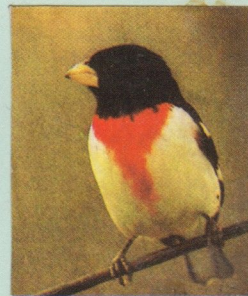


# THE AVIARY

VOL. 4, #1  
(JAN.-FEB., 1987)

From Francis Baumli:  
for friends & associates



" ... let us now suppose that in the mind of each man there is an aviary of all sorts of birds--some flocking together apart from the rest, others in small groups, others solitary, flying anywhere and everywhere."

Plato (Theaetetus)

How very, very excessive of me to have sent out such a lengthy diatribe as was last year's Aviary! How very excessive, and how preposterously presumptuous, to expect my dear friends and loyal colleagues to read something so lengthy. I confess to a mild disappointment, although to no surprise, that many of my most eager readers did not finish it. The complaint was quite consistent: too, too long. For some people, it was obviously too long for their flaccid attention-span. For others, it was too taxing to their sense of morals. For example, one lady of unimpugnable virtue, when pressed for her impression of last year's Aviary, merely replied that she thought it was too graphic, and therefore did not finish it. I, of course, always mindful of the Latinate roots of the English language, thought she was referring to my crude attempts at drawing geometrical figures on the reproduction of Raphael's Alba Madonna. Not so,



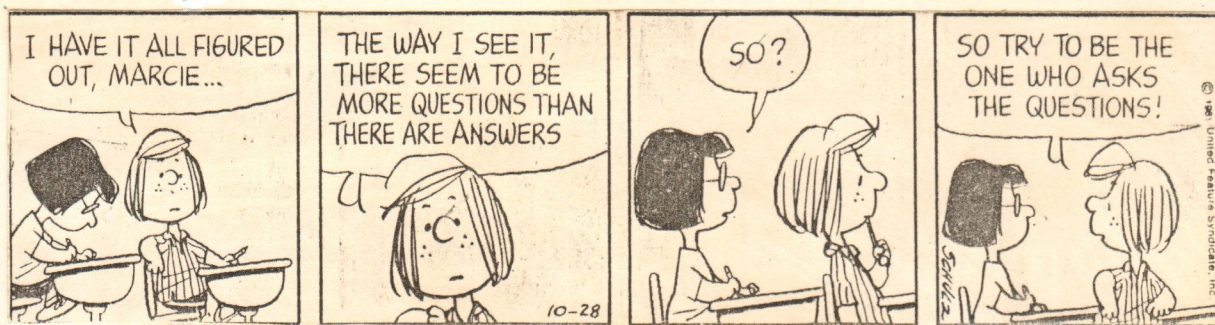
this goodly lady informed me. She was referring to other things but, were she to give them less indirect mention, it would compromise her character. I, not entirely insensitive to the prudery of souls less dionysian than mine, divined her subject and was kind enough to let the matter drop.

There also was no small number of readers who eschewed reading that issue through because they thought Baumli's ego was running too rampant, and they refused to indulge what they thought to be his sin of pride. Other, more discerning and intelligent readers, saw that any pride was but a stage upon which a simple soul was posturing--acting out a comedy; still, even these steadfast readers often skipped major portions, explaining that some of the subjects, e.g., paintings or music, were simply outside of, or beyond, the pale of their interests.

Well; it was obvious that my lengthy prose was posing a variety of problems for my readers. Moreover, it had posed a couple of problems for me. One difficulty was that putting together that issue of The Aviary consumed entirely too much of my time. If memory serves, I spent about two weeks doing little else; such absorption is not prudent when other, more sublime, things beckon. A second, and quite significant difficulty, was the cost of xeroxing 130 copies of that 75 page tome. The expense amounted to nearly three hundred dollars, and seriously curtailed several self-indulgent monetary outlays I had planned.

I confess that there was a third problem too: my sister, whose contribution to The Aviary is quite minimal, nevertheless received more letters of appreciation (often even admiration!) than I did. Realize, dear friend and reader, I am not unwilling to share the limelight with my twin, and I am even willing to concede that when it comes to intelligence, charm, and (certainly) beauty, she has more in the way of natural gifts that I do. Yet, when she told me about, and then later showed me, the many letters she had received based upon that brief appearance in my form letter, I truly could not see the justice in it. She hurriedly typed out a few sentences before rushing off to board a bus; I, for two weeks, poured my soul onto paper. She received letters of admiration, letters from two men declaring their love, proposals for meetings (trysts??), invitations to give speeches, requests to write articles. In other words, she received appreciation, love, intimacy; I received the usual assortment of rejoinders, exceptions, chastisements, intellectual verbage, outrage, and (most depressing of all) those nagging lectures about my demented moral character.

So ... this year it must be shorter. This way, if my sister receives as much attention as she did last year, then at least the injustice will not be so grave--the disproportion of deserved praise not so magnitudinous--since I will have written less.



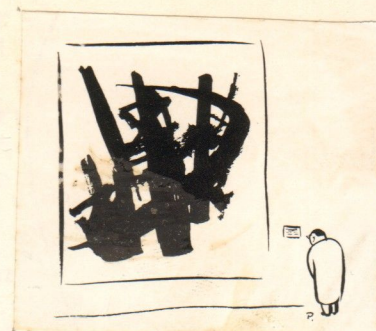
I am plundering joy!

(said by Brother Giles,  
companion of Saint  
Francis of Assisi)

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF 1986

April 13, 1986: A very wonderful day spent in the Nelson Gallery, Kansas City, Missouri. It is ranked as one of the ten best art galleries in this country, and it certain deserves such status.

While there, I was especially impressed by the fact that the men's restroom seemed to be so much better kept than are such facilities for men in most public places. I remarked upon this to Abbe, who was immediately interested in doing a comparison. She looked into the men's restroom when it was unoccupied, and informed me that, nice as it was, the women's was much better. I was skeptical. After all, how does one so easily improve upon burnished wood and marble? So, when the women's restroom was unoccupied, I had a look inside.





Well; indeed it was more nicely furnished. It was equipped with lush couches, the most beautiful carpet I have ever seen, and in addition to the fine wood and marble in the men's restroom, it had elegant fixtures and mirrors. The norm held: women's restrooms are always more nicely equipped than are men's.

Of course, this small distraction did not prevent my enjoying the great art in the gallery. For a description of the high points of this viewing, turn to the section on art later in this issue.

May 1, 1986: This day, in Columbia, Missouri, I heard two addresses given by the peace activist and anti-nuclear spokeswoman, Dr. Helen Caldicott. While this woman has worthy, even eloquent, things to say about the perils of the nuclear arms race, I have never read anything by her, nor did I hear her say anything on this day, about peace itself. Instead, I was witness to a goodly glut of something I had previously only had a glimpse of, namely, her rabid misandry. This woman, it seems, has three main theses: 1) Nuclear war is bad. 2) The threat of nuclear war is strictly the result of male values--primarily their tendency to play at comparing penis size with each other, resulting in an arms race for bigger and better missiles, i.e., penises. 3) Women, who are morally superior to men, are the nurturers who might be able to save the world from nuclear destruction and men.

Believe me, I do not exaggerate in putting Caldicott's theses this way. If you doubt me, then I refer you to pages 315-324 of her book, Missile Envy. There, you will sample venom.

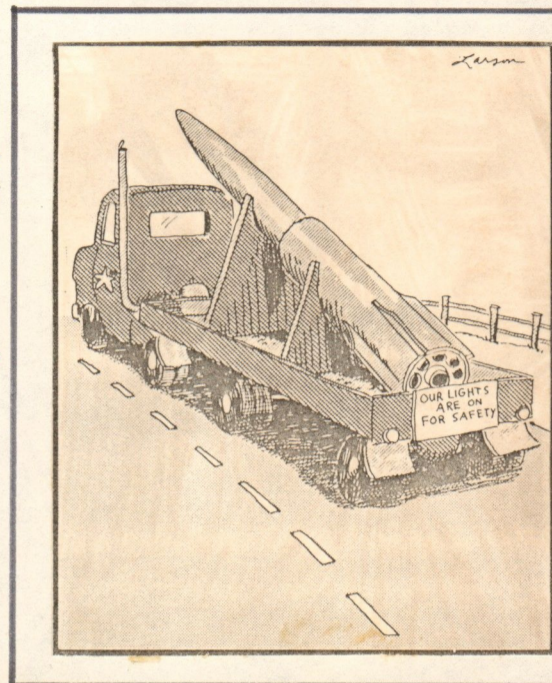
There are, I concede, many thinkers who say very negative things in their prose, but when they interact with other people, they are more sane and civilized. Not so Caldicott. With lacrimating doe-eyes, she says that she loves her husband even though he is a man, but then adds that we must not forget that he is a man. (Maybe Baumli should add here that more likely, he was a man, before Caldicott got her claws into him.)

I had thought, after the first speech Caldicott gave, to approach her and see if she might listen to a few thoughts of mine, namely, that her affected superiority toward men might actually comprise part of the etiology of this violence she so easily calls male. After she was finished with her talk, I waited politely while several women chatted with her. They exchanged pleasantries, it seemed that most people were finished talking, so I stepped forward. Caldicott turned to me, and the expression on her face, moments before beaming and pleasant as she talked to the women, was immediately transformed to one of sheer hatred. It took all my stamina to keep from recoiling from her glare. I introduced myself, told her of the work I have done in men's liberation, and ... thereupon she interrupted me, told me icily that she had heard of men's liberation, and suggested that I send any material I might have to her husband, that he would certainly be more interested in it than she would.

Discouraged, but undaunted, I decided to attend her second speech--which would be given that evening. Perhaps, I thought, there would be a question-and-answer session during which she might have to account for some of her prejudices on these matters.

For her evening speech, she was given a rousing introduction by a fellow named Gerard H. Clarfield. I myself had never heard of this chap, but his credentials are many, if not impressive. He is Chairman Elect of the Department of History at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where he also serves as a Professor of American Diplomatic History. Furthermore, he is co-author of a book entitled, Nuclear America. "Might I hear some sanity from this man?" I thought as he began his lengthy introduction. No; there was no sanity. Instead, this caponized man gave obsequious deference to Dr. Helen Caldicott, and then proceeded to sum up the dangers of the nuclear arms race. Midway in his summary, he stated something to the effect (this is almost an exact quote): "And we know that the nuclear danger is caused by men who live in a world they control, exploit, and dehumanize. The nuclear danger is a male phenomenon, men are to blame for its existence, and it will only be resolved when men take responsibility for its existence." At this point the women in the audience applauded wildly, several screamed, a chorus of "Woo-woo" sounded forth, and this man, who had just condemned himself and all men in one resounding declamation, smiled and bowed as these women cheered! Yes. Truly, I do not exaggerate! The women were yelling, "WOO-WOO!!" and he was bowing--over and over. He actually took pleasure in their applauding the fact that he had just condemned all men! And I, at this point quite daunted, wondered if he even realized that he had condemned himself in the bargain.

I chose to stay for Caldicott's speech so I could record it. The woman was tired at this point. She not only was tired from having worked so hard this day, she also was tired from having given so many speeches over the last few years. She now was burned out; she was quitting. She would take a long





vacation. Her speech pattern at this point was scarcely coherent. She upbraided those who were leaving toward the end of her speech. One person in the aisle stopped to tell her that he, and he presumed most of the other people who were leaving, was off to attend the symphony orchestra's recital of Mozart. She responded that they should stay and hear her, so that they might learn some things that would make the world a safe place for future generations of people to hear Mozart. It apparently never occurred to her that, if she had stopped to listen to Mozart a few times in the course of her campaigning over the last few years, then she might not have burned herself out to the point that now she had to quit her anti-nuclear work, plus, she might not have been so inclined toward hating men.

Toward the end of her speech, she, groping for an illustration, pointed upwards at the lights and said something to the effect, "Lights. We have gotten along without them for thousands of years. We can get along without them now, if it means getting rid of nuclear powerplants." I looked around. Her microphone was plugged into an electrical socket. She not only was giving her speech from a well-lit stage with a lighted podium, there also was a spotlight on her. Moreover, the radio crew that was recording her had all their equipment plugged into electrical outlets. At that point I would have given a goodly sum of money to have been able to put my hands on the main breaker of that building. I do rather doubt that this lady could have continued her speech, much less her metaphor, had she been forced to experience what her rhetoric recommended.

Ah well. There are peaceniks of more than one ilk. I am glad that they do not all embody Caldicott's hatred.

This hatred. Many people could not understand why this woman did not receive the Nobel Peace Prize when she was nominated for it a few years ago. I think I know why. When men, and women who love men, hear men being hated, even though they may not be able to very well articulate their disagreements with such sentiments, they feel resentment--and they resist. When Dr. Helen Caldicott spews forth hatred toward men, when she blames the world's evils on men, and when she tries to sanctify women, then people know fully well that there is no peace in her heart. They reject her; and unfortunately, I suspect that many of them also reject her message about the nuclear peril.

May 29-30, 1986: I spent two days in the doctor's office, being poked, palpated, and X-rayed. Two large, painless, hard lumps had come up on my rib-cage, and there was a similar lump on each knee. I was scared--worried about the big C.

The doctors did not know what the lumps were all about, but were steadfast in their opinions that there was nothing to worry about.

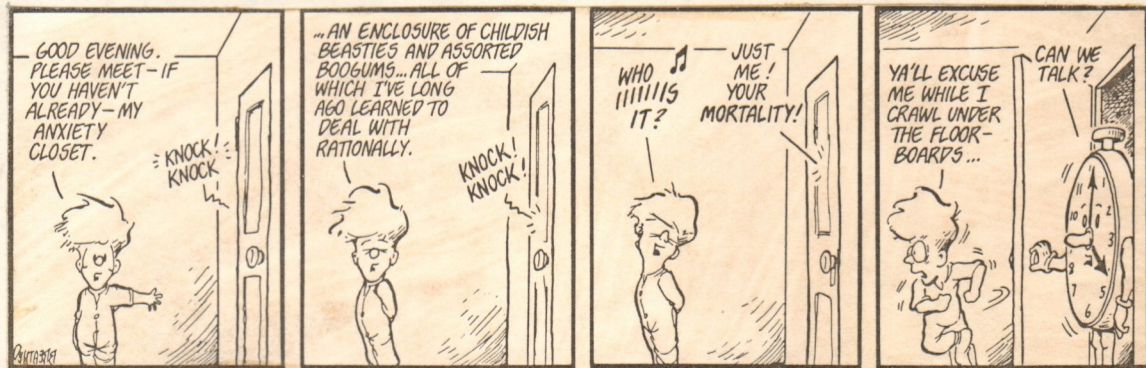
Certain friends and family members later implied that I was indulging a certain hypochondriasis during this time, what with my worry, and my own hyperbolic statements about the matter (which were only intended to lighten my own fears with a bit of levity). I did not appreciate such innuendo on the part of my friends. I was, after all, only doing what the American Cancer Society tells one to do. If a painless lump appears on your body, then get it examined right away. I didn't have just one lump; I had four. And I rather suspected that, if the American Cancer Society tells you to have such things examined, then they are concerned about cancer, and not about, say, cosmetic appearances or phrenology.

May 31, 1986: My birthday--38 years old, and showing it. I look at other people, who say they are my age, and I think: God; they look too old to be only 38; I certainly don't look that old. But then, I go home and spend a few moments in front of a mirror, and the reckoning is there.

This birthday was a nice celebration. The phone was mercifully quiet,

and I spent a simple day in company with my goodly wife. She gave me several things which I asked for--some of which I dare not mention because to do so would bring a blush to her modest cheeks.

One thing she gave me which I especially appreciated was a list of diminutives about my personality. I suppose this needs explanation. Last year, I requested a list of 25 superlatives about my personality, i.e., things which describe me as the most of something, the best of something, etc. This year, a list of 25 diminutives, i.e., things which describe me as the least of something, the worst. etc. Although this year's list was more difficult for Abbe than last year's, she came through with it. Again, to respect certain arenas of privacy, I shall eschew mention of certain things she penned for me; but to titillate, if not satisfy, the curiosity of my friends and readers, I offer the following





sampling: #8: Worst sense of time. #9: Youngest middle aged [mid-life] crisis. #13: Least able to disguise his sexuality. #16: Least able to tolerate being curious. #20: Least able to resist buying colorful underwear. #22: Worst dreams. #25: Worst person to try to win a bet from.

About the time of each birthday, people ask me a certain question:

"Does it really get better as you get older?"

My reply: "What do you mean by 'it'?"

Their hesitant response: "Well, uh, you know ... it!" And they leer.

My answer which follows is eloquent, complex, and ... unfortunately too lengthy to herein set down.

June 15-19, 1986: A trip to Chicago, primarily to see art and listen to good music. Unfortunately, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, one of the best symphony orchestras in this country, was on vacation that week. Also, a good part of the art gallery was closed, including all of the old European sections. However, we did get to see some good art; details are to be found in the section on art.

June 19-22, 1986: A trip to Detroit, again to see art and listen to good music. As it turned out, the Detroit Symphony was virtually inaccessible during the days we were there, and a good part of this art gallery was closed too. However, we were able to see some great art, including a special Boucher exhibit. Details of this viewing are listed in the section of art herein.

One interesting thing about this trip to Detroit was the fact that the Detroit Grand Prix was being run while we were there. As a result, we had the art gallery pretty much to ourselves; everyone else was at the track. I did learn an interesting statistic about the races, however. Namely, that it costs about 40 million per year to build, maintain, and race each of those cars that were in the Grand Prix race. There were more than 20 cars in that race. That quickly adds up to a billion dollars per year! You could feed a lot of people for this much money.



16th-century Mona wanna-bes

July 13, 1986: I finally finished my very late edition of the January-February, 1986 Aviary. It was 75 pages--legal size, single-spaced--in length! The day likely shall arrive when my many biographers, cataloguing my works, will enter upon a lengthy debate among themselves as to whether this edition of The Aviary should, given its length, be catalogued as a book.

July 19, 1986: The 20-year reunion for my old high school class. However, I did not attend. I graduated from a small, rural high school. If memory serves, the total size of my graduating class was 16. I had considered attending, but when letters to the person organizing the party went unanswered, I became discouraged. My letters had probed the possibility of trying to structure things so that we would all, at least for a short while, sit down and talk about ourselves. I did not want to repeat what happened at my ten-year reunion, when people awkwardly gathered to talk to one another, and quickly escaped to food and volleyball. Unsure as to what the outcome would be of this reunion, I called one of my old high school mates--perhaps the most intelligent fellow in the class--just to see what we might still have in common. He proceeded, for 20 minutes, to talk about himself, and never once asked me about myself except, in passing, to wonder aloud if I smoke. Well; after this example of comraderie, and after having already been pretty much assured that my hopes for group intamcy were null, I decided to stay away. Sometimes it is true not only that, "you can't go home again," but also that, "you're damn stupid to try and go home again."

July 22, 1986: This was the last date I saw a psychiatrist for the problems I have with insomnia. I am putting it mildly when I say that this exercise in so-called self-discovery was quite futile. I went to see this man because he, reputedly, was--is--the best counselor in Columbia. Well; I might as well have been seeing a veterinarian for all the good it did me. When I first began seeing this doctor on Sept. 11 of last year, he professed that my problem with insomnia would be solved within six sessions. These sessions would each last 45 minutes, and would occur once every two weeks. Well, as it turned out, 4½ hours of therapy in six weeks did not solve an acute problem of eight years duration. Not only did my problem seem to possess a magnitude considerably greater than his intelligence or skills, there were certain problems in personal compatibility between us. For one thing, he seemed very threatened by my intelligence. He seemed even more threatened by what he perceived to be my distrust of women. I had shown him some of my writings on men's liberation, and he chivalrously leaped at the opportunity



for playing the role of women's protector. He was, in fact, so appalled by my views on men's liberation that he quickly came to the opinion that much of my difficulty with sleeping surely resulted from my distrust of women. He could never offer arguments, or even cogent opinions, as to why my views on feminism and such are purportedly wrong; rather, he hid behind his professional mask and issued proclamations about my menagerie of neuroses and hang-ups with the female sex, taking refuge in his supposed professional omniscience when I would press him to justify his edicts. I might have offered to nominate him as "Mr. Chivalry of 1986," but being of a generally polite disposition, I did not.

Aside from the personal difficulties with this man, I had problems with his professional approach to me. His professional approach was too professional. He was formal, aloof, controlled; I felt like I was being handled with forceps, deftly dipped in alcohol before each session so that anything I might say would somehow seem more sterile--less threatening to him. This man obviously had a very powerful phobia when it came to confronting emotions in their raw, powerful reality. Everything in the sessions had to be ritualized, sanitized, becalmed. He would scarcely talk with me about the incident that had precipitated the insomnia; of this he had a pronounced aversion, and was only willing to deal with it when I was under hypnosis--i.e., pretending to be hypnotized, since I really wasn't.

Out of fairness to the man, I must say, however, that he did give the process a good go. He was, if too professional, at least impeccably profes-

sional. I guess I mean by this that he was focused on me during the sessions, and unlike the counselor I saw for four years before him,

he at least conducted himself with a certain decorum and responsibility. He was candid, not as unintelligent as he believed himself to be, and willing, at the end of the process, to admit that he had failed. Candor and humility are qualities I can scarcely ascribe to the counselor I had previously spent four long, lame years with, working with the problem. This woman was always too unprofessional. She constantly played subtle little power games during the sessions, used her office as a clearing-house for the town gossip, and did quite unprofessional things such as trying to arrange dates between clients she was seeing--all but playing the role of the 1940's French conciierge in those houses of lascivious repute. Worse, she constantly broke rules of confidentiality, gossiping to me about other clients she was seeing, and, I later found out, gossiping to her other clients about me. I should have quit seeing her earlier, but frankly, I was rather entrapped in this woman's sticky web of invisible power games.

But ... I do not need to go on about all this. I suppose, rather than complaining about the past, I need simply make a resolve about the future. And this I have done. I am through with counselors. I shopped around for another. I saw four briefly. It was obvious, from these brief encounters, that whereas these counselors might be good at helping a wedded couple communicate better (You know, saying things like, "Is it possible that you're maybe a little bit angry about all this?" or, "I think there would be no problem if you would just go ahead and say how you feel!"), but it was obvious that these people had not the capacity for dealing with the labyrinthine, subterranean dungeons of my insomniacal psyche.

July 25, 1986: I finished typing the final draft of my seventh novel, The Plucked Chicken. This novel, written from January 8 to November 24, 1977, had been sitting idle for many years. About two years ago, I had begun typing the final draft when my typing time was not otherwise preoccupied.

## THE FAR SIDE



A lucky night for Goldy.





This typing job had turned out to be a very long and arduous chore. I began the typing in 1984, and by the end of that year had typed 294 pages. In 1985 I typed 302 more pages, so by the end of 1985, I had 596 pages of the final draft. This date, July 25, 1986, I finished the final draft's last page: 682. Yes; it took almost seven months to type that last 86 pages. It may seem that I was in no hurry to finish it, which is rather true. After all, when one is playing with the accoutrements of one's immortality, why be in a rush when there is all eternity for one's playground?

August 4, 1986: A very sacred sacrament this day (not a redundancy, by the way): My beautiful black car, my 1955 Caddy hearse, which had been in the process of being repaired--a major overhaul--for slightly more than one year, is back on the road with a man of character, surname Baumli, behind the wheel.

August 14-18, 1986: I went to northwest Missouri, locale of my old stomping-grounds, for a visit with old friends and family. I especially enjoyed a visit to the monastery at Conception, and I got to play bass with a CW group called The Country Playboys with whom I played



many years ago. All in all it was an enjoyable trip. There were some of the usual traumas with family, but these were considerably lessened this time given that I did not go to visit my parents.

August 22, 1986: Abbe's 28th birthday. I presented her with a surprise gift early this morning, at 2:10 A.M., the time when she was born. She was most appreciative, but not overly pleased--given the hour.

The actual celebration took place the following day, when her family arrived at our home for a major celebration. With all due respect to these goodly people, I must say that I remain surprised at the difficulties they experience in coping with the country. Mind you, I have a beautiful place in the country, with a nice woods and paths running through the woods that are kept mowed. Despite this inviting pastoral ambience, these people, all from the city, generally hover close to the house, perhaps a little bit frightened of the country, certainly somewhat disoriented. In fact, they were so disoriented during this visit that none of them--not one!--noticed that I was, part of the time, walking around in the nude.



All in all it was an enjoyable celebration, complete with those things--such as love, song, and gluttony--which are supposed to accompany such occasions.

August 26, 1986: What I had suspected for some weeks became obvious. Our house was the target of a full-scale invasion of clothes moths. Believe me, contrary to popular myth, those things do not content themselves with eating wool only. They also eat cotton. Like, for example, Baumli's socks and underpants. I mounted a full-scale war upon them, which soon either wiped them out, or at least reduced their numbers to where the damage was unnoticeable. It was later reported to me that during this war, I was heard on several decisive occasions to announce, "Damn the toxins! They're eating my underwear!"

August 28, 1986: On this date, Abbe, Dacia, and I attended a concert by the double bassist, Gary Karr. A truly wonderful concert it was! For details, see the music section herein.

September 7, 1986: I, this date, began writing my ninth novel. It will be a long, long time in the making.

September 9, 1986: Chris Griffith, my very dear, very close friend, was killed when he unwittingly happened upon a robbery that was in progress. The loss is deep, painful, and the sadness goes on and on.

Strange, it was, how so many people I know--casual acquaintances--attempted, in their clumsy way, to comfort me by telling me that the killer (who was caught) would soon enough be executed. It so happens





that I do not believe in capital punishment, but even if I did (and allowing other people their beliefs) I must say that I find this to be a strange, strange way of extending comfort to someone over the loss of a friend.

Among friends, of mine and Chris', I observed a very strange pattern of interaction among people who were grieving. Chris had just as many, if not more, male friends than female friends. Many--most--of Chris' friends knew one another. As a result, they had much opportunity for extending sympathy to one another. Over and over I observed men extending sympathy to men, and men extending sympathy to women, but the women seemed quite reserved about extending sympathy to the men, even though it seemed quite clear to me that the men were not reticent about receiving such, but rather, were even eager to receive it. I concede that this sad occasion is not the most appropriate instance for bringing up a gender issue. But then, "issues" are feelings put into words, and the experience--the feelings--resulted from an aspect of that occasion which affected me deeply. Hence my words on the matter.

September 17, 1986: My cheerful, graceful, lithe, and growing daughter, Dacia, turned 11 years old. Still enjoying school, she has been studying her flute diligently, and, it should be announced, was first-chair in her band within only eight weeks of beginning the instrument. She has held this position since, and in my opinion, shows promise of playing first flute in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and perhaps in the Berlin Philharmonic.



October 1, 1986: My book, Men Freeing Men, went into a second printing. This makes 4,000 copies in print. It sells much more slowly than I had anticipated, but still, it is nice to know that the true message is being promulgated.

October 20, 1986: I this date finished composing a new will. Mind you, this will is quite complicated, especially with regard to the elaborate, and quite unusual, stipulations regarding disposition of my ~~remains~~ body.

I, one day, may be so generous as to make this will public. Suffice it for now that I quote from Richard Selzer, M.D., whose book, Mortal Lessons, gave me much guidance in composing said document. The following is from page 140:

The doctor shivers despite the warmth of the saloon, and hugs his chest with his arms. He is fresh from debate with next of kin, weary, weary. There is a stain on his vest more terrible than the Ancient Mariner's eye.

"I want," he begins, "to be buried--unembalmed and unboxed--at the foot of a tree. Soon I melt and seep into the ground, to be drawn up by the roots. Straight to the top, strung in the crown, answering the air. There would be the singing of birds, the applause of wings."

October 24, 1986: I attended a wonderful concert by The Cleveland Quartet and Emanuel Ax. For details, see the music section herein.

November 1, 1986: I was in a wreck with my pickup. A fellow careening through an intersection, late for work and speeding, ran into the back of my pickup just as I was clearing the intersection. The injustice of it all: even though the fellow was speeding and didn't even apply his brakes before he hit me, I was issued a ticket for failure to yield the right-of-way. I have resolved to fight the ticket in court.

At first, it seemed that my gool-ole-pickemup truck was totaled; but now it seems that it can be repaired.

November 10, 1986: I dropped my subscription to a newspaper. This always happens: I begin feeling guilty about my ignorance of world events, I take out a subscription to a newspaper, and then I find that I am becoming dangerously pessimistic about the world, and quite aware that now I know no more about world events than before, it's just that I have a lot of slanted impressions given me by the pulp media. So, again, I quit subscribing ... hoping that a respite from the "news" can make of me a less gloomy fellow.

November 27, 1986: On this date--Thanksgiving Day--the odometer on my hearse turned over at 100,000 miles. I would not be surprised if it has considerably more miles on it, given that I think it was turned back before I bought it. Still, it seemed a worthy event, and deserving of a modest celebration.

December 11, 1986: On this date I finally spent the money on a CD player. It's a Magnavox, and quite satisfactory as CD players go. I must say, however, that I am not an enthusiastic convert to the medium as some people are. It definitely has advantages. Wow and flutter, as well as



surface noise, are things of the past. And there is the very strong advantage that there is no wear--no worn out records, or worn needles. Still, if I have a choice between digital and analogue recording, I prefer analogue. While digital captures "something of everything" from the entire musical spectrum, it does not capture everything. It has only 44,000 bits of information per second, which simply is not enough. The entire musical spectrum is present, but it is full of holes; it's like a half-tone photograph--one of those photos made up of little dots. The closer you look, or, in this case, listen, the more you realize is missing. The tonal individuality of instruments like harpsichords, high-quality clarinets, subtle pedaling in a piano, and such are not as distinct or present. This may be fine for someone listening to rock music, but if you're listening to a recording of Bach's English Suites on period instruments, then there is a lot of frustration. Of course, so much is being recorded on digital today anyway, one gains nothing by buying an LP if the original recording was on digital, and in fact gets all the disadvantages of the LP. So ...

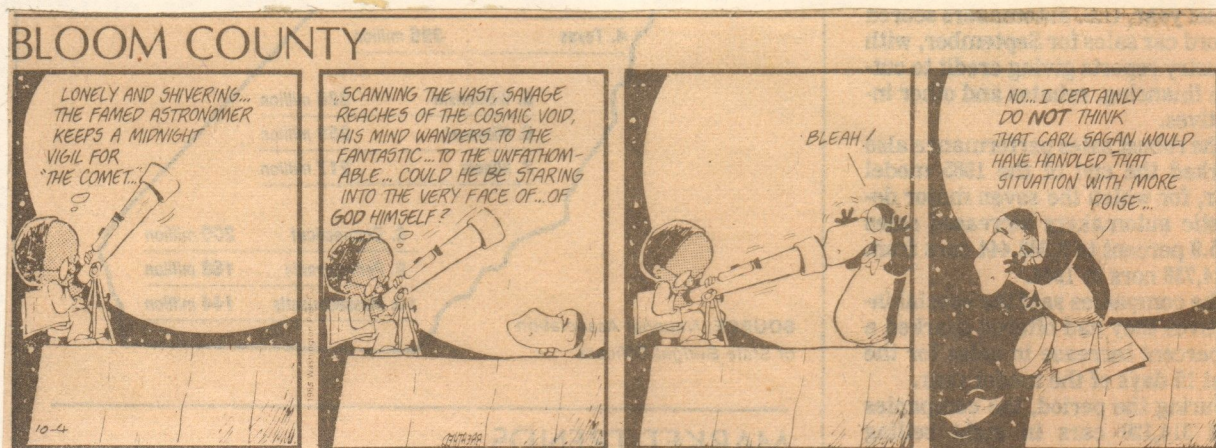
to all my friends who have been urging me to get one, I now proclaim that the deed is done. But do not expect me to wax eloquent about the CD player's advantages. Moreover, allow me to complain about the expense of those CDs. Another bad side-effect of the CD player is, now that I realize that I prefer the analogue recordings, I am spending too much money trying to buy existing analogue recordings before they are remastered and available on CD on digitally remastered LP only.

Due to the Christmas generosity of friends and family, I did, by the end of the year, have a respectable library of 13 CDs. A larger collection, however, will be most slowly forthcoming.

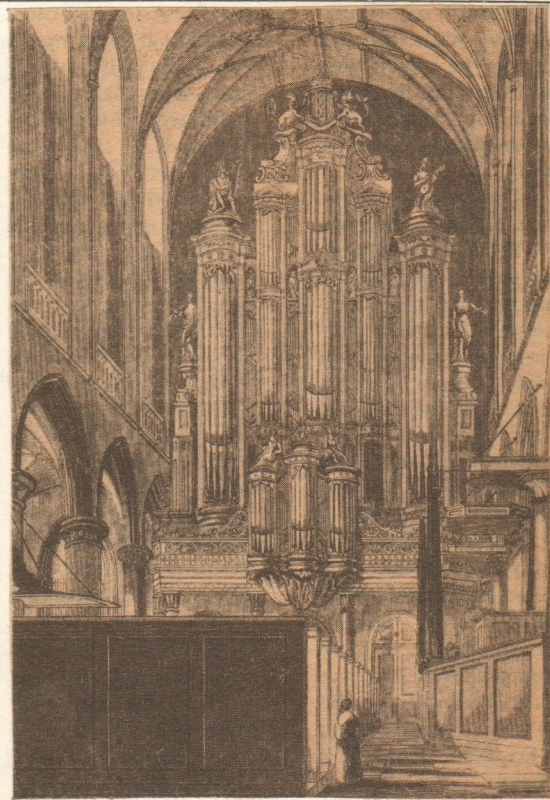
Generally: Other things of note, which happened in 1986, which can not be so specifically dated:

1. I finished volume nine of my Phenomenology of Pseudo-Sentient Aeschatology. In this work, I am accomplishing what I want to, and volume ten is already underway.

2. With my telescope, I had hoped to enjoy long hours of observing the return of Halley's Comet. I must say that the Comet made a very poor showing this time around. Fortunately, friends of mine who went to New Zealand to take pictures brought back some nice photos of the Comet, which consoled me somewhat.



3. Again Baumli won a bet, which involved no small amount of money, and a considerable investment of certain people's egos. All over a very trivial, but not entirely inconsequential, matter. You see, I grew up in Northwest Missouri, and I myself, as well as various friends and members of my extended family, have occasion for making a goodly number of trips from that area to where I live. The dispute, and consequent bet, arose over what is the shortest route through Kansas City. There were those who argued that circumventing Kansas City via Highway 291 through Liberty is the shortest route. Others argued that even if this route is shorter, in terms of distance traveled, it actually takes longer because of the traffic and winding highway. Still others argued that one should detour Kansas City by leaving Interstate 70 and taking Highway 435 North to Highway 35 South (or vice versa, if you're going the other direction); these people argued that this route would trim about ten miles off the trip. As for myself, I, who normally have a terrible sense of time and no sense of direction, do have an infallible awareness of the duration of agony behind the wheel of a car. Hence, I was quite sure that the very route which everyone argued is longest through Kansas City, namely, simply following Interstate 70 through the city to where it intersects





Highway 71 (or vice versa, if you're coming to Columbia), is actually the shortest route in terms of miles traveled. Well, having occasion to make that trip several times over the course of a couple of weeks, I decided to do some measuring. I drove all three routes. Being aware that measuring mileage over the course of more than two hundred miles could be subject to considerable inaccuracy, depending on amount of traffic, stops made, etc., I did not measure the entire trips. Rather, for each trip, covering a different route, I measured each route from one marker on the east side of Kansas City to another marker on the north side of Kansas City. My markers, very simply, were the signs for the Highway 291 exits, one from Interstate 70, the other from Highway 71. These exits, I knew, would serve me well since they define the distance of the detour around Kansas City which some claimed was the shortest route, and they lie beyond the routes for the other two traveling options.

Well, between these two signs, the distance around Kansas City by Highway 291 is 32 miles. Between these two signs, the distance traveled through Kansas City via Highways 435 and 35 is 35 miles. And, between these two signs, the distance traveled by going straight into the heart of Kansas City and back out via Interstate 70 and Highway 71 only, is ... 31 miles.

I was right.

I won the bet.

So there.

And as for those who haven't yet paid up, I want them to know that my satisfaction from winning the bet goes far beyond any sum of money they must eventually pay me.

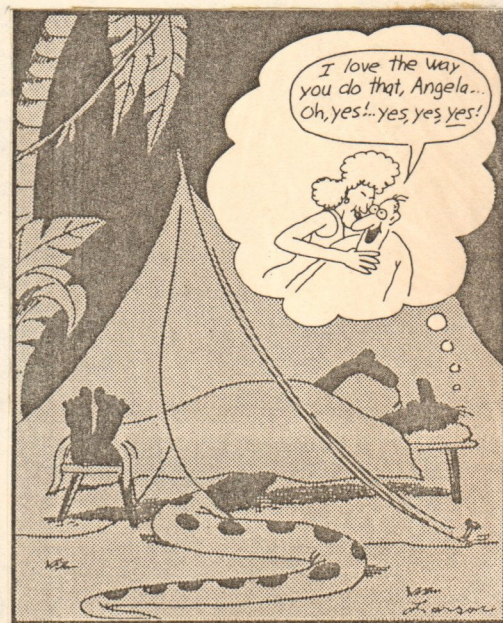
4. A very nice honor, which I am pleased about receiving: The Coalition of Free Men presented me with an award in excellence, namely, for "Best Book on Men's Issues" for 1985, in recognition of my book, Men Freeing Men: Exploding the Myth of the Traditional Male.

5. My insomnia (yes; I admit that that possessive "my" may be part of the problem) continues. The public confession I made about it in last year's Aviary did not help in the ways I had hoped it would. Indeed, from those who seemed to feel guilty about their previous conversational reticence on the topic, it elicited some polite queries. And from some people there was expressed a genuine, and probing, interest. However, none of these public musings shed any light on the topic, and the insomnia remains much the same.

I did, on the advice of several people, try a rather singular approach to the problem. Whereas before, all sleeping pills had failed, these people recommended that I take a certain amino acid called L-Triptophan which is supposed to aid sleep. Well; this it certainly did. That first night when I took it, I slept for eight hours straight. But the next morning I awoke in a confused, very drugged state which did not abate the entire day. I fought a valiant battle, trying to regain my sensibilities, but simply could not. I was in a fog--nearly asleep, unable to work, unable to read, unable to even walk in a straight line or talk coherently, the entire day. That night, I took the drug again, thinking that surely its effects would wear off more quickly the second day. Well, the effects did not wear off more quickly the second day. Instead, I lacked even the energy to try and fight off the torpor. I sat in a chair, alternating between stupor and slumber, the entire day. And still, even though I was nearly asleep, I felt horribly, painfully depressed. Clearly, while this drug was helping me sleep, it was also depriving me of my life, my intelligence, my creativity. And the sleep was not restful at all; instead, I awoke, only to find that I was less able to withstand the rigors of insomniacal toil.

I did not take the drug again. I could no longer subject myself to a treatment this bewildering and debilitating. That night I slept poorly, awoke still somewhat sluggish, but at least my mind could function again. I resolved that there would be no more bouts with that drug. It was stronger than me.

Since that trial, I have been trying a couple of things which have actually helped me sleep a bit better. Mind you, they are very miniscule antidotes when compared to the



"Go back to sleep, Chuck. You're just havin' a nightmare — of course, we are still in hell."



magnitude of the problem, but they do seem to have helped somewhat. On some nights, their application adds perhaps fifteen minutes to my total slumber. What I am doing will help me the most, I think, if I tell no one what it is. Meanwhile, the problem continues. I sleep little. The nightmares continue and even worsen, and ... well, I have nearly given up on ever solving the problem or even on hoping to significantly ease it.

6. As for my battle with the phone, things have improved somewhat, but not much. As it is, my main problem is with men in the men's movement; these are the people who call at odd hours, and presume that I have a couple of spare hours for listening to them without their even asking me if I am free. I have become much more assertive, even aggressive, about getting these people off the phone more quickly. Still, I am not always very successful. There is a response, to my stating that I need to get off the phone, which I encounter quite often: "Listen, let me tell you just one more thing while I've got you on the phone." Twenty minutes later, they are still telling me about that "one more thing." There are still evenings that are awful. One night, just before sitting down to help Dacia with her homework, I said to her, "Hurry up and make your phone call before somebody else calls." God! After she had made her call, I unplugged the thing for the evening.

Is asking for simple courtesy asking too much? All I request is that if someone calls me, they simply ask me if this is a convenient time for me to talk. If I say it is, and they think the conversation is going to take more than 20 minutes, then I also ask that they be aware that just because now is a convenient time to talk, this doesn't mean that I have half an hour. So ... I also ask that anyone who calls, and anticipates talking for more than 20 minutes, negotiate this too.

If my callers will extend to me these simple courtesies, then they will find me to be a most convivial conversationalist, with nothing but a friendly demeanor, and no subsequent ire to vent.

7. My attempts at gaining some control over my "underwear neurosis," i.e., my need to hoard vast numbers of socks, underpants, etc., has not succeeded. I now have fewer shirts, slacks, t-shirts, and such, but, realizing that I was attempting to cure this neurosis by going public about it in last year's Aviary, my unconscious insecurities erupted and, alas, I have acquired even more underpants and socks. As of Dec. 31 of this year, I owned 87 pairs of socks, along with five, unmatched singles, which I retain in the event their lost mates should ever turn up. Those "lost mates"--what untold anxieties I have lived over them. My patient wife can vouch for the fact that I have been known to stay up for a couple of hours, refusing to go to bed, until a sock, lost in the course of doing laundry, has been located. I tried, at one point, to give three pairs of socks away. I put them in a bag, intending to take them into the charity house the next day. But I could not do it. I got up in the night to rescue them, and tucked them safely back into their drawer. As it was, the thought that I almost gave those three pairs away caused so much anxiety that for the next two weeks, I wore only those three pairs.

I said that as of December 31, I owned 87 pairs of socks. I confess that I was too embarrassed to take a census of my underpants.

I admit to it; this is all a very sad comment on my character.

8. You will recall that in last year's Aviary, I mentioned my anxiety when I spotted a small capillary in my leg, was afraid it was a varicose vein, and went to no small trouble to have it checked out. As it turned out, the capillary was not varicose, and in fact disappeared from view in a few days. My fear of death, of the body leaking its vital fluids, seems to have found focus in varicose veins. I had tended to think of this as a rather esoteric and private fear, but as it turns out, many other people have this fear also. This brief mention about my fear of slack veins elicited six letters from friends and readers--all of them women. The letters all professed a similar worry, and asked for advice. I have no advice; all I can say is that if you spot a varicose vein, then begin taking stock of your mortality and the state of your hopefully immortal soul.

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9. As for my health, over this last year there has been no marked, noticeable deterioration, but it has nevertheless regressed somewhat. As the disease takes its toll, it seems that I find new ways of compensating, new reserves of stamina. Because of this coping method, I rather suspect the day will come when my entire body gives out quite suddenly. To others, it will seem that this disease has suddenly worsened, which will not be the case. Rather, I will have used up all my reserves, and having gone on to create even more reserves, I will have used those up too. Then, there will be no more--no more reserve strength, no more will power. And I will have appeared to succumb completely. Sometimes, already, it seems that I am running on will power alone.



10. I have, in the past, inveighed against those who use the generic word, "relationship," to mean, specifically, a romantic relationship--a sexual involvement perhaps (although not necessarily) encumbered with the accoutrements of love. I tire not only of people's fixation with this topic, but also with the slatternly language they use for describing it. For example, I just this last year learned that, "We are seeing each other," means, "We are relating with each other sexually." Upon learning of this, I entertained no small amount of worry about my past verbal conduct, which surely inspired no small amount of misunderstanding about my supposed sexual conduct.

Not that I mind occasioning such misunderstandings. In fact, I become so enraged at people using the word "relationship" to mean something more specific than it does, that I have on more than one occasion used the word properly for the sake of purposefully spawning rumors among those who use it improperly. For example, I might, upon encountering one of these slack-tongued gossips, say something like, "I tell you, I'm feeling overwhelmed! I'm trying to keep Abbe happy, I have two new relationships going, and I don't have enough time for myself. Listen; I've got to be going. Talk to you later. I'm off to pursue one of my new relationships!" And I rush away, leaving my listener gawking, already rehearsing her or his report on Baumli's latest escapades. I, of course, am already anticipating what I've got to do about this new relationship--it may be a relationship with my latest research topic, a relationship with my car, or a relationship with a group of people at a philosophy meeting. Always, it seems, I quickly forget these baitings I do to other people, and then am surprised, even angered, when the rumors I myself began catch up with me.

My anger, however, is not so much the result of encountering the rumors; more, it results from the fact that people care so much about things in the first place. I tell you, this addiction to "relationships" has become so widespread as to constitute a veritable plague. It permeates--it defines--virtually every stratum of our society. During the '60s, our culture produced the "radical" generation. During the '70s, we had the "me" generation. Now, during the '80s, we have the "relationship" generation. It's a generation of people who haven't the energy to become impassioned about anything on their own. All they can do is look around themselves for people who will mirror them, people who are somehow remotely like themselves, i.e., single, or if married then on the look-out for further romantic attachments. These people, upon espying such a person, are heard to moan softly, "Ahhh, a potential relahshunshipp! You! And me too!" And they go slobbering and drooling in the direction of their potential mate, quivering uncontrollably at the prospect of bliss and eventual misery.

Such behavior, because it is so narcissistic, and so nullifying when it comes to human vitality, enrages me. At one time, it seemed that people entered into romantic attachments because they enjoyed them. Today, it seems that people pursue such attachments as though shopping for a prosthesis. Which, I suppose, is exactly what they are doing. They are cripples, every one of them. And I take great pleasure in doing everything I can to break their crutches.

One thing: I must admit that there is something about my own personality which causes so many people to come to me, talking about--complaining about--their "relationships." It seems that I can not but take pain seriously, and in the course of taking pain seriously, I evince a certain quotient of genuine compassion. Also, it seems that I have a certain clinical ability at analyzing people's problems with other people, and pronouncing judgement upon such interactions--judgements that evince both compassion and sound insight. Hence, people come to me, always wanting another handout--more of the same advice, more of the same attention, more ... more! It seems they have no one else they can go to for such things because everyone else is more interested in talking about their own "relationships" than somebody else's. The result is that this meal of compassion and understanding which I give to people is like being the first person to feed a stray dog. After that first meal, there is no way you will drive the starving animal away, even after it has filled its belly to what should be a healthy satiation.

What then happens to that compassion which initially was so genuinely given? Well; it becomes a confused compassion, perhaps a compassion tainted by malice. Compassion takes on a new task. It believes that more good is done people by breaking their crutches than by continuing to bind up their wounds.

11. The interest in Baumli's "real man" characteristics seems to me to have waned in this country; my friends, however, inform me that this is not the case, that it is just that I am oblivious to all the attention I continue to get. Be that as it may, my twin sister, Frances, has brought my attention to the fact that some of her female English friends, upon being shown the issue of The Aviary which I did last year, have displayed considerable interest in this facet of my personality. In fact, at a certain social gathering, Frances was telling her friends about me, and they comprised a short list of questions which they asked her to forward to me, hoping I would answer them. Now I must say that while it goes against my nature to brag talk



about my masculinity, I nevertheless have a weakness for indulging silly questions of the feminine ilk. Hence, I answered the list of questions Frances sent me. And I here, for your edification, record the questions and the answers I gave:

Question: "What's a real man's definition of a wimp?"

Answer: "A wimp is anyone who gets upset by being called a wimp."

Q: "Why would a real man do something feminine, like sit for hours and listen to classical music?"

A: "He wouldn't. A real man does something masculine, like sit for hours and listen to classical music. Aesthetic sensitivity, i.e., aesthetic appreciation, is not that distant from aesthetic creativity. And aesthetic creativity is directly proportional to high testosterone levels, which is to be found in massive quantity, circulating in the bloodstream of real men."



Q: "My husband tells me that only a real man knows how to double-clutch a truck on a hill. Is this true? And, what does 'double-clutch' mean anyway?"

A: "I thought every man knows how to shift a transmission by double-clutching. But maybe I'm very wrong; maybe only real men know how. As for what it means, ask your husband. Or isn't he a real man?"

Q: "Do real men get along well with children?"

A: "Of course. And children adore real men. Real men know what children like. For example, this real man gave his four-year-old nephew a tool-box for his birthday this year. It was his nephew's favorite gift."

Q: "How does a real man cook?"

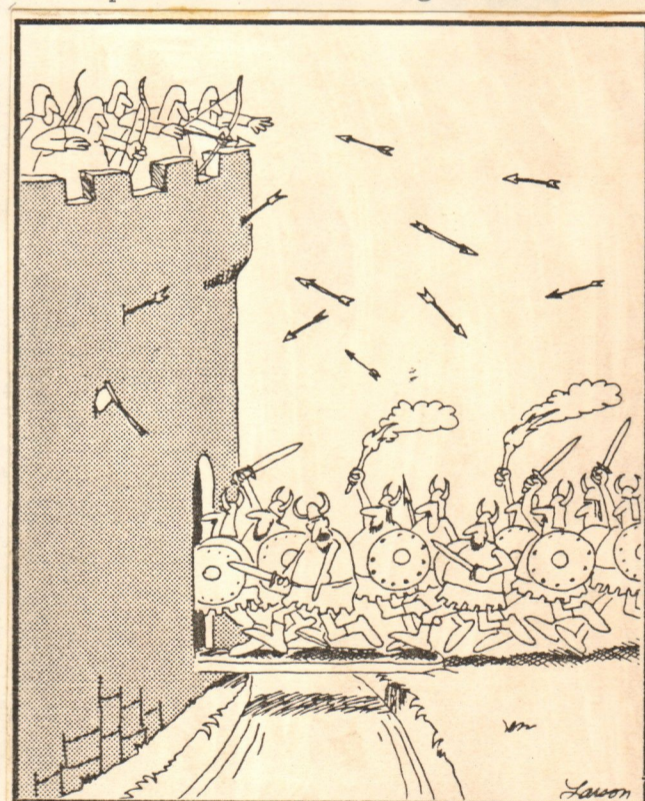
A: "Well; this is a question which requires an answer too lengthy for me to go in to. I would, however, recommend to you one of my biographies, entitled, Real Men Don't Eat Quiche by Bruce Feirstein. I will here comment, however, that when a real man cooks, he would never use something as pansy-ass as a pot-holder for removing a hot baking-dish from the oven. He uses his welder's gloves."

Q: "Is it true that real men are sensitive?"

A: "Yes, but not so sensitive that they can figure out the meaning of questions as vague as yours. But, to answer you very generally: Real men are sensitive in matters that are sexual, aesthetic, and sexual."

Q: "Is a real man generous? What kind of gifts does he give his lady friends?"

A: "A real man is very generous. He gives his lady friends gifts that are sensitive, i.e., aesthetic, etc."



"Oo! Goldfish, everyone! Goldfish!"

Q: "How long can a real man last?"

A: "Very long. But, to some extent, this does depend on how exciting (or unexciting) his partner is. Are you worried that you couldn't last that long?"

Q: "What is the single, most defining characteristic of a real man?"

A: "Let me put it this way. The second most defining characteristic of a real man is his refusal to answer sexually naive questions such as yours."

### \*\*NOTICES ABOUT FORTHCOMING EVENTS\*\*

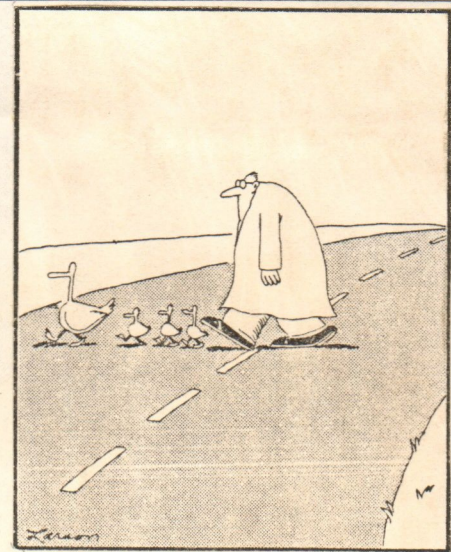
1. As many mourners sadly attest, there have been no chili parties over the last few years at Baumli's domicile. There have been various reasons for this, which I outlined in a previous issue of The Aviary. I am, however, planning to have a party during the fall of 1987, complete with the famous and unsurpassable Baumli chili. Why have I changed my mind? Well; I haven't really. I want to have a chili party, but of a different sort than were previous ones. Different, in that this one will be by invitation only. In this way, I hope to avoid the crowds of people who have shown up, partaken of the feast, and promptly left as soon as their bellies were full. I also



hope to avoid some of the problems, namely, the dogs-- and subsequent dog-fights--during which one little kid got hurt a few years ago. Also, I hopefully will be able to enjoy the party myself this time. In the past, what with all the preparatory work, and the crush of people attending, I have been so busy hosting the throngs that I have not been able to relax and enjoy either the food or myself as much as I want.

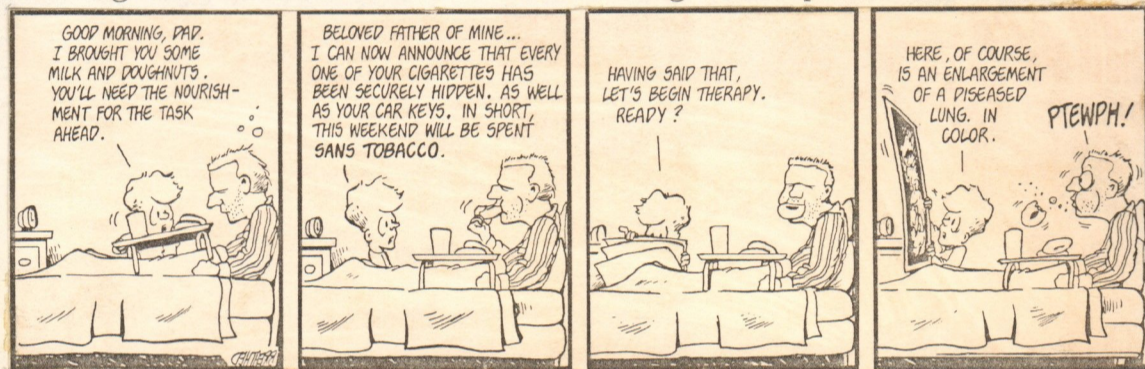
So ... sometime in fall of '87, there will be a chili party, date not yet determined. I will send out announcements when the time comes. And hopefully I will get announcements to all my friends and not forget anyone. If anyone believes I have forgotten them, they can call me up and ask. I'll be both honest and predictably generous.

However, if people show up uninvited, then they will be asked to leave. I hate to be this way, but frankly I still seethe when I remember that last party, when two vans pulled up in my front yard and disgorged no less than 15 people, none of whom I knew. Occupied with other matters, I did not have the time to inquire as to who they were; but then I saw them leave, after eating, in 45 minutes. I do not want this happening again.



When imprinting studies go awry

2. My attempts at avoiding smokers have been succeeding. People have become much more considerate about the matter, and I have become even more assertive about it. The issue is very simple: for some reason, when I am around cigarette smoke, I not only experience discomfort, I also find that my cranial nerves are significantly affected. And whereas this multiple sclerosis I have has damaged my cranial nerves primarily, I simply am not willing to expose myself to further debility because other people are addicted to tobacco.



I have become more sympathetic to those who are addicted. I understand that it is a terrible craving when they can not smoke, and I have seen people put themselves through hell trying to quit. Hence, I try not to preach and condemn. I simply ask that people keep the consequences of their addiction to their own bodies as much as possible.

One friend pointed out to me that part of my problem with smokers is that the average smoker tends to smoke more when around me than when with other people. This tendency, my friend claims, is because I tend to make people nervous, given my direct approach with people; and smokers, when nervous, smoke more. Well; maybe. But ... somehow this all doesn't make me feel very responsible for people's need to smoke. Perhaps I do make people uncomfortable at times with my personal demeanor and candor. But there are other ways of dealing with such emotions than damaging one's lungs.

Whereas I can more or less successfully avoid cigarette smoke when it is a question of individual people whom I can confront about it, avoiding the toxin in public places is not so easy. Abbe has expressed the concern that I seem to have become somewhat agoraphobic, given my revulsion of the stuff. Indeed it is true; I often avoid public places if I know I will be subjected to even the odor of cigarette smoke. As a result, I no longer visit crowded bars, I avoid meetings, I try not to step inside certain stores, and some restaurants I even avoid. This certainly is inconvenient for me, but then ... I would rather stay at home than soil my clothes and sully my body by exposing myself to such.

Be it proclaimed: Baumli's campaign against the use of nicotine will continue unabated.

3. As will my campaign against the evils of the dread television. I must say that I am pleased to see that more and more of my friends are finding it possible to live their lives and





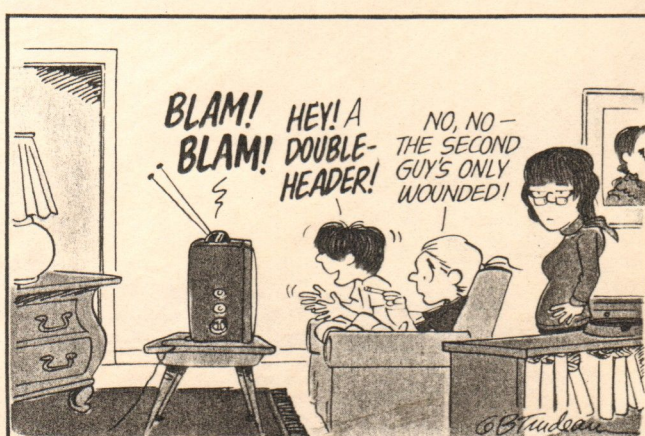
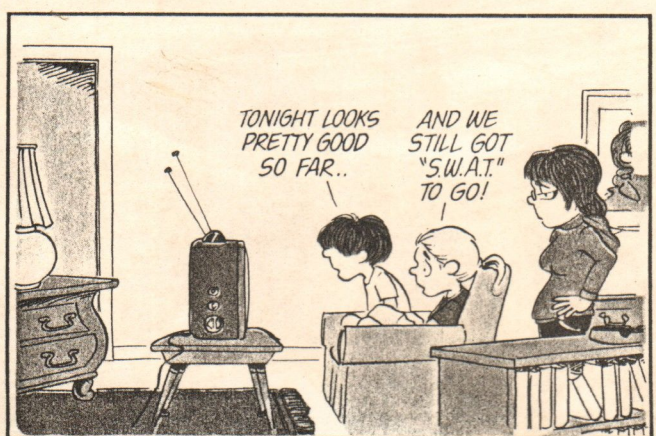
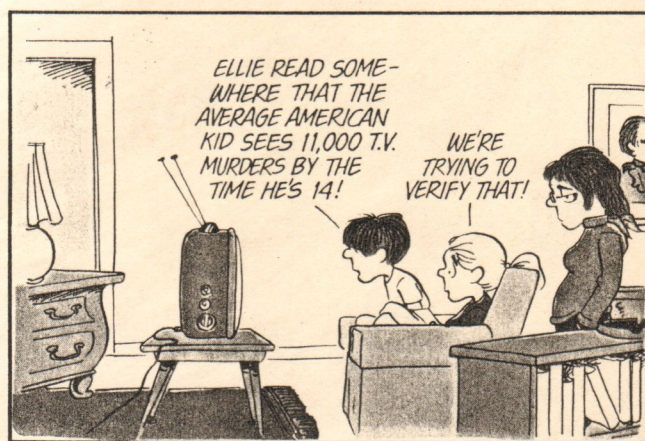
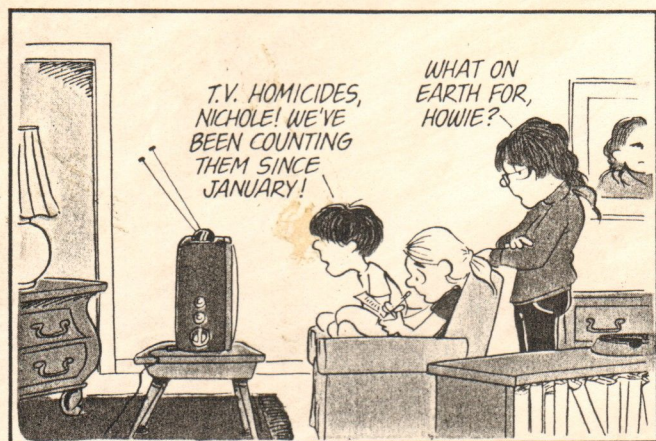
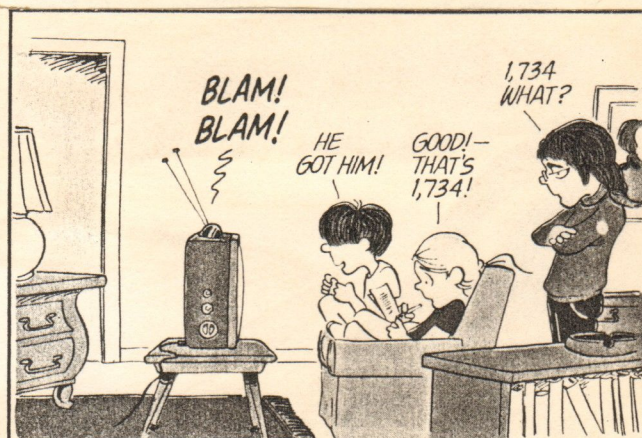
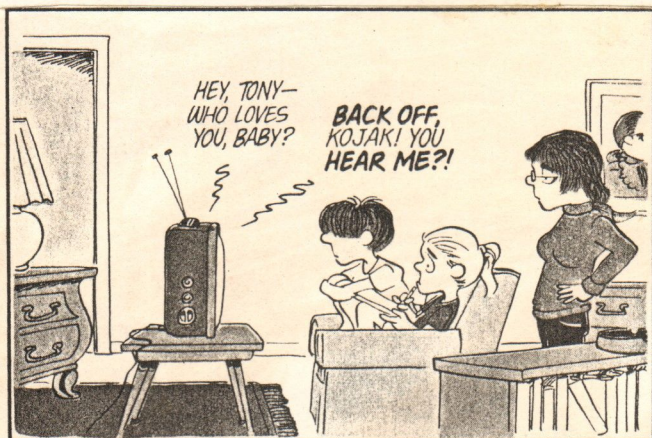
educate their children without needing this infernal tool. And I have come across even more references in literature to how abominably distasteful the stuff on television is. Note this statement by a 14-year-old black prostitute in One Hundred Dollar Misunderstanding by Robert Gover, p. 93:

He stop talkin, some Whitechick come on an she singin. She singin bout beer. She jes wrinkle up her face an singin like she got her some longgone boyfrien' made o'beer an her lil ol pussy jes a-creamin fer her beer boyfrien'. Then this other tee vee Whiteman come on an he say, Syen-tifick ree-serch perfect this beer this here Whitechick creamin her pussy bout.

Refreshing, isn't it, to know that someone can watch television and truly understand what is going on. Parody aside, this girl understood!

I will, this year, confine my invectives against television to public declamations. There will be no more shootings of the damn things. I did, early this year, mortalize a live one while it was turned on: One shot from my .44 magnum, at a distance of slightly more than one hundred yards--I hit it dead center, and it was dead. Problem was, since I left it on when I shot it, it shorted the circuit it was plugged in to, and not only tripped the breaker but also fried it. The replacement bill on that breaker came to more than fifty dollars. The second one I shot was already dead, and this one I shot from a distance of a bit less than fifty yards, simply because I was too lazy to walk any farther up the road. Again, a problem, this one a bit more threatening. I also hit this one dead center, but when the slug hit the glass, it shattered in all directions, including my direction. A small sliver of glass put a long and rather deep cut in my left cheek.

So ... enough with such games. Those damn things are dangerous even when they're dead!





## \*\* ON-GOING WORK \*\*

1. I have, as stated earlier, begun my ninth novel, and work on it is proceeding steadily. To have a lengthy, uninterrupted period of time during which I can work on it, I have been writing at night, which means that when I am able to sleep, I try and sleep late into the mornings. Fortunately, the plethora of visitors which used to plague me during early mornings has pretty much disappeared. I have asked people to call before coming out, and they have generally been courteous enough to comply with my wishes. On those occasional times when someone does come knocking, I usually do not even answer the door. As far as I'm concerned, they can come back another time after they have been considerate enough to call.

The country quietude remains a nice environment for writing, although this aspect of country living is starting to diminish. There is probably ten times as much traffic on my road as there was when I moved here 10½ years ago, and probably five times as much traffic as there was even two years ago. This seems to have been caused by the fact that several thousand acres of land just behind my property have been set aside as a "wildlife management area"--which is a low-key way of saying it is a hunting preserve. Hence, many hunters drive by, and there is the sound of their guns during some of the seasons. Plus, some of the farmers around here have bought property along my road, and they are constantly driving by with loud farm equipment. I resent this, but there is little I can do about it.



The Arnolds feign death until the Wagners, sensing the sudden awkwardness, are compelled to leave.

2. I continue work on my Phenomenology of Pseudo-Sentient Aeschatology; the quality remains good, and I am quite excited by what I have managed to work out philosophically. I do rather dread the eventual task of going back and revising all that material. As of this writing, the manuscript amounts to about two million words; it is in fairly good shape, and will require little revising, but still ... it is not a final draft, and will await my secondary labors.

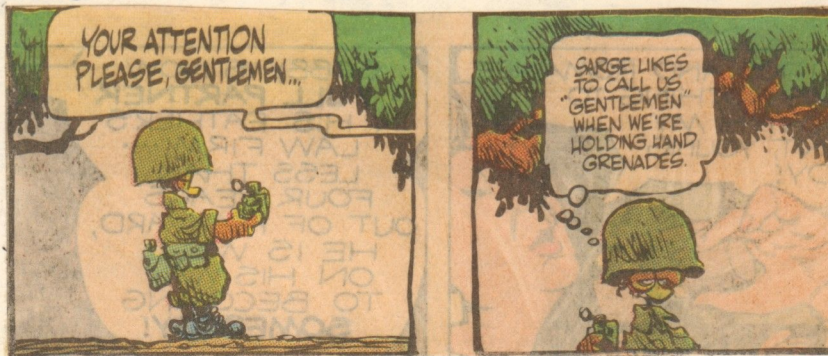
3. Sales of Men Freeing Men are stady, but limited. I will, as of 1987, continue doing a modest amount of promotional work for the book.

4. Also, in 1987, I will continue working as Missouri representative for The Coalition of Free Men. This entails a goodly amount of work. There are many phone calls from men who are facing a divorce and child-custody battle. They take up a great deal of my time.



Brain aerobics

5. I continue my work as Senior Associate Editor of Transitions. I can not say it is a highly rewarding job. I am good at editing, but I do not like doing it. I have tried to arrange for spreading my duties out among other people--forming an editorial collective of sorts. Thus far, the governing structure of The Coalition of Free Men has opposed this idea, saying that it is better to have all the work in the hands of a very few people. And I have not been overly successful at interesting other people in the task. They sense, perhaps from the desperate tone of my pleading, that editing Transitions is not an easy task.



6. Also, I continue translating Bergson's essays, letters, lectures. A very slow task, quite enjoyable, but having a gratification that, given the dimensions of my task, is deferred well into the future.



## READING FOR 1986

Looking back over the list of books I have read this last year, I am quite surprised at the number. I had thought the list would contain no more than 40; as it is, there are 109 on it. I'm not sure what this means. Perhaps it means that I read too much. Perhaps it suggests that the quality of what I read is in many ways lacking.

There were many books I attempted to read, but could not. For example, I again undertook Ulysses by James Joyce. This time I gave up in an hour. I simply could not find it interesting. And I am, I confess, rather ashamed of this. So many writers I do admire place this book among their favorites. And when I read about, or am told about, its general architectonic, I am most impressed. But then I begin reading and, very soon, it all seems too pointless. And as for the inner poetry, it just does not appeal to me as poetry.

I suspect that had I picked up this book during my early 20s, I would have loved it. But then, I have no more penned these words than the memory comes in that during my early 20s I attempted to read Joyce's Finnegan's Wake, and could not get through it. And I did read his Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and while I enjoyed the book, I was not overly impressed with it.

Perhaps the problem is me. I have never had that automatic love of the Irish tongue that comes so naturally to so many writers. Yeats' poetry, for example, pleases me only sporadically. I love his plays, but his short essays and stories scarcely keep my interest. Dylan Thomas' poetry has fine lines, but I seldom like his poems. His book of short stories, Adventures in the Skin Trade and Other Stories, is one of the best books I have ever read, but this year I began his, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog, read about one third of it, and gave up in disgust. This book I threw away, because I thought it so bad I didn't know anyone I would even feel okay about giving it to.

Perhaps admitting to these limitations when it comes to appreciating certain works of literature will make me somewhat more patient when it comes to tolerating other people's shortcomings with literature. Undoubtedly more toleration is in order. It seems that about once a year I indulge a totally uninhibited temper tantrum over what I perceive to be someone's inexcusable ignorance about literature. This year, it happened when a woman I know, who is actually very well-read and a lover of the Russian novel, upon hearing me hold forth about certain lengthy poems, told me that she had trouble understanding what I was talking about because she had never heard of either The Waste Land or of Song of Myself. My consequent eruption, I am ashamed to say, was quite conceited and cruel. More, I refused to quell my fury even when it should have been evident that I had trod too heavily on delicate feelings. Eventually, my anger abated, but I had been most unkind during my very selfish catharsis, and such arrogance, especially within the realm of art, is inexcusable.

Meanwhile (putting aside my obvious guilt-feelings about the above-mentioned matter) I am planning to read a good deal of American literature next year. Perhaps I shall even concentrate on Missouri writers. I admit to a certain regional pride when I consider some of the writers this state has produced. There are Tennessee Williams, T.S. Eliot, Mark Twain, Langston Hughes. Mark Twain is arguably the greatest of American writers. T.S. Eliot is arguably the greatest American poet, although, of course, the British have claim to him too. And Tennessee Williams is certainly one of the greatest dramatists of this century.

Well; it shall be an interesting year for reading. But, to return to 1986, I here list the best books I read:

1. Men's Studies: A Selected and Annotated Interdisciplinary Bibliography by Eugene R. August. This book I reviewed in several journals. It is slanted for the academic teacher, but nevertheless will appeal to any reader. It has a brilliant style, and thoroughly covers 591 different books on men. Each book is analyzed so carefully that each description reads like a thorough review. A must for any student of men and men's liberation.

2. The Frump by Francis Baumli. The second novel I wrote, penned in 17 days during the summer of 1969. My opinion about it wavers. Sometimes I think it is one of the two or three best books I've written. Other times I am convinced it is impossibly complex, obfuscated, esoteric.

3. The Plucked Chicken by Francis Baumli. Probably the best book I have written. I remain convinced of its quality, because each time I read it, I become so absorbed in the prose that I truly forget I am reading a book of my own making.

4. Sometimes a Great Notion by Ken Kesey. When people say to me, "When





will 'The Great American Novel' be written?" I reply, "It's already been done." Truly, I believe this novel by Kesey is the greatest novel ever to come out of this country, and (here my claim invites the barbs of many a critic) I believe it is as great a novel as any ever written by anyone. Yes, in asserting this, I am not forgetting the progeny of Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Miller, and company.

5. The Art of Grit: Ken Kesey's Fiction by M. Gilbert Porter. It is rare that I enjoy book-length literary criticism, so for me to count this book among the best I've read this last year surely bespeaks its quality. I appreciated Porter's book primarily for what it taught me about Kesey's Sometimes a Great Notion. Porter's calling that "voice" in the novel the Tutelary Spirit grounded me more firmly in Kesey's method, and I better understood its metaphysical undercurrents through Porter's insisting, "That circularity is important to the themes of intrareferential time and repetitious history is clear both from the structure of the novel and from clues in the epigraphs." (43) Porter avoids the temptation of many a literary critic to exhaust a reader (while neutering a novel) by applying theory to the novel's every detail. Instead, this critic draws his observations in broad strokes, and then has the humility to stand back, generously observing that, "All the key scenes in the novel are constructed with this [above circumscribed] kind of complexity and symmetry, and all of them reward detailed examination, but such analysis becomes tedious in large doses and, once the narrative method is understood, unnecessary." (59) The reader, under Porter's guidance, is raised above such tedium to the same echelon of understanding already occupied by the Tutelary Spirit, from where it can be seen that, "As it has done throughout the novel ... time circles back on itself, and in the tradition of the patterns traced by Heraclitus and Eliot, the end is in the beginning." (76) And the result is perceived as, "... a novel of great density and enormous impact, a novel whose every notion is realized in rich ... concretions from beginning to end." (78)

I, like many readers of Kesey, have been disappointed by his output since Sometimes a Great Notion. Porter addresses our disappointment by stating that, "... to insist that experimental work meet traditional standards or that all of a writer's work attain the same degree of excellence may be willful critical perversity." (89) Very well stated--with generosity and tact, Porter thus acknowledges the limitations of genius, while admonishing us to view those limitations with humble circumspection.

6. The Time of the Assassins: A Study of Rimbaud by Henry Miller. One of Miller's books which I had never before read. Miller, not usually one to expound at length upon another writer, here devoted an entire book to one of the greatest poetic geniuses of the last two centuries. I learned a great deal not only about Rimbaud, but also about the status of philosophy as an art in and of itself.

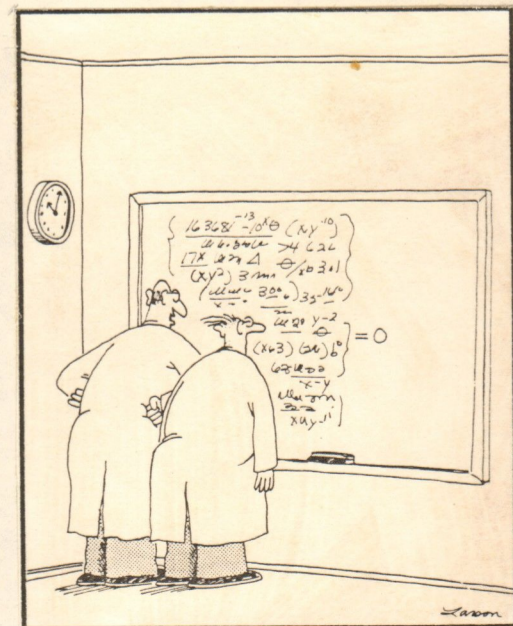
Truly, this is a wonderful book, and I highly recommend it. It is but one more reason as to why I believe H.V. Miller is the greatest writer of this century.

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I was careful to not begin books I felt unsure of, and quick to put down books that showed little promise. Hence, I experienced few disappointments in my reading this year; still, there were a few:

1. Journey to the End of the Night by Louis-Ferdinand Céline. This book I have never before read, and I have for a long while been wanting to get to it, given that so many great writers--Henry Miller and Charles Bukowski among them--have claimed to have been so influenced by this Frenchman. I have read part of this book in the French, but it is very difficult and unusual French; still, it was obvious to me that here was--is--a book of sheer genius.

Why, then, did this book disappoint? I rather suspect that the main problem was with the translation. The translator, Ralph Manheim, did not do the book justice. In fact, it seemed as though he could not avoid certain anal compulsions as he worked with the book. I had the impression that, before he began the actual translation, he spent a couple of years making a list of every cliché and whimsical expression of the English language he could think of. Then, with the fervor of an obsessive-compulsive personality, he proceeded to render Céline's argot such that every one of these expressions and clichés would make their way in to the translation. There were many paragraphs which



"No doubt about it, Ellington—we've mathematically expressed the purpose of the universe. Gad, how I love the thrill of scientific discovery!"



in the original French had power and a strange, razor-edge uniqueness, but in Manheim's translation, came out something like: "You'd have thought I'd lost my marbles, the way I moped along, feeling blue and down on my luck. Out of my head with worry, plunged into the depths of despair, convinced that the fates were against me, I was so down in the mouth that I didn't even notice the pouring rain. I knew I was at the end of my rope, I was the black sheep of all humanity, and all I could do was go off somewhere alone and cry in my beer. I was really down in the dumps."

Yes; in some places, the book was truly this bad.

So ... why did I read it? A bit compulsive myself, I suppose.

2. The Seven Storey Mountain by Thomas Merton. This book definitely takes the prize for being the most disappointing book. The manner of writing itself left much to be desired. Merton is a good wordist (I used my dictionary three or four times) but, except for some nice landscape descriptions, in which he does a good job of fusing the pastoral and spiritual, he is a very mediocre stylist.

But I quarrel with him about content primarily. The man has an obvious phobia of women. Although we get dozens of character portraits in the book, he never pens more than a sentence or two about a woman until page 342, when he is describing a Russian Baroness who, it seems, is sufficiently sanctified that he can write about her without fearing that he will sully his soul with something female.

This monk speaks so fervently of his love for God, and trusts so effervescently in God's love for him, yet, no where in his writings did I detect even an iota of genuine love for another human being. Playing missionary at home, he goes off to Harlam for a few days, there to be charitable. What he ends up doing is pontificating, as an authority of the Church, on the people there and their problems, his pious rhetoric revealing quite clearly that he is much more worried about these people's sins and impure souls than he is worried about their physical suffering or emotional anguish. Even his brother, but a few years younger, gets the same treatment when, after a long absence, he comes to visit Merton when the two of them are adults. Merton's very first words with his brother are to urge him to be baptized, and for the duration of the subsequent visit, it seems that the most intimacy the two can share is to talk about the Catholic version of Hebraic tribal law.

Overall, I found Merton to be bloodless and gutless when it comes to dealing with human beings, and smugly superior when it came to preachings about God and grace. Quick to impugn protestants, always ready to dismiss as "pagan" any religion of the East, I found his posturings to be utterly intolerable by the end of the book. More, I felt spiritually sullied, even spiritually raped, by the man's silly, scarcely concealed haughtiness. It was a spiritual rape characterized not by a strong penetration, but rather, by a flaccid fondling that ended with a feeble spurt of decayed, sterile semen being dribbled all over my soul and body. The result has been that, rather than being spiritually uplifted by his book, as I had hoped, I experience a revulsion, a spiritual loathing, whenever I even think of the man or his books.

This dead priest is possessed of a very mediocre intellect, which has neither familiarity with, nor capacity for, the higher reaches of theological probings. But he does conjoin a mild poetic flair with what intellect he does have, and these tame traits, I am sure, are what make him so palatable to a large number of lay readers.

3. Straw Dogs by Gordon M. Williams. I should, instead, have been reading Shakespeare, but I began this book because I had seen the movie version of it. It was, in my opinion, a very engaging movie. Feminists had done a lot of complaining about the rape scene in the movie, when basically, I had felt more horrified by all the brutal, gruesome deaths of the men. Even more horrific, to me, than the depicted deaths of all those men, was the fact that while the feminists were busy protesting that rape, not one of them thought about protesting the killing of men and the portrayal of men as beasts.

Something in the movie did, however, impress me; namely, the compassion of the main character for the mentally deranged criminal. I wanted to see if this compassion was well portrayed in the book. It was.

I must say that it has been a good many years since I have read a "horror thriller." This book was that. Halfway through the book, it was so upsetting I wanted it to be over, and read on, as fast as I could, finishing it in one sitting. By the end, after the terror and carnage were over, I had to take stock, in a more sober frame of mind, of how I felt about the book. I had to conclude that the book disgusted me. The main theme of the book is: civilized man, when confronted with danger of sufficient magnitude, can become primitive man who picks up club (in this case, a baseball bat) to protect himself, home, and family. Wife, who has been bored with the civilized man's sexual blandness, finds him newly attractive in his warrior role after he slaps her and beats brains and pulp out of several men. Man, after beating brains and pulp out of several men, finds newly discovered



sexual potency. Man puts club down and discovers hard-on. Man and wife (sic) fuck each other with hard-on. And they live with that hard-on happily ever after.

The author certainly, in this book, had a good command of the reader's emotions. If only he had exercised similar command of his language. Note the following sentence, on page 149: "He went on yelping and screaming and tearing at his clothes for several minutes, until the pain subsided into mere agony."

Mere agony?!?

Spare me.

This year, the same book shares the prizes for the "most offensive" book and for the "worst" book. It is, Peter Pecker's Guide to the Male Organ edited by Diane Arnold.

Mind you, I am not such a hypersensitized men's libber that I can not see the humor in such books. But it was so badly written, I doubt that even the most rabid misandric lesbian separatist feminist would have found it either funny or enjoyable.

As those who know me well can attest, I have continued my campaign against what I see to be the creeping illiteracy within this country. And it is comforting to know that some of our greatest writers are aligned with me in this attitude. Note the following, from pp. 287-288 of Views from a Window, Conversations with Gore Vidal (Vidal is speaking):

The [current] use of language really offends me deeply and terrifies me. The language has absolutely been so euphemized, so corrupted, so burgered that it just doesn't mean anything any more. It isn't just the politicians; it's any American with the "likes," the "ahhs," the "you knows," the inability to say anything. I noticed this particularly going around the colleges-- that the kids can't talk, they cannot arrange sentences in their heads, maybe because of ... television, God knows what the reasons are. They can't ask a question. Well, language is what defines intelligence. Language is what civilization is all about.

My sentiments exactly, although I believe that, unlike Vidal, I am not capable of a serene cynicism amidst my terror.

I often feel quite personally depressed by the lax language I hear all about me. And I am quite saddened by the difficulties encountered in attempting to communicate about the simplest matters, difficulties that come up for no other

(from The Columbia Daily Tribune, Sat., Feb. 15, 1986, p. 10.)

## Americans chastised for scientific illiteracy

Los Angeles Times

BALTIMORE — A substantial part of the U.S. population is "technologically illiterate" and encounters serious problems in everyday life, a prestigious conference was told yesterday.

Experts at the three-day National Technological Literacy Conference said that many people are unable to grasp the significance of issues such as nutrition, the safety of contraceptive devices and the recent space shuttle explosion — and therefore are unable to make informed decisions.

"We've let science become magic instead of hard technical decisions that everybody has to face," Rustum Roy, director of the Science, Technology and Society program at Pennsylvania State University, told a news conference. Too many people, he said, fail to connect science with everyday activities like buying appliances or voting on environmental issues.

"I guess you don't have to be a scientist or a technician to be able to vote," said Democratic Gov. Richard Lamm of Colorado. "But on the

other hand I sure do think that it is extremely important to the long-term health of democracy that people know those basic trends that are affecting our society."

The conference, organized by the National Science Foundation and Pennsylvania State University, released a national survey of 2,000 adults that shows:

- 70 percent do not understand radiation.
- Four of 10 persons think space rocket launchings change the weather and that some unidentified flying objects are actually visitors from other planets.
- More than 80 percent do not understand how telephones work.
- Three-fourths do not have a clear understanding of what computer software is.
- 72 percent do not understand the gross national product.

Jon Miller, director of the Public Opinion Laboratory at Northern Illinois University, which conducted the telephone survey, defined technological literacy as "an understanding of the application of science and engineering to

the solution of concrete problems."

On a scale of one to 10 the median score for people in the survey was 4.4. To be "literate," Miller said, a person should score nine or 10. Only 2 percent scored a nine or 10, and 16 percent scored two or lower, a figure the study said represents 28 million adults when the survey percentage is applied to the nation's entire adult population.

Calling the survey's results disappointing, Miller said that the people in the survey were questioned about items that "were not inherently difficult."

"It is not unreasonable to expect citizens of a modern democratic nation to understand terms like radiation or GNP," Miller said.

The study said that men scored "significantly higher" than women and that people younger than 25 and older than 65 were "significantly less likely" than those in middle years to be "technologically literate."

Several conference participants said that the inability to produce enough science and math teachers is a large part of the problem.

reason that because the people I try to communicate with are supremely ignorant of the most basic scientific (see article above), literary, artistic, and even mundane matters.

Ignorance is scarcely the entire problem, however; a great deal of it is nothing more than sheer laziness when it comes to language skills. You will recall the inveighing I last year did against those who are slothful in their verbal delivery of language. As it stands, I can not give any new examples of my friends using improper grammar or enunciation around me; since last year's epistle on the matter, they have been sufficiently warned that now they are virtually paranoid about the possibility of using slothful language. Now, when they speak to me, even if it is nothing more than a friendly greeting, their elocution is so precise, their delivery so self-conscious and formal, that they look like a young boy in grade-school, legs planted wide apart, befisted arms stiff at his sides, as he recites a poem by heart in front of his class. However, I do encounter many an example of lame diction in my interactions with the general public. To give but one example: A neighbor was doing some work for me early this year, and there were several times I had occasion to call him on the phone. His wife would answer, I would state who I am, and ask to speak to her husband. The first time this happened, upon asking to speak to him, she uttered a single



syllable which sounded like, "Smih." I loudly said, "What?" but she had already gone to get her husband. Several times, over the next two weeks, this exchange took place, my initial query about her husband answered by, "Smih," with no time for me to ask her what in all the English language she was either saying or parodying. Finally, after much confusion over the matter, I one day managed to detain her on the phone before asking to speak to her husband, and with some difficulty, managed to learn that, "Smih," was her lazy, peasant-like way of saying, "Just a minute." Now it seems quite obvious that this latter sentence is neither complicated nor does it require a great deal of intelligence or verbal facility to deliver. Yet, this woman was unable to pronounce those four modest syllables, and instead, could do no better than to compress and distort them into one ... what? I would call it a syllable, but does one apply such grammatical categories to repulsive-sounding bestial grunts?

Were it not bad enough that I encounter such verbal barbarisms in my daily dealings with people, I also have to contend with bad language in much of what I read. For example, in the August-September, 1986, issue of the Men's Studies Newsletter, page nine, there is a sentence by Joseph Pleck, Ph.D.:

Here are my reasons: In our current name, the term "task group" is off-putting to many people; just because it is unfamiliar, it makes people stop to try to figure out what it means, and they often miss the content that follows."

Dear reader, are you yet recovered from that so-called predicate adjective called "off-putting?!?" Were you able to follow what the writer penned after such verbal excrement, or were you instead encumbered by the very thing he was warning against; namely, that you would be so busy trying to figure out what (in this case) that word means--or does not mean--that you were oblivious to what followed?

Not only do I encounter such vulgar prose in the periodicals that cross my desk, I actually receive letters, addressed to me personally, that are just as bad. As editor of Transitions, I received, from a Mr. Don Hyrum Richards, a letter offering his services as a writer. I list the following excerpt, from his letter dated August 18, 1986:

Would you be interested in featuring a running byline? I haven't seen your magazine yet, but I think it would be fun as hell to stir the shit a bit with a running commentary from month to month. I am articulate as hell and can churn out as much or as little as you like, and fast.

"Articulate as hell?!?" "Stir the shit?!?" "Churn out?" And he even had the gall to admit that he had never even seen our magazine!

But how am I to expect good writing in the small men's liberation journals when even prestigious, scholarly journals commit such atrocities? I suspect you are aware, my intelligent reader, that The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism is certainly the most respected journal of its kind in this country, and is generally considered one of the three most important journals that deal with aesthetics in the entire world. But, in an article entitled, "Wit and Imagination in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics" by M.A. Goldberg, Volume XVI, No.4 (June 1958), this fellow, on pages 507-508, penned the following labyrinth:

Though Clarence DeWitt Thorpe has cogently argued that Hutchenson's divergences from Shaftesbury tend to align him more with Locke and Addison, despite the purported aim of An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue to explain and defend Shaftesbury's principles, Thorpe's emphasis upon similitudes and his ignoring of differentiae tend to obscure Hutchenson's significant divergences, those which made possible the mediating position of the Scottish School relative to the rationalism of the neo-Platonists and the increasing mechanism of the Lockian empiricists."

Surely I do not have to here affect undue modesty, in stating that I am not an unintelligent man. And when I read the essay from which the above sentence (sic) is taken, I had been doing a good deal of reading on the topic being considered. Yet, I swear that although I have read the above sentence several dozen times, I can not hold in mind its entire intent at a single reading. I assure you that the entire essay was as bad as this one sentence, and although I forced myself to read it, thinking that surely, at some point, it would all begin making sense--become coherent thought--I must concede that I never was able to understand what this scholar was trying to tell the world.

One should surely have the right to expect an author, dealing with a topic in aesthetics, to have a certain command of the English language. But no; instead, the prestigious JAAC presents us with language that not only is bereft of good style, it also is impossibly obfuscated.

This sin, however, is committed not only by minor authors. I this year



attempted to read Beethoven the Creator by Romain Rolland, who certainly is considered one of the most discerning art critics of all time, and in this book also I found a maze of dense language that would submit to neither patient study nor to sharp intellect. I soon gave up on the book, but I did read the chapter entitled, "The Appassionata." Note the following prose on page 32 (the chapters were numbered individually):

But when we look a little closer, and no longer at the soul, that is invisible, but at the body (and the body, in truth, is also the soul, but the soul made visible and palpable), at the living substance (and for him who can see to the core, the spirit that governs each organism is inscribed upon it), we soon discover in the body of these two sonatas the transformations the spirit of Beethoven has undergone, and we realise how greatly he has grown.

It is actually a nice idea, but so terribly written that struggling through the prose for the referent is scarcely worth the trouble.

As if Rolland's prose itself were not bad enough, he had to further encumber the reader with a plenitude of footnotes that kept the mind staggering back and forth, from the middle of the chapter to the end, and back again, and then back and forth several times to rediscover where one was before going to the footnotes, and ... do I make my point? Truly--truly, I do not exaggerate--there were instances when individual sentences had four or five footnotes each, with each of the footnotes being longer than the sentence to which it referred. And the footnotes--sometimes they contained valuable information, often not; but even when they did contain valuable information, that information would have been better conveyed had it been incorporated into the original sentence, instead of banished to the end of the chapter.

It might be fun to illustrate such self-serving pedantry with an example of one of those sentences with its plentiful offspring, but I do not care to devote the space that would be required for such a task. However, I will give one example--a sentence which contains two footnotes--to illustrate why I believe the information could have, i.e., should have, been contained in the original sentence. The following, from page 27:

Let us look at a few of the types. After the two pure reveries of Op.2, Nos.1 and 3 (the adagios in F major and E major), in which we have the first flowering of the young man's tenderness, his first poetic plaint, we get the fine largo of the sonata dedicated to Countess Babette de Keglevics (Op.7),<sup>(139)</sup> with its great, serious, firmly drawn melody,--frank and healthy, without a touch of society insipidity or of equivocal sentiment about it; of all the Beethoven meditations this is the one that, while not concealing anything of itself, is accessible to everyone.<sup>(140)</sup>

(I list the footnotes as follows):

<sup>139</sup> "The beloved" of that period (1797).

<sup>140</sup> The majority of artists of today, who, by reaction against the rising democracy out of which they have come, aim at an aristocratic detachment, will not admit the validity of this "public word." I have had occasion to explain what I mean by it when speaking of the Eroica. I believe that if the first condition of greatness is to have a great soul, l'alma sdegnosa that parsimoniously reserves itself for itself and its imitators--Narcisse and Corydon!--is doomed to sterility. The greatest artists--Handel, Bach, Beethoven--thought for themselves and spoke for all; their veracious works appeal to large communities.

Truly atrocious, is it not? Why, I ask you, could not the entirety of that first footnote quite easily have been written directly into the initial sentence? As for that second footnote, I contend that too much of it is self-serving, intellectual exhibitionism. Intellectual exhibitionism I have nothing against, if it is done with a note of humor--tongue-in-cheek, so to speak--but I have no patience with it when I am trying to garner information about a scholarly topic. Indeed, there is valuable information in that second footnote, but it could have been written in to the conclusion of that sentence it straddles, and made for a telling point about the democracy of the sublime, instead of necessitating a grubbing search by the committed reader who felt obligated to find and read the footnotes.

Rolland committed an unforgivable absurdity at the end of this chapter when, amidst a salvo of footnotes, he had the audacity to pen a very lengthy footnote to a footnote. Suppose one of his obsequious admirers had encouraged Rolland in this practice; imagine to what absurd extent it might have been taken. First, a footnote to a footnote; then, three footnotes in that footnote to a footnote, and a couple of footnotes in the latest footnote, and then a footnote referring to a different place in the text where the topic is mentioned, with footnotes appended to that different place in the text, and footnotes appended to those footnotes. It would have made for a



maze that would have stymied even a Daedalus, so befuddling him as to make it impossible for him to escape with his waxen wings.

As for myself, I have simply resolved to never read Rolland again. His reputation in aesthetics will have to be upheld by those whose intellects are lesser than mine.

Over this last year, it is becoming apparent to me that many of the problems people have with using the English language result not only from pedantic obfuscation, but also from a general tendency among people to use words wrongly--so often as to obscure the meaning of certain words. I suppose that, some years ago, I had pretty much resigned myself to the fact that people will 99% of the time use the word, "moot," to mean the exact opposite of what it does mean. (Look it up, friends, if you don't know.) But now, over the last year, I have on several occasions witnessed people using the word "peruse," to mean the very opposite of what it means. For example, I will get a letter from someone in which they say, "I didn't have a chance to really read that book; I just perused it for a couple of minutes and then put it aside." I even was beginning to think that maybe these people had some kind of sublime intellectual capacity I could not even imagine, so on a couple of occasions, I asked them to define the word. No; the problem was not with any limitations of my imagination, the problem was with their vocabulary. Ghastly, is it not, to think that people use the word "peruse" to mean that they simply skim over a book quickly instead of studying it carefully?

As if using words incorrectly were not bad enough, people also seem bent upon formulating new words--strange abominations, twisted into a shape that will express their crippled intellects. Now realize, I have nothing against creative minds formulating an exciting or endearing neologism; but these repugnant, hybrid offspring that, like stale vomit, gush from the slack mouths of blathering fools--I can not abide them.

Shall I give a few examples? I shall begin with an adjective: "conflictual." Yes; there are people who actually use this word, as in the sentence, "Two-year-olds are very conflictual creatures."

Would you rather sample a few nouns? Well then: have you heard of "read" used as a noun? Here is an example I came across: "That book was a most difficult read."

Another coined aberration is, "comparable," used, for example, as, "That religion has a lot of comparables to this one." Then there is "generativity," which surely takes the prize for being most repulsive. Note the following sentence, taken from a business periodical: "The Generativity Committee reported that Mr. Williams's [sic!] generativity had increased significantly since last year." By "generativity," they meant "productivity."

The problem with these pseudologisms is most pronounced with verbs, and it is here that a plethora of repugnant examples exist. But before I proceed to display a few of these monsters, allow me to here speculate as to why it is verbs seem to be the most common repository for such verbal inanities.

As you are well aware, in most forms of progressive aphasia, memory loss proceeds in predictable sequence. First, proper nouns are difficult to recall. Next, common nouns are forgotten. Then, adjectives can not be remembered. But verbs remain until the very last--not only are they the last to be forgotten, they seldom are forgotten entirely until the person becomes completely demented. I ask of you--I wonder--if it is possible that our entire culture is suffering from a kind of progressive aphasia, occasioned by a general atrophying of intellectual capabilities, a diminution of emotional capacity, and a general torpor when it comes to physical or bodily passions. Is it possible that the average person in this country--this culture, intellectually bored and emotionally besotted though he may be, nevertheless, in an attempt to rescue as much of his muddled intellectual functioning as he can, is trying to pour the entire language--adjectives, nouns both proper and common, adverbs--into a new mold, i.e., convert all those words into verbs, which are sturdier and stronger repositories for the meaning, memory, and usage of language. In this way, even as minds fade, stupidity's masks fall away, and consciousness flickers out, there will remain, as long as possible, some semblance of verbal function among these poor, wasted human beings.

Perhaps my theory seems too exotic, but I suspect you will give it more credence, once you have pondered the following examples of verbal cachexia.

I must begin with a few words about the word, "interface," which in the last two or three years, has come to be used as a verb. Allow me to say that, some years ago, I finally extended certain courtesies to the word, "network," and began tolerating those who use it as a verb, when originally it was, and should have remained, a noun only. But the word, "interface?" Dear friend and loyal correspondent, allow me to remind you that this word was born from

### 🌀 The Bard Said It First 🌀

Words and phrases that first appeared in Shakespeare:

*accommodation, antipathy, dire, dislocate, emulate, indistinguishable, modest, obscene, pedant, premeditated, prodigious, reliance, submerged...It's Greek to me; more sinned against than sinning; vanish into thin air; play fast and loose; a tower of strength; stand on ceremony; the long and short of it; the game is up; the truth will out; dead as a door-nail; the play's the thing; more in sorrow than anger; a laughing stock; without rhyme or reason.*



the profound disquisitions on phenomenology written by Edmund Husserl himself. "Interface" is not a verb, never was, never ~~will~~ should be, and I, for one, will not tolerate people saying things like, "Let's interface our two secretaries and see if that makes our offices run more smoothly."

And then there is the noun, "access," which has been converted to a verb, as in, "Let's access what he thinks." And this, uttered by a professor: "You know; I really enjoy mentoring students." Also, uttered by a different professor, "I haven't had time to census my students yet." I heard a secretary say, "Let's reference that file and see what it might tell us." A women's liberationist, trying her best to sound profound, said, "This theory has merit, but first it needs to be contextualized." And, written by a seasoned journalist in a health magazine, there was the following atrocity: "Fathers who average as few as two drinks a day may be significantly downsizing the birth of their offspring." A clerk in a library said, "I'll input this request and see what they send back." A clinical psychologist, describing himself and his latest occasion for passion, committed two sacrileges of the ilk I describe in the following two sentences that were said, all in one gushing breath: "Well; we've been transitioning lately. As a matter of fact, we've started relationshiping." And then there was the following sentence in Nurturing News (July '86), page 9: "In abstract terms it takes both the positive and negative Earth Father and Sky Father functions to potentiate wholeness in a man just as it takes both the positive and negative Sky Mother and Earth Mother functions to potentiate wholeness in a woman." As for that word, "potentiate," the nearest I could figure out was that he meant, "to bring from potentiality to actuality," or, to put it more tersely, "to actualize." And to think, this writer is a medical doctor--the hallowed "M.D." after his name--who graduated from Harvard. Of course, you may wonder what I was doing reading drivel such as the above. As a matter of fact, I was not reading it; I was skimming it, and was brought up short by the dual presence of that thing called, "potentiate."

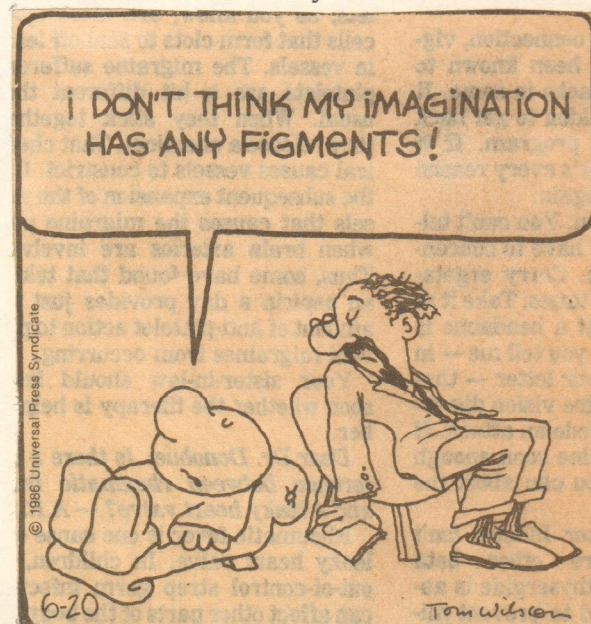
Do you begin to understand my revulsion? Here we have, "Interface," "access," "mentoring," "census," "reference," "contextualize," "downsizing," "input," "transitioning," "relationshiping." (This latter, while not only not a verb, is also not even derived from any word that could be called a noun; but then, I have said enough on this subject elsewhere.) And lest we forget, "potentiate." All of these being words, or pseudo-words, used improperly--insultingly--as verbs, which they are not.

I had thought, as a humorous and pedagogic exercise, to compose a brief story, amounting to no more than a paragraph, which would utilize all of the above-mentioned grotesqueries. Truly, I had intended to do it, but upon halting my writing here long enough to give a moment's thought to what this little story might be, I experienced such a sense of nausea that I now find I am unable to compose it. I also, in looking over the last few paragraphs I have written, am aware that dabbling in these pathogens causes a certain deterioration in my own prosaic skill. I must leave them be, and try to regain my literary equilibrium.

No small number of my friends have, over this last year, tried to convince me that I would achieve not only greater literary equilibrium, but also significant respite from the toils that writing involves, if I would but discard my typewriter and use a word processor. Well, my friends have not made a convert of me; but since they do not flag in their efforts at changing my habits, perhaps it would behoove me to here explain.

Contrary to what some friends claim, my reticence about using a word processor does not mean that I am technophobic (their term). There is no phobia involved at all. In fact, I rather like the things. The games are fun. The graphics are entertaining. But I soon lose interest, as I do with most toys. My objections to using a computer, i.e., word processor, are based strictly on matters of personal preference, my uncertainty as to whether it would ease the labor of my writing, and my observations of other people who use (and in my opinion, mis-use) their machines. I will do my best to explain.

First of all, it seems to me that people who use word-processors have a very difficult time ever moving beyond the "toy" stage with them. They indeed are fun, one can play with them for hours, and, in the course of such play, one can become quite addicted to the screen. Such addictions may be quite harmless in and of themselves, but I have witnessed too many people who, so enamored with the play, never get on to their work. This idle attitude is encouraged, I believe, by the fact that the computer's speed, its imposing screen, its sense of magic, tend to give it a false importance.





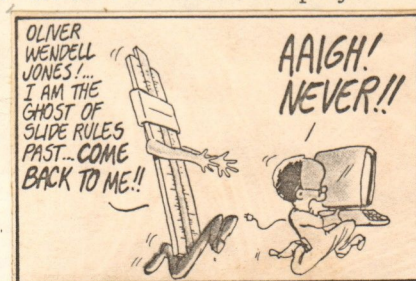
It is very easy to continue playing with the toy, believing that one is doing something quite important, simply because the toy is so impressive. I have seen this happen on many occasions when people hook their computer into what they call a modum link. People can, via telephone, hook their computers into a central link; they then can place written messages on that link, to which others can respond. I have read over the material of several of these modums, and without exception, at least 95% of the information therein has, for me, no value whatsoever. The thinking is sloppy, the style of writing discordant and vague. Yet, those who use these modums become so attached to them. I point out to these people that, were this information in a book, and not on a computer screen, they would find it utterly uninteresting, without merit, and they would put it aside immediately. They usually agree with my observation, and then ... before they come up with a good reason as to why they yet want to use their modum, they are distracted by that big screen, and with face aglow and fingers atwitching, they go back to their toy.

Another difficulty I have with computers is that people like to use them as show-'n-tell opportunities. I swear, it seems that every time someone gets a new computer, a new program, or discovers something new they can do with their machine, they feel a compulsion to sit down and show me, running through every detail, all the while exclaiming at the wonder of it all and gloating at their new-found capabilities. I do think such exhibitionistic tendencies are largely motivated by generosity; these people want to show me what their computers will do, and they want me to be convinced that my own life would be made easier if I had one of these things too. All well and fine. But the show-'n-tell games go on too long, and are repeated too often, for me not to suspect that the computer has become something of an artificial, and addictive, "conversation-piece," rather than something which can be enjoyed at will (sic), and shared in terms of the audience's desires and not the shower's needs only. When I find myself becoming especially irritated by this show-'n-tell proclivity, I tend to try understanding it better by considering how, or whether, I might be tempted to do the same in such a situation. But usually I can not very well imagine how I would behave in such a setting, and the best way I can think about it is by analogy. I think of this IBM Correcting Selectric II typewriter I have. Now, as far as typewriters go, this is a pretty impressive machine. It's fast, it puts a sharp impression on the paper, and it uses these little typing balls that have different type faces: LIKE THIS, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and back to this. I give but seven examples here; I could have gone on, since I have about 15 balls for the machine. But I do not care to bore my reader with such things, and I have no personal need to show the typewriter off; my only reason for giving the examples, herein, is to demonstrate that I could become quite exhibitionistic with this machine, just as my computer friends do with their computers, if I wanted to. But I don't have such desires. This machine is rather impressive, with all these typefaces--all I have to do is snap one ball out and snap another in--but I haven't ever asked anyone to sit down and see what my 15 balls will do.

Ah well; I suppose I should just give up trying to understand.

My main objection to word processors, however, is that I think they do not always work very well as a tool. I base this statement primarily on the behavior I have observed among those who use them as tools.

The facility of the computer--the ability of the programmer to move paragraphs around, make corrections on the screen, and such--seem to promote a certain sloppiness of writing. People are aware that corrections can be made easily, so they are not very careful when they type that initial information. I have heard more than one programmer call this, "the splash it down method." They believe that the best way to use a word processor is to just try and get everything that's on their mind, with regard to the topic at hand, into the computer. Once there, they can breathe a sigh of relief, and then set to work arranging the material into coherent order. Well; this simply is not my method. I believe in trying to put things down right the first time. If corrections then are in order, so be it; but for me, it is in that initial inspirational flux that my ideas have the most power, and if that inspiration can not be captured in an orderly manner while it is still with me, then later attempts at trying to "re-order" it will never succeed in capturing it. Hence, the "splash it down method" is simply too haphazard a way for me to work. Of course, my friends have told me that, since I try to put it down so orderly in the first place, the computer will not prevent me from doing this; I can be careful in my initial writing, and then use the computer to make corrections. This also does not work for me. There is something about the computer which puts me into an uncertain frame of mind, and I end up writing as sloppily as I would if I were writing by splashing down. So, I have to end up going back and making all those corrections on the computer; and as it is, I am fast enough at the typewriter that I can type a second draft faster than even an experienced programmer can correct a draft with a computer.





Another objection I have to using computers as tools is that they make people too impatient. I see this in my friends who are computer programmers, and I have experienced it myself when I use computers. The computer quickly spoils the writer. Things happen so quickly, that when they don't, one becomes upset. Truly, I have found myself (and observed other people doing the same) pounding the table when I had to wait even 1½ seconds for something to come up on the computer screen. It has taken me too many years to stalk this virtue and begin taking it on to so quickly jeopardize my grasp of it by using computers.

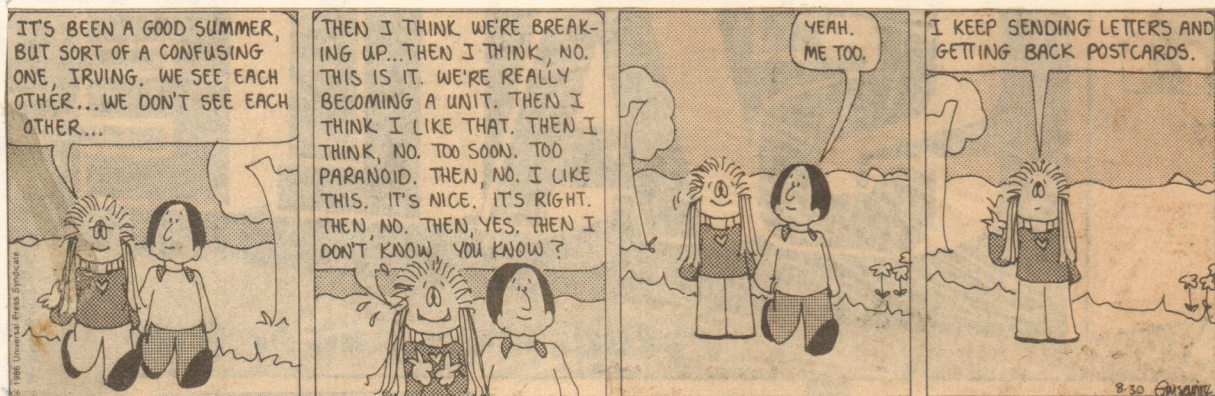
One of the biggest difficulties I have with computers is that I have seen them turn people into poor writers. In my extensive editing work, I have opportunity to work with writers who use typewriters and writers who use computers; I have also worked with many writers who have, in the course of our working relationship, switched from typewriter to word processor. While I have not exactly kept count, I would say that about 90% of the writers who switch from typewriter to computer fall down in writing quality. Many of them, it seems, become so engrossed with their computers as toys that they stop writing, or virtually stop. Others continue to write, but they do not write as well--as editor I get the feeling that I have the end result of a "splash it down method" essay. I have on my hands a muddy puddle, and not a product of inspiration. There is another difference I see between the writers who use typewriters and those who use computers, and here the difference is even more pronounced. I would say that, in about 95% of the cases I encounter as editor, there are more errors in the finished manuscript done by word-processors. There are more big errors--entire phrases, sentences, or even paragraphs left out. And there are even more spelling errors. I know that these computer people tell me about their word-checkers--built in dictionaries that check for spelling errors so that the writer can easily correct them. But for some reason, even with these word-checkers, they do not catch the errors as well as those using typewriters do. Again, I suspect that it is a matter of impatience and sloppiness born of the "splash it down method." They are moving so fast, the computer seems to be doing so much for them, that they just haven't the ability to stop and apply themselves carefully when caution and close attention are in order.

But, put very simply, my main objection to using a word processor is quite personal. I like the feel of the typewriter to which I am accustomed. Furthermore, I know that trying to make changes, with one's writing tools, is a difficult and even dangerous thing. Years ago, I did all my writing with pen. Switching from pen to typewriter was very difficult, and for some time I could scarcely write. At the time, I was using a manual portable, and when some years later I realized that I needed to switch to an electric typewriter, I again experienced a good deal of difficulty. In fact, there is no question but that switching from manual typewriter to electric was much more difficult than switching from pen to manual typewriter. I rather suspect that it would be much, much more difficult for me to make a successful transition from an electric typewriter to a word processor, and I simply do not want to jeopardize my writing by doing that, especially considering that I am already in the midst of writing two books. Artisans become attached to their tools, and it is not easy to change tools without changing the nature of one's end product. This is why Tennessee Williams used an old, sticking, portable manual typewriter right up to his death. He was accustomed to it, and did not want to change. The situation is similar with me. I like the feel of this typewriter. By "feel" I refer to the fact that its motor is attached to the ball by a mechanical linkage, which makes it faster. That brief, but noticeable, pause between key-stroke and key-strike that characterizes the "daisy-wheel" electric typewriters, as well as word processors, drives me crazy. I begin to understand why players of the pipe organ rebelled against electric-pulse linkage between the keys and the pipes, and insisted on organ makers returning to the direct, mechanical tracker action.

There is another personal reason as to why I do not like computers, and do not like to see other people switching to them. I refer to the fact that when a computer is their writing tool, they seem much

less likely to sit down and compose personal letters. I suppose this is somewhat understandable. A computer is, of course, quite impersonal. Moreover, if one is going to write a simple letter on a word processor, there is that sense of grandeur--of doing something big and important--which a computer tends to evoke. Not a very conducive frame of mind for writing a personal, intimate letter.

I protest this limitation which computers seem to impose because I





get upset about the dearth of personal letters that people write, or rather, the many that they seem to be unable to write. This upset, I know, comes partly from the fact that I feel so plagued by the

It's been my great misfortune that for most of my life I had to be the letter writer. Whether I wrote to a man friend or a woman I was deeply in love with, the responses were usually tardy and never what I expected. Which only led me to write more letters. The true letter writer seems to be a thing of the past.

Book of Friends by Henry Miller, pp. 90-91.

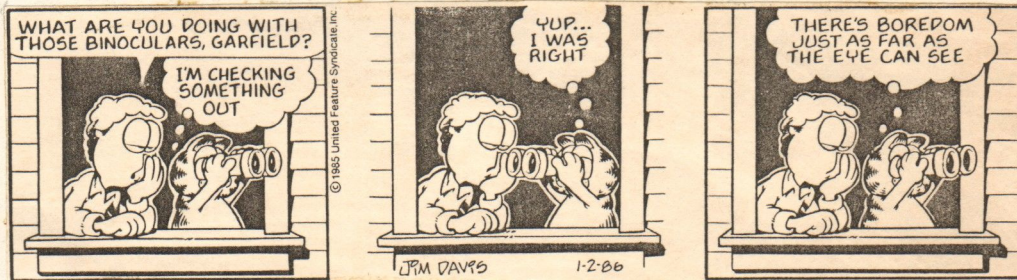
phone. I receive so many phone calls that, quite often, I simply wish those people would write instead of calling. But even aside from this irritation, I am rather astounded by the inability of people to sit down and pen a simple letter to a friend. Truly, I know people who have many years of college behind them, and admit that they have not written a personal letter to any friend in years. Moreover, they admit that they really don't know how to; they sit down to write, and they feel quite helpless before the task they have set themselves. The result, for some people, is that they live in a house in which there may be no writing material, maybe but one functioning ink-pen, whereabouts unknown, and likely not a single postage stamp about.

"Write you a letter?" they exclaim, when I prod them about it. "Why, uh, that's something ... that people used to do, in, uh, the old days. I'd just as soon pick up the phone, you know, and besides," here their eyes shift about, as though they are searching for a convenient distraction--like, say, a television screen. They then lapse into silence, their mind seems to wander a bit, and thereupon the topic seems to be either deliberately ignored or forgotten.

### \*\*\*MOVIES AND SUCH\*\*\*

This year was a lean one for movies. I tend to stay away because they so often disappoint. They are so bad--dull, formulaic, depending on violence and the usual

romantic rituals to inject brief moments of excitement. I seldom walk out of a movie, once I have paid to get in to a theatre, but I did walk out of The Gods Must Be Crazy. I do not remember its rating, but it was one Abbe and I felt safe taking Dacia to see. And it had been recommended to us by



no small number of people, including an enthusiastic contingent of peaceniks. But when, during the first fifteen minutes of the movie, a dozen or more men were machine-gunned down, and the helicopter full of people was blown up, Abbe and I decided that we and Dacia had had enough. We left. Later, people told us that if we had just stayed a little while longer, the violence would have ended and an entirely different feeling would have resulted from having seen the movie. Well, I have been told this sort of thing before, with regard to reading books, seeing movies, and other things. If something has this bad a beginning, then I am interested in neither the middle nor the end.

I did manage to take in six movies during the year. They were:

1. Apr. 23: An Officer and a Gentleman. I had seen this one before, and went back because a fellow named Shepherd Bliss, a member of the mytho-poetic faction of the men's movement, had tried to tell me that the sergeant in there had some strong masculine traits that, despite certain shortcomings, are admirable and imitable. Well, I tried to see the movie from this perspective. But what I saw was a sergeant who was pathologically sadistic, and forced recruits to sing songs about napalming babies, along with the ditty, "fucked 98 'til his balls turned blue, backed up, jacked off, and fucked the other two," I figured that if Professor Bliss needs this kind of role model to feel like a man, then he has serious problems, both between his ears and between his legs.

2. June 13: The Karate Kid. This one had many faults: rather poor acting, and a story line in places that made me feel like I was reading fortunes from fortune cookies. I did, however, very much appreciate the interaction between the older man and the boy; the implicit message about what a boy needs from a father, or father-figure, was very well done. The presence of the female bimbo, however, was quite unnecessary. She detracted from the movie, just as her sister female bimbos do from life.

3. June 27: The Karate Kid II. They barely managed to scrape together a plot for this one. I was sorry I took Dacia to see it. A rather typical martial arts movie: In the name of pretending to extol nonviolence, it just so happens in the movie that many violent scenes have to be played out. Again, they put in a female bimbo to try and sharpen the edge of ... what? Violence? Sex? All very stale--and when you mix stale violence with stale sex, you get something that is very sour and smells bad.

4. Aug. 27: Stand by Me. A very mediocre movie, but with a sweet sense of youthful



innocence that left me with a good feeling. As for that narrator, whose voice was dubbed in at the beginning and end, and who was portrayed at the end, typing the story line of the movie into a word processor, I never could see the meaning, much less value, of that. The movie does, however, hold a certain poignancy for me. I liked seeing the lives of young boys explored. And I saw the movie with Chris Griffith, my friend who was killed a few days later on Sept. 9; this was our last evening together, and hence I remember the movie with this mixture of pleasure and sadness about Chris' friendship.

5. Sept. 20: Nothing in Common. The two main characters did their best, but they were not able to bring it off. The movie's manic opening scene was overdone, and everything went downhill after that. In this movie, there were two female bimbos--lots of stale sex was alluded to. Stale sex and bad odors, scarcely relieved by the diabetic father's septic feet.

6. Nov. 15: Kiss of the Spider Woman. At last, I got to see one good movie this year. Powerful acting, a very believable story, and a beautiful rendition of friendship between men. The didactic tone came across powerfully, without at all sounding overbearing or preachy. A movie worth seeing again. Dacia came away from this one very deeply moved, with many a question about South America, human nature, and her relationship with us. It was so nice to see a movie with her in which, although there was violence, it was not portrayed garishly, but rather, was presented in a way that could allow aesthetic rendering and subsequent moral aggrandizement.

\*\*\*\*\*PORTRAITS BY AN EXHIBITIONIST\*\*\*\*\*

In last year's Aviary, I complained about the fact that, in Columbia, Missouri, there is no high-quality, outside sculpture. I am glad to say that this situation has changed somewhat. Now, in front of the University's main library, there is one worthy piece. Entitled, Yielding Spire, it was finished in 1984, and is done by John Brough Miller. A most worthy piece of art it is. Now, if only some of that other junk on display around the city would be torn down, and something as good put in its place.

I also mentioned, last year, the display of sculpture by the local, Rocheport resident, Larry Young. He had another display, this time in the medical center in Columbia. Truly, he is a powerful artist, and I predict that he one day will have a considerable reputation, not only in this country but all over the world. In this display, his Messiah, a 22" bronze, was my favorite, with his Genesis, a 25" bronze, running a close second. Should you ever have a chance to see this artist's work, do not pass it by.

This year, there was time for only three visits to art galleries. The first was to The Nelson Gallery in Kansas City, Missouri. Those of you who do not live in Missouri, and have never visited the Nelson, should be made aware that the Nelson is considered to be one of the ten best galleries in the U.S. It well deserves this reputation (just as The St. Louis Symphony also well deserves its reputation as one of the ten best symphony orchestras in this country) and is worth many a visit.

I this year stayed away from some of the works I usually spend time with, so that I might give more attention to some of the other great pieces that are there. Boucher being one of my favorite painters, his works took up a good deal of my time. His pastel, Venus with Cupid is simple, charming, lush; and his Seated Male Nude has a power one does not usually associate with Boucher's playful attitude on canvas. His painting, Jupiter in the Guise of Diana, and the Nymph Callisto, which is one of his masterpieces, was not in the gallery, but

rather, was on loan for the special Boucher exhibit which we would see later in the year at Detroit. Two paintings I had never before given time to were very appealing: Adoration of the Shepherds (1632) by Abraham von Diepenbeek, and Saint Sebastian (1600) by Joachim Anthonisz Wtewael. I shall not here enter upon a description of the two paintings, but rather, content myself with listing them so that, for my friends who do spend much time in art galleries, they may be kept in mind for a future viewing. I could not spend a day in the gallery without devoting some time to Rembrandt's Youth with a



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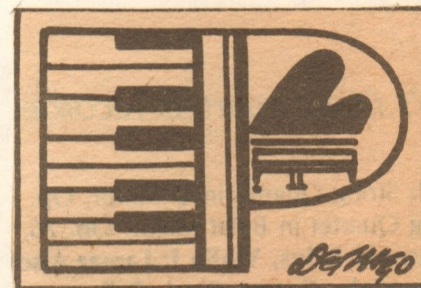


Black Cap (1666); this, in my opinion, is one of Rembrandt's finest portraits of a young man.

Usually, when visiting the Nelson, I do not spend much time with the modern art that is there. This time, however, I decided to make sure I took in the Van Gogh and Miró. My appreciation of Van Gogh, I confess, is sporadic; some times I love him and can not get enough of him, and other times he does not interest me at all. During this visit, I did spend a long while with his The Olive Grove (1889); he has, of course, done many paintings on this subject, but this painting in Kansas City is one of his finest in this genre. And Miró's Women at Sunset I loved. It has his usual humor, with an unusually strong note of serious penetration. Among the moderns, I also enjoyed Richard Estes' Central Savings (1975); I had always before considered this a shallow piece, but I have come to better see its value--even if such value is more in terms of technique and experiment with light, than with something which concerns the depths of human emotion.

Among the moderns, I most enjoyed Marcel Duchamp's bronze, Marcel Duchamp Cast Alive. I am quite familiar with Duchamp's paintings, many of which I do not like, but this piece of sculpture displays incredible skill, not only in composition but also in the casting. The gallery is worth traveling to just for this one piece alone.

The Chicago Art Institute, which we visited in June, is obviously a very great gallery, but so much of it was closed that we both felt disappointed. Moreover, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra was on vacation, so there was no access to this great promulgator of art. Add to these disappointments the fact that, on our first night in Chicago, a woman, who postured as someone who knows a great deal about art, gave us directions to a restaurant by saying, "Just walk down the street until you come to the building that has a big painting that looks like it's by Latooz-Latrek, and you'll know you're there,"--as I say, add this, and you can see why I set out on my experience of Chicago's aesthetic comestibles with great trepidation. When we did find that restaurant (the painting did not look like it had been done by Toulouse-Lautrec), I was not in the best of moods for enjoying myself.



However, things were looking up when, the next day, we visited the Art Institute. In fact, it may be fortunate that most of the European and classical sections were closed; otherwise, I probably would never have seen some of the very great modern art I did end up viewing.

One of the most impressive things about this gallery, when first going into the modern section, is their extensive collection of Picasso paintings. While I am one of those heretics who is not overly impressed by Picasso, I nevertheless was quite impressed by certain of his paintings, most notably the simple, Three Nude Women and Bust of a Man, and the very massive, Mother and Child that was done in 1921. I did not like his, The Old Guitarist, which seems to be everyone's favorite, but his very popular, Girl with Pitcher done in 1906 did excite me very much.

And those wonderful paintings by Miró! That man's ability to, using such abstract figures, laugh on canvas, never ceases to amaze me. His Women of Oct. 1934 is very complex, and one of the finest of his paintings I have ever seen; in this genre there also was his, Women and Birds in Front of the Sun, which is equally delightful. I also liked his more serious Portrait of a Woman (Juanita Obrador) which was done in 1918; here is a discerning psychological study, with a specificity of emotion not usually found in his paintings.

Also very pleasant was the opportunity to view several paintings by Georgie O'Keefe. I had never taken much notice of this woman's paintings, until I met Abbe, who is especially enamored by her work. I must admit that O'Keefe's, The Black Place, had as great an impact on me as any piece of modern art I have seen in a long while.

What paintings impressed me the most? Those by Salvadore Dali. Note that when I talk about modern art, make comparisons and such, I usually leave Dali out of such discourse. I do not think of him as a modern artist, because I do not consider him to be part of an age or a trend. He is, in my opinion, already one of the classical artists. He is unquestionably the greatest painter of this century, and he truly is beyond compare; therefore, any attempt at analyzing or even describing his work in terms of other modern artists always sounds hollow, seems futile.

I was most taken by his, Imaginary Portrait of Lautréamont at Age 19 Obtained by the Paranoid-Critical Method, which was done in 1937. This portrait--so much white, and that face, so small in the midst of the surrounding color tones on the canvas; truly, a definitive statement about Lautréamont--starkly ascetic, yet lavishly wanton. Two other wonderful paintings by Dali are in this gallery: a self-portrait entitled, The Image Disappears, and his 1937 Inventions of the Monsters.

What else? In trying to describe it, I feel like a little kid, exclaiming aloud over and over. There was some wonderful sculpture. Sleeping Muse, a bronze sculpture done by Constantin Brancus in 1910, is a most engaging work, but not nearly so great as his truly unique, transcultural piece



entitled, La Negresse Blanche. This piece, truly, is one of the best works of modern sculpture I have ever seen. It is rivaled, however, by another piece in this same gallery, this one by Jean Ipousteguy; a huge piece, done in gold-colored metal, entitled, La Femme au Bain, it truly has world-class quality. There were other wonderful things. I loved Maurice de Vlaminck's Houses at Chatou. And while I was not particularly aroused by Marc Chagall's 1977 stained glass windows entitled, The American Windows, I was enthralled by his painting, White Crucifixion, which I had never before seen. His 1911 Naissance was also very appealing, although not as unique as White Crucifixion. I could go on and on: Portrait of Max Hermann-Neisse by Ludwig Meidner, Isaku Yanaihara done by Alberto Giacometti in 1956, The Rapidity of Sleep by Yves Tanguy. And ... then there was the splendid collection of French lithographs, with notable works such as Delacroix's La Consultation, and ... but no. I must stop. I risk boring my reader, and I also risk plunging into a deep depression, which not infrequently happens when I contemplate paintings I have previously seen, and begin mourning the fact that I cannot now see them.

After the visit to Chicago, Abbe and I departed for Detroit, where we hoped to hear the symphony, along with visiting The Detroit Institute of Arts. The Detroit Symphony Orchestra was not on vacation, but it gave only one performance while we were there, it would have been difficult getting to the hall, and the program did not particularly appeal; hence, we did not attend. But the gallery was wonderful--an even more enjoyable experience than was the Chicago Art Institute. I was especially impressed with their Italian collection. Carlo Crivelli's Deposition of Christ (1470) was a compendium of unbelievably powerful portraits, and Sassetta's The Agony in the Garden, in terms of composition alone, held me transfixed for half an hour. Niccolo Renieri's The Repentant Magdalene is perhaps the best painting I have ever seen on this subject, and Salvator Rosa's Self-Portrait was a most pleasing treat, given that it was so perfectly done, and given that nearly everything I had before seen of his was in the genre of either landscape, or the grotesque ... or, of course, both. Guido Reni's The Angel Appearing to St. Jerome was an unusually tender rendition of a male figure--strength, warmth, piety, beauty in the course of ageing. And Tiepolo's St. Joseph and the Christ Child showed deep emotion in the father-child relationship, which of course pleased me immensely.

I had not looked forward to seeing the Diego Rivera murals, because usually I do not particularly enjoy this medium. But these murals made a convert of me. They were much more than mere political pamphlet-eering; the individual frames, as well as the mural as a whole, succeeded as very powerful, and simply beautiful, art. I was especially impressed with Miró's Woman and Bird in the Night, and also with Picasso's The Melancholy Woman. And one of my favorite paintings in the gallery was Renoir's Seated Bather which he spent three years painting. This is one of his late works, which reflect the Raphael influence and the effects of his time spent in Rome. The figure--a young woman--is absolutely massive; she appears to weigh ten tons, yet she blends with the atmosphere, while yet being framed by the clearly defined limits of the background. In his work, Renoir probed the limits of impressionism nearly as far as Monet did; yet, he journeyed that far while yet carrying with him the structure and solidity of the classicists. Truly, this painting, except for those in the Boucher exhibit, was probably the one I enjoyed the most in this gallery.



This special Boucher exhibit--here I must curb myself mightily, or I shall proceed to write a dozen pages out of sheer enthusiasm! It was the first Boucher exhibit ever put together. It appeared first in New York, then went to Detroit--where we saw it--and from there would go to Paris. I truly am a fortunate man that I was able to see this exhibit; it was the chance of a lifetime, and I did not want to pass it up, given that Boucher is one of my very favorite painters.

My favorite painting in the entire exhibit was his The Toilet of Venus, which usually hangs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art--a gallery, I am sad to say, that I have never visited. This painting--there is no way to describe it, except to say that it is utter perfection. The composition is flawless, and the woman's body is exquisitely beautiful.

I should point out that another painting closely rivals The Toilet of Venus as being the best. I refer to the smaller painting which usually hangs at The Nelson Gallery in Kansas City, namely, the Jupiter in the Guise of Diana and the Nymph Callisto. This latter painting, while not so perfect as the former, nevertheless has a voluptuousness that is scarcely equaled by anything else Boucher did.

While I have long admired the few Boucher paintings I have seen, and have spent hours with reproductions of his paintings, I was able to see some things in this exhibit that I had never before realized about Boucher. For example, as much as he idealizes and adorns, the man is nevertheless very much a realist in some most startling ways. For instance, in the first



painting he did--i.e., the Resnick version--of Leda and the Swan, he very carefully painted stretch marks on the woman's very voluptuous bottom. And in more than one instance, Boucher breaks with a strong tradition in painting, and portrays the woman as an overt seducer of men. And, speaking of men, I especially like the way Boucher paints the male figure. Allow me to register a gripe here. I have read more than one critic who claims that Boucher can not paint the male figure, and that he has this lacking because he preferred to paint women. I readily admit that he seemed to prefer painting women; one need only look at the subject-matter of most of his paintings to discern that. But this preference in no way entails a difficulty with the male figure. In fact, I find him to be one of the most successful painters who has ever lived when it comes to painting the male nude. If one must apply criteria of success, one would have to say that his idealization of the female nude sometimes caused him to paint women that were almost too much more than human. Not so with men. He does not encumber them with excessive musculature, as did Michelangelo. And he does not

portray them as stern, proud figures as Titian usually (not always) did. Rather, Boucher's men have bodies which look pretty much the way men's bodies actually appear. They are somewhat idealized, the musculature is somewhat emphasized, but then, this usually happens in paintings by any painter of nearly any period. He certainly does not fail with the male figure, if he does not idealize it more than he does; and I see no evidence whatsoever to substantiate the charge, so often levied against him, that he was careless or uninterested in his male figures. Usually I avoid those tours that are given in art galleries, but since I am always wanting to learn more about Boucher, I decided to follow the little old lady around as she gave her rehearsed speech. She, too, commented at length about Boucher's mediocre rendering of the male figure. At the end of her tour, I asked her why she believed this, and invited her to illustrate this assertion in detail. She merely replied that this is something all art critics believe, further asserted that it is quite obvious from looking at any one of his paintings, and she held up a reproduction she was carrying of Venus Requesting Vulcan for Arms for Aeneas. I protested that of the two central figures in the painting, Vulcan is by far the more realistic, in terms of posture, skin tone, musculature, organization of flesh in terms of musculature and fat, and in terms of the figure's gesture. This, I could point out to anyone, and truly, unless they are enamored by the white tones of Venus' skin, I do not believe they can say the female figure is in any way superior to the male figure, whether their criteria be personal or aesthetic. After my rather uninhibited statement upon this matter, the woman frowned as though she herself were unsure of her recent thesis, but then her attention was distracted by a question from someone else, and we both let the matter drop. I could have strengthened my point with other examples. In Aurora and Cephalus, the male figure is as well done as is the female figure. And the two central male figures in St. Peter Attempting to Walk on the Waters are given more facial specificity than are any women Boucher has painted; furthermore, they are painted with a grand mixture of corporeal emotion--the bodies are powerful, heroic, and yet there is a sense of weary ageing flesh in St. Peter that is rarely captured by any other painter. As for those who would judge Boucher's success with the male figure strictly in terms of how well he can idealize a male nude, then I would direct them to Juno Asking Aeolus to Release the Winds, which was painted one year before his death, when his eyesight had already deteriorated significantly. Here, Aeolus has an heroic stature that, unlike Michelangelo's figures, whose musculature sometimes borders on the grotesque, is truly splendid, godlike, sexually appealing, and wrought with complexity of emotion.

But I have said enough about Boucher's male figures. How can I avoid saying too much about his female figures? I could go on at great length about



THE TOILET OF VENUS



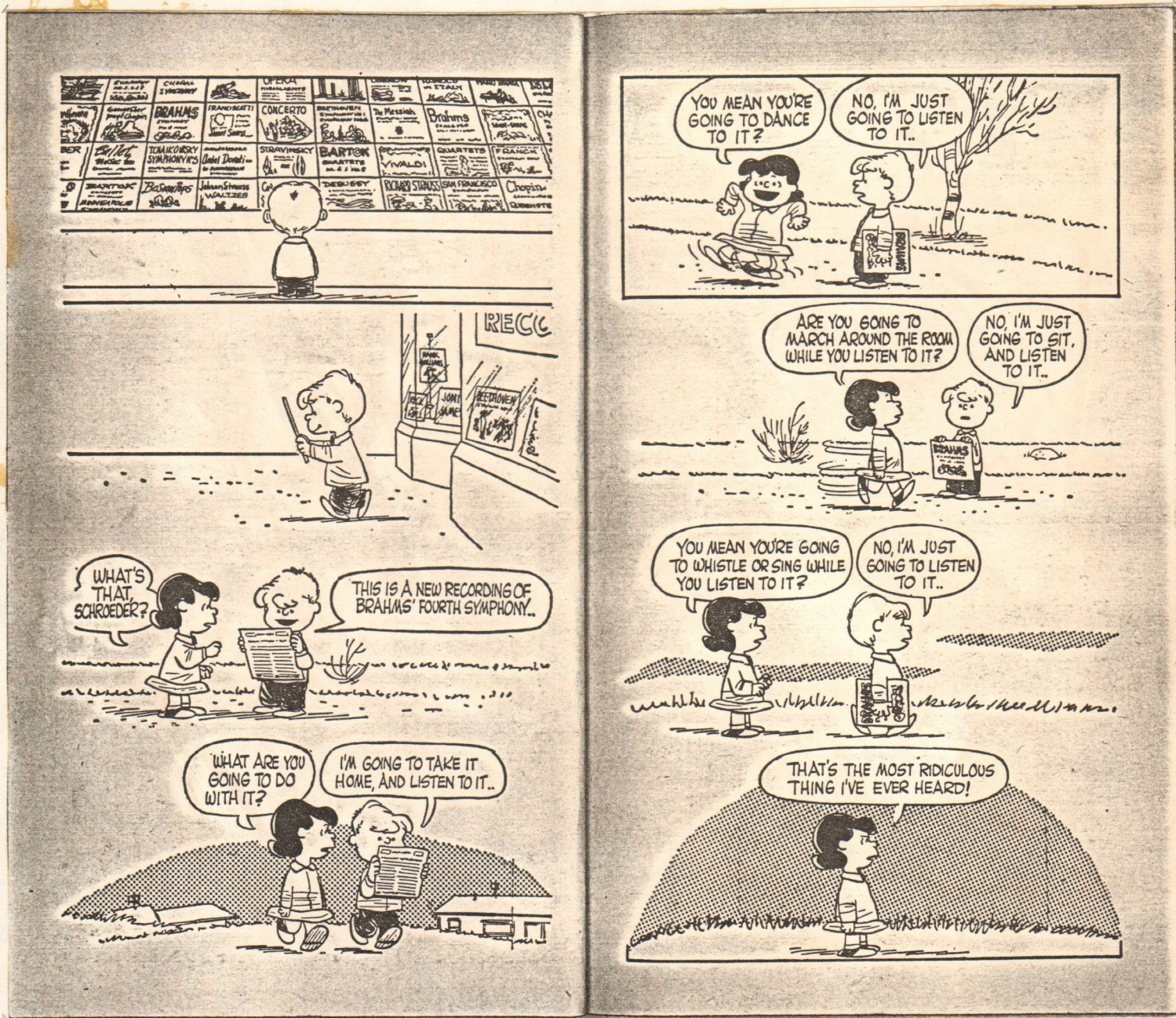
that almost unbearably erotic, The Dark-Haired Odalisque, but I fear that my language would offend the ~~prudent~~ prudish sensibilities of certain of my readers, so I shall content myself with here stating that I am sure Boucher did this painting's model a service with not only his paint brush, but also with less artificial, although certainly no less refined, sacramental ministrations of the primordial genesis of his aesthetic temperament and creative genius.

Both the 1756 Portrait of Mme de Pompadour and the 1759 Portrait of Mme Bergeret(?) were included in the showing, and these, of course, were powerful additions to the exhibit. I obtained a large poster of the 1756 Portrait of Mme de Pompadour which I still have not framed, but which will one day adorn a wall in my home.

I would like to say more about this exhibit, but really, I must stop writing. I resolved that I would keep this section brief.

Many art critics were drawn to this exhibit when it was in New York, and no small number of articles were written about Boucher during this year. One, published in The Smithsonian, was in my opinion too critical. I penned a letter to the editors, so lengthy that it essentially comprises a short article, to protest their article and its author's attitude. This letter, which I wrote, is to be found later in this edition of The Aviary, in the articles section. I think you will find it somewhat edifying.

\*\*\*\*\*MUSICAL MUSINGS\*\*\*\*\*



1986 was a good year for enjoying music. This was aided by the fact that early in the year, I obtained a good set of headphones for my stereo system; hence, I have been able to listen to music more freely, and not always confine my listening time to those hours when other members of the household are not busy with their own things. This year, without really intending to, I have concentrated somewhat on the instrumentalists, and have come to appreciate them a good deal more. I spent much time with Schumann, Liszt, and Chopin; these three composers I have always liked, but only this last year have I come to love them. I am sorry to say that I cannot claim the same for Rachmaninoff. The fault is mine, I know; but I simply



have never been able to enjoy more than a handful of his works.

I have been aided, this last year, in my appreciation of the instrumentalists by a couple of things. Early in the year, I purchased a 12 album set of records entitled, "The Collected Piano Music of Chopin." Having this much music, composed by such a consummate instrumentalist, on hand has occasioned many an opportune listening. Moreover, I have concentrated somewhat on listening to interpretations of the various instrumentalists by Vladimir Ashkenazy. I love his touch--very light, rather like Wilhelm Kempff's, although Ashkenazy's touch gets more powerful as he gets older. Listening to so much Chopin, and concentrating on the interpretations of Ashkenazy, bring me closer to understanding this group of people.

I want to herein mention what was, for me, a most profound musical experience this last year; I speak of hearing, for the first time in my life, Haydn's work entitled, The Seven Last Words of Christ. The version I have is for string quartet, and my recording is done by the Via Nova Quartet. Truly, this is one of the most beautiful pieces of music I have ever heard. Haydn also arranged it for orchestra, and as oratorio, but I have thus far avoided purchasing such versions. I believe I am somewhat worried that such versions will not have the sweet purity to which I have been initiated, and I am avoiding any possibility of disappointment that might result from different arrangements.

Another nice experience this year has been listening to more of Prokofiev's piano music. I now have all of his solo piano music, recorded by Sandor. While Sandor's interpretations are not as good as many other players, at least he has recorded the entire repertoire, and thus it is available. I have come to better understand the unique, defining characteristic of Prokofiev's piano music: except for the last two piano sonatas, it is primarily percussive--not at all of a "singing" quality like Chopin's. That seventh sonata for solo piano, especially as it is played by Richter, is the most percussive thing ever written for piano--even more percussive than any of Bartok's pieces.

I am not, of course, in any way claiming that a percussive quality is superior, or in any way to be preferred, to a more "singing" quality. I merely comment on, and register my appreciation of, someone who has been able to take that quality and carry it so far.

If I were pressed to try and make a qualitative judgement about these two aspects of piano playing, I would have to say that I most enjoy the piano when the two proclivities are combined. Mozart, for example, composed music that moves back and forth between the two tendencies--sometimes it is highly percussive, but always there is injected a singing quality. Beethoven, however, best combines the two approaches. Some of his marches, of course, are primarily percussive; and certain passages of his piano music, e.g., in the first and second concerti, are primarily of a singing quality. However, in all of his sonatas, the Diabelli Variations, and in virtually all of his music for piano, the quality is a perfect blend--the song hammers, the hammering has the timbre of rich voicing.

But I must not go on about Beethoven; my subject was Prokofiev.

Allow me, as an aside, to make one comment about Prokofiev which interests me very much. I have never paid much attention to such things in the past, but one day I noticed that Prokofiev, in his early photos, has such a strong resemblance to Henry Miller (the greatest writer of this century!) as he appears in his photos. I could not obtain a photo of Miller, which would reproduce well, so I am not able to put one in here; but I have above put in two photos of Prokofiev, and would advise my many friends, who are fans of H.V. Miller, to pick up their books which contain photos of Miller, and note the very striking resemblance.

One other musical interest, or odyssey, which has occupied me this last year has been to extend somewhat, to the extent I can, the reputation of the pianist Walter Klien. I am not so enamored with his playing that I believe that he can play any piece of music better than any other pianist alive. But if I were pressed to state who I think is the greatest living pianist, I believe that, with all due deference to the likes of Sviatoslav Richter, Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli, Alicia de Larrocha, and Vladimir Horowitz, I would have to select none other than Walter Klien as the greatest. I admit that this is not a commonly held opinion. Klien has not, compared to many of the best concert pianists, done all that much recording. And there are even a few appreciators of the classical piano who do not know his name.





As to why he does not have a greater reputation, I have no idea. I have been told that he is a rather simple man, and although somewhat reserved, not at all haughty. I wonder if perhaps he does not have the capacity, as do some musicians, to snub the snobs, and instead, feels keenly their judgements, and quails from the sometimes aggressive and always competitive atmosphere that characterizes the performing milieu in classical music. I wondered this especially when I heard a live broadcast, on June 4th of 1986, of Walter Klien doing his debut with the New York Philharmonic. With Erich Leinsdorf wielding the baton, they performed Stravinsky's Concerto for Piano and Wind Orchestra. Of course, Stravinsky is not usually in Klien's repertoire, but his playing was unblievablely masterful. The wind orchestra did a very fine job, and, of course, in this piece, the piano does not come in for some time. The injection of quality was magical when Klien's resounding power announced itself. The playing was instantaneously projected to the echelons of the great, the perfect, the stunningly memorable. Yet, at the end of this performance, the announcer made it a point to comment that Leinsdorf moved into the orchestra, congratulating the wind players and shaking their hands, while giving but token recognition to Klien himself. Truly, this was an insult--more, it was an artistic abomination, that Leinsdorf should so openly snub a man whose mastery is so much greater than his.

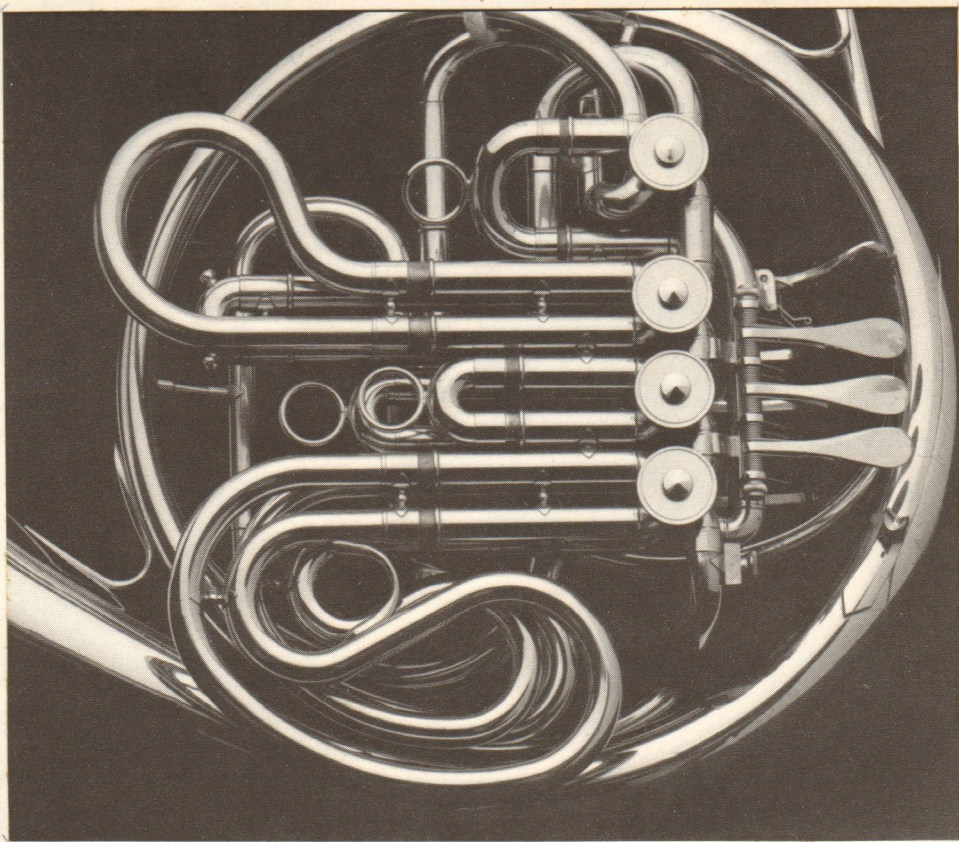
Tell me, my dear friends, if you have any information on the matter-- why is it that Walter Klien has not a greater reputation, and is even this openly snubbed, by his fellow artists? My penchant for justice makes me want to know.

Meanwhile, this next year, I may to some extent embark on another part of a musical odyssey that began long ago. Namely, to see what can be done about arousing more interest in classical music among the smaller cities in this country. I know, of course, that there are many appreciators of classical music in our country; what I want are more creators. More people composing, and more people playing, classical music. It saddens me to think that every small village of 19th century Germany had a small orchestra of its own, but in this country, it is rare for a city of even 100,000 people to have its own orchestra playing classical music. Instead of hearing about Brahms, Bach, Rossini, one hears about the senile kazoo band at the fanciest rest home in town.

I certainly do not expect the smaller cities to mount first-class orchestras; but I am not one of those who believe that unless an orchestra shows promise of being first-rate before it is even put together, then it should never be formed in the first place. On the contrary, I firmly believe that when the spirit of classical music pervades more strata of our society, is to be found in more cities, being played by younger people and older people, then the potential exists for even more first-rate orchestras, and more world-class orchestras. Furthermore, there then exist more appreciators of classical music; and when there is a goodly population of such appreciators, then the world of classical music--listening, playing, composing--is healthier and more vital.

This coming year, I certainly hope to attend more concerts than I did in 1986; as it is, I only attended two this last year. Still, both were very good and quite memorable.

The first one I attended was by Gary Karr, the double bass player. I was rather skeptical that a double bass player, even with piano accompaniment, would be able to carry an entire concert by himself, but Karr did it quite well. His program was too varied to list in its entirety here, but I should mention a few things. In a serious vein, he did Henry Eccles Sonata in A Minor, and Ravel's Pièce en forme de Habanera. Both of these were played quite well,



although one could say that he was somewhat lacking in emotional depth. Such depth was not lacking, however, in his beautiful rendition of Rachmaninoff's Vocalise, Op.34, No.14 and Bottesini's Reverie & Tarantella. There were several pieces he did which lay somewhere between the serious and the light vein. These pieces, by Scott Joplin, George Gershwin, were not, in my opinion, very well done. However, when Mr. Karr put all



seriousness aside in his humorous pieces, which involve telling a story while playing his double bass, he was thoroughly enjoyable. His rendition of, Failing (A Very Difficult Piece for Solo String Bass) by Tom Johnson was probably the funniest musical experience I have ever had. Also, his "Fly Fly" the Fly and "Trunk Trunk" the Purple Elephant, which he did for an encore, was very humorous and quite endearing. All in all, it was a concert that was intimate, most educational to a double bass player such as myself, and truly a display of musical virtuosity even if the command of emotional depth and nuance was somewhat inconsistent.

A better concert was the October appearance, in Columbia, Missouri, of The Cleveland Quartet with Emanuel Ax on piano. The Cleveland Quartet is, in my opinion, one of the two or three best in the world, and this concert certainly mirrored such stature. It was, however, quite obviously a difficult night for the quartet; Donald Weilerstein, their first violin, was visibly ill, and although he played flawlessly and brilliantly during the numbers, he virtually staggered off stage when each piece was finished. Emanuel Ax lent his famed good will and humor, which allowed for an uncommonly congenial rapport between musicians and audience. I should note here that Ax's musicianship clearly demonstrated why he is quickly moving beyond the ranks of the "rising young pianists" and is taking up company with the most respected and admired of the established virtuoso pianists.

The program for the evening began with Schumann's Piano Quartet in E-Flat Major, Op. 47; this work was played moderately well. Ax then was absent while the quartet did Bartok's Quartet No. 4; this piece was the highlight of the evening, with truly sublime musicianship, and an exercise in pizzicato that taxed the quartet (and surely their instruments' strings) to the utmost. The final piece, Schumann's Piano Quintet in E-Flat Major, Op. 44, was also quite brilliantly played, although I myself do not understand it very well, and hence, I was unable to appreciate it as much as I should have.

Truly, this was a concert I shall long remember, and it certainly helped solidify, in my own mind, the very high opinion I have held of this quartet for the last several years.

The last two years, I have taken it upon myself to use The Aviary as a registry of my views about different versions of a selected piece of music. Two years ago, I concerned myself with three Beethoven sonatas: the popular Moonlight, Pathetique, and Appassionata. Last year, I devoted my full attention to Beethoven's Concerto No. 5 in E-Flat Major, for Pianoforte and Orchestra, Opus 73, The Emperor. This year? Well, I had thought to do Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, and perhaps his Symphony No. 9 too. But prudence has dictated otherwise. My prose becomes rather lengthy when I take up Beethoven; I love him so much that words can never contain it all, but still I try ... and more and more words pour forth in the seemingly never-ending attempt to fully render my admiration, my passion, my adoration. Moreover, I was aware that, given the magnitude of these symphonies, were I to start writing, I might end up with a book. Finally, there was that sad experience of last year, when so many people complained about the length of the section on music and did not read it.

So this year I shall forego any exercise in analysis, and merely say a few words in passing about the two symphonies.

But first, a couple of observations about last year's comments on The Emperor; I must correct some minor mistakes. You remember, do you not, that I numbered, from 1 to 15, several versions of this concerto; and I placed the sign: \*+ before the ones I would highly recommend, a + before those I liked, and a - before those I did not like. Well, by mistake, a + instead of a - was put in front of the versions that were numbered 14 and 15. By certain comments I had made about the sonatas, this mistake should have been obvious to my readers, but I here point it out just to be sure. Another mistake happened, this one rather embarrassing. Really, I do--and did--know that Guiomar Novaes is a woman. But in my analysis of her version of The Emperor, I referred to her as a man--a "he." I certainly should have avoided this mistake. I have a very nice picture of the woman, and in this picture she is both beautiful and memorable. I suppose I made the mistake because I knew that, immediately after finishing with the analysis of her playing, I would have to turn my attentions to Emil Gilels' playing. And there I would have difficulty with my prose, because, as I stated in last year's Aviary, I have always been uncertain as to ~~his~~ ~~her~~ his gender. Most people, of course, assert that she is a man, but I have for some years been convinced that he is (or was, since she is now dead) a woman. I do think that my trepidation at having to soon broach this question about Gilels caused me to affix the same confusion to Novaes also. Hence, my mistake.

Why was I, this year, so tempted to write about Beethoven's 5th and 9th? I suppose it was the appearance of the latest (his third!) recording of Beethoven's symphonies by Herbert von Karajan (old Hair Bear--as some admirers affectionately call him) with the Berlin Philharmonic. Truly, this is a great achievement for classical music. Admittedly, in this set, not every symphony was recorded superlatively. I was rather disappointed with the 7th; there was one mistake, and it seemed unrehearsed. The 4th, while very well



done, was a bit too festive, as though the entire orchestra was enjoying some kind of huge joke--which is not wrong, per se, but the playing had sparkle while lacking the power of that B-Flat Major key.

But I must not sound too critical. The other symphonies were played wonderfully. The set contains what I believe to be his best version of the 3rd, and it also unquestionably has his best versions of the 5th and the 9th. I shall never forget the day I first heard von Karajan's latest version of the 5th. Every other version I had ever heard was, in my demanding opinion, very lacking. An old version by William Steinberg and The Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra had always been my favorite, but very simply, it was not angry enough. That symphony is angry. The score allows nothing else. The anger has grandeur, benevolence, and even humor, but first and foremost it is anger. No composer had ever emphasized this. But now, on this day when I first heard von Karajan's version (it was March 20, 1986--this is how well I remember it!) I at last got to hear what I had always seen in the score. It was as though von Karajan and I had spent an entire day together, discussing the score, coming to perfect agreement on every bar, every note! Truly, if there is such a thing as the divine madness of aesthetic surfeit, I experienced it on the day I finally heard Beethoven's 5th.

Although Beethoven always protested the glory given his 9th, and insisted that the 3rd is his greatest, I align myself with his detractors--I believe his 9th has the highest glory. And I am grateful that von Karajan has produced what I believe is the greatest version of the 9th ever recorded. Always before I had given this honor to the version recorded by Bruno Walter and The New York Philharmonic in 1949-53 (yes; it was four years in the making!). But Beethoven was served well by von Karajan; von Karajan bettered Walter's version. His choice of the excellent soloists: Janet Perry, Agnes Baltza, Vinson Cole, and José Van Dam helped him immensely in this accomplishment. But interpretation was crucial too--this "Ode to Joy" choral is clearly, even in the first three exploratory movements, a joyous, celebratory ~~ex~~ultation. Always before, in every version I have heard, there is too much that is serious. At last von Karajan saw fit to banish all human lamentation from his version, and make sure that this prayer's passion never once loses its hold on joy.

By years end, Bruno Walter's version of Beethoven's 9th had stepped back to where it occupies third place among my list of favorite <sup>recorded</sup> interpretations of this symphony. Christoph von Dohnányi, with The Cleveland Orchestra, came out with a version which, although in my opinion not quite as good as von Karajan's, certainly rivals it--and, in the first three movements, is perhaps better in some ways. Again, as in von Karajan's version, von Dohnányi made sure that the emotional definition lay, not with prayer's longing, but with prayer's celebration. If anything, this latter version was an even happier rendition. Robert Lloyd, the bass, when he comes in with the initial oratorio, almost seems to be laughing as he sings.

Note that above, I stated that von Karajan's recording of Beethoven's 9th is the best version of the symphony ever recorded. I must, with a sadness bordering on grief, state that it is not the best version I have ever heard. On January 29, 1986, the radio station, KBIA, in Columbia, Missouri, aired a live performance of the 9th by Christoph von Dohnányi and The Cleveland Orchestra. This performance is unquestionably the best version of the 9th I have ever heard. It is not the same version as the recording they released at about this time. This was a live performance, and whereas the recorded version has for soloists Carol Van Ness, Janice Taylor, Siegfried Jerusalem, and Robert Lloyd, this live version had the same soloists except James King was used for tenor. This live version is a better version than the recorded one! It is better even than von Karajan's version! In this rendition, when Robert Lloyd comes in with the initial solo, he does laugh! The chorus itself was so enthused that they actually went slightly sharp in some places, which, given the energy, I did not mind at all! I had intended to record this broadcast, but as often happens at such crucial times, my tape-recorder messed up and I did not get it all. I called the producer of the show, and was sent on a wild chase, making phone call after phone call, trying to see if I could get a tape of this broadcast. I was to eventually find out that indeed there was--is?--a tape of this broadcast. One tape. Held in a tape library, by the radio station in Cleveland that is involved in producing the live broadcasts of The Cleveland Orchestra. Could I get a copy of it? No. Under no circumstances. There are union rules against it. There are copyright laws. And despite my begging, my pleading--I do not exaggerate, I was





this desperate--the producer would not yield. He was, I must grant, a very courteous and even affable man. But he would not break any rules. He did, however, want to assure me that there would be another live broadcast of The Cleveland Orchestra, same conductor, same soloists, but this time from London; i.e., it would not be the same live performance, but he could guarantee me that it would be every bit as good as the first one which had so enthralled me. So ... I listened. It was not as good. In fact, it was a very poor performance. The group was tired, the soloists were feeling the strain, and there was no fire, nothing superior in any way. I called the producer back. By now he was terse--still courteous, but terse and firm. There was no budging him.

So I tried a different route. I advertised, hoping that someone "out there" might have recorded this particular live broadcast, since it was released to public radio stations all over the country. Not a single person has answered my plea. Moreover, I have been informed that my offers to pay someone for a tape of this performance are illegal; I would be breaking the law were I to pay money for such a tape. This problem I am sure I could avoid, or in the unlikely event that it should come up, I suspect I could handle the consequences (in fact, I believe I could withstand considerable consequences, if only I could keep a tape of that performance).

So what to do next? Dear friend and reader, be assured that you have Baumli's word. This live performance, aired in Columbia, Missouri on January 29, 1986, is the best version of this symphony ever done--or at least ever heard by my ears. It was aired on more than one radio station around the country. Not all broadcasts of this version were necessarily on the same date, but they would have occurred close to January 29. Please, please; if you have a version of this broadcast, or if you can obtain one for me, be assured that I will humble myself, I will prostrate myself, and in so doing I will devote my life to exalting you to aesthetic dimensions that would make even the Lord God of the Christians tremble with humble envy. Please! Please answer my call, and help me possess, so that I may once again hear, this version of Beethoven's 9th.

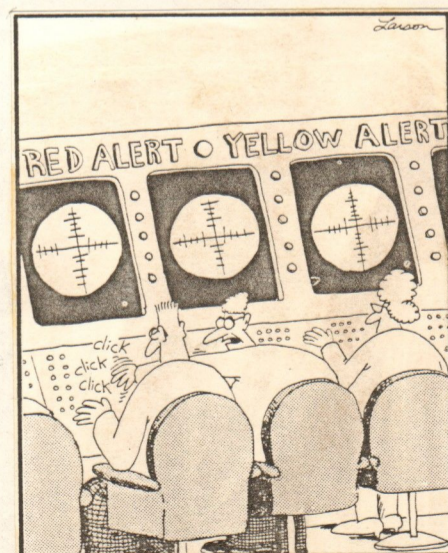
### NOTES FROM TWIN FRANCES

*(First, a word from the first-born. I find myself in something of a fix. After having allowed space herein to my twin sister, two of my other siblings are demanding space too. And I simply have not the money to reproduce a familial "round robin," and I'm not sure I have the energy to try and coordinate such a project. If the demands of my other two siblings continue, I fear I may have to, in future issues of The Aviary, deny space to my dear twin. It seems that my other siblings can not understand that I love them just as much, care for them just as deeply, while yet maintaining a certain, special relationship with my twin which requires certain concessions--not out of generosity, but as a result of breadth of personality--that are not required for my relating with other siblings who did not have such proximity to me during the first nine months of my life.)*

Dear friends,

How else to begin my statement, than by acknowledging the generosity and goodwill that have been extended me by so many of Francis' friends? I have much I would like to say, but my brother, the taskmaster, say, "Keep it short. I was hoping to keep this thing at 25 pages, and now look at what I've gone and done." So, to try and compensate for his imprudence, I must be sparse with words.

I am continuing my anti-nuclear work, which is most fulfilling these days, given that there is more and more support in the United Kingdom for unilateral disarmament. And I continue my job with the government. Currently, I am stationed on the Isle of Man, but since my work is classified, I can not say what it is, except that it is not military work, and my role is that of a journalist. I work six days a week for three weeks, and then have a full week off, which is a schedule much to my liking. I have been in London a good deal during these free weeks, and have been spending a lot of time in France, Spain, Italy. My job is very demanding, and it seems that I am now living very much in a "man's world," given that virtually all my co-workers are men. This, incidentally, is not because of discrimination against women. Quite the contrary. It seems that most of these men are married to women who call themselves feminists, but who would never consider working at a job as arduous as mine. Instead, while I and my male co-workers work at a job that is quite dreary and soul-consuming, these "liberated" women work either part-time or, if full-time, only sporadically. They have their "fulfilling" jobs, which they quit the moment the jobs cease to "inspire me and realize my potential." How childish! They demand the right to be free, but their husbands must take care of them so, when they work, if they want to work, they can keep only the kind of job that pleases them. I do not like this, and as I said, I



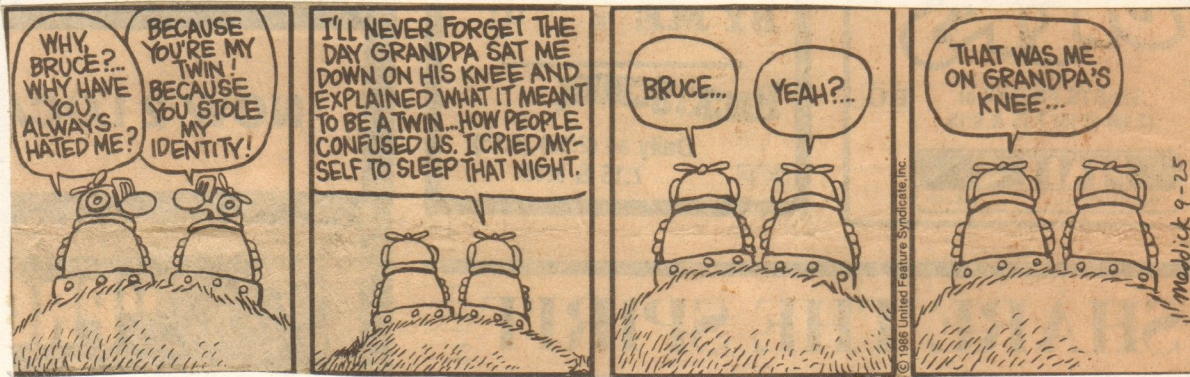
"OK, Baxter, if that's your game, I'll just reach over and push a few of your buttons."



find that as time goes by, it is the men I talk to, while the women and I have nothing in common. Maybe this is why I have taken a part-time job in London (three days every two months) working for a modeling agency. I had hoped, by doing so, that I would be able to meet other women like myself, and thus experience a sense of community among working women again. Don't get me wrong; I'm not modelling lingerie. I work for the division that markets women's business suits only, and that is all I model. As things have turned out, I have met two very nice women, and now when I'm in London, even if not working, I have companions I truly enjoy. I discovered a most interesting thing in my line of work. The modeling agency has discovered that whereas any model can market just about any kind of clothing, it seems that business women are not at all lured by advertisements unless the models themselves are working women. A certain perceptive acumen? I'm not sure, but I rather like it. I have not yet appeared in any famous magazines, but my picture has been in several issues of the London papers, and some of the smaller, more esoteric fashion line mags.

I have only made it to the states twice during this last year--1986. Each time, I was able to spend several days with Francis, and our time together during these visits was unusually easy. We

don't seem to struggle so much with jealousy, and concerns about our separate and very carefully guarded identities. (I am following Francis' example by putting in a couple of cartoons; these may help illustrate



some of the things I am alluding to.) As time goes by, I think we both are more accepting of each other's strong points, and less defensive about our weak points. I do not feel as threatened by Francis' intellect and creativity, and he seems less uneasy--more relaxed--with my levity and spontaneity. Also, something we both are finally able to be open about

is how we both had to struggle with each other in the course of making a successful transition to adulthood. It would not be fair of me to divulge many details about this subject, except to say that it is nice to have



it all out in the open. Francis helped me a great deal for several years, and much as I needed that help, I also resented it, and sometimes put him through sheer hell. Francis had his problems with me too. His jealousy of me, while in no way incestuous (he always makes me mention this when the subject comes up) was very difficult for me to deal with, and I never could escape it until I could admit that I was just as jealous of him, even though my jealousy was manifest in more covert ways. Also, I found Francis' loyalty very difficult. He will support me, stand by me, no matter what; and he always (I think to protect himself from open conflict!) tries to be fair with me. But after I have taxed his patience as much as it will stand, he becomes resentful and withdrawn. Which is understandable, but I think it would be easier for both of us if his temper with me were shorter.

Another nice thing is that both of us, now, are better able to deal with--interact with--each other's lover(s). This has, in the past, been an unbearable source of tension, and now it is working its way out. I'm not sure what either of us did to make it easier, but something has changed. This is nice.

I have certainly appreciated the letters that were sent me, care of Francis, over this last year. It was flattering to receive so much attention, although getting lengthy letters from people I did not know was at times quite confusing. Still, I answered every letter, and this was fun. Even the strange letters I generally liked. The only ones I found particularly difficult were the ones which asked me questions about Francis. He and I are both quite fierce about our own privacy, and we do not violate the other's privacy. So when people asked me questions about Francis, I generally had to decline an answer except to say that there would be no answer. One theme that cropped up in several of these letters, however, was that people were asking me questions about Francis, but only as a means of expressing a strange kind of jealousy, or envy, or rancor--or something like this. I suppose I should have predicted this would happen in letters. It certainly happens when Francis and I are around other people. There is something about him, a pugilistic stance, i.e., a stance of emotional pugilism, which draws people's aggressive attention to him. Plus he has an affect of always being on guard against something; it's not really a paranoia, but there is a hypersensitivity there which seems to make people want to act out--make more overt--the things they are afraid Francis perceives. Plus, it seems that many people feel threatened by Francis' intellect. They are always trying to trip him up, prove him wrong, and they certainly sneer at his mistakes and crow over his blunders. In such circumstances, I find it difficult to not try and defend him. But while I am accustomed to not defending



Francis when we are together, it was rather difficult to avoid falling into this role when I received certain of those very nasty letters. Still, I kept my peace, and decided to let these people fight their battles--either alone with themselves, or with Francis.

I hope I have not unwittingly fallen into the role of being my brother's defendant in this Aviary. I certainly do not want to do this. I only mention the difficulty, because I felt somewhat surprised, and rather violated, when people were so rude as to try and use me as a sympathetic ear for their concerns about Francis.

Strange, what people presuppose! Me--an ally against my brother? How preposterous! And how stupid.

There is to be something of a "feature" in this, my section. It resulted from a not unusual interchange between Francis and me. We were talking about poetry, disagreeing as we often do, and we decided to resolve the disagreement (the specifics of which I will not go in to) by each writing a poem on the same topic, using more or less the same form. We discussed what the form would be, and even decided that we each would write a brief dedication. When I asked Francis what he wanted for a topic, he, in his usual crass way, said, "Tits." Always tempted when it is a question of sibling rivalry, i.e., twin rivalry, I refused to pass up the challenge and said, "Okay." Francis, sensing my irritation over his slight vulgarity, quickly tried to salvage his image by saying that he was only wanting to prove that he, as a man, could, from within the artistic perspective, quite successfully write about a woman's body. Well; it sounded like a good reason, even though it was nothing more than an ill-timed excuse. Still, we proceeded. We even agreed to dedicate our poems to the same person.

And, with Francis' permission, I have decided to print both poems herein. I ask, and Francis asks, that our readers consider our poems to be rough drafts; we have not had the perspective of lapsed time for polishing.

It suddenly occurs to me that my (our) readers may think of this as something of a competition between us, a sort of dueling of egos, using poems as our weapons. This we did not intend at all. We were not, each of us, trying to write a better poem than the other; we were trying to show that we could achieve aesthetic success through very different emotional (and what Francis calls phenomenological) perspectives. So, I ask that my readers not consider this a competition for deciding whose poem is better. I, in fact, concede that Francis' poem is considerably better than my own. We did, however, convince each other that very different perspectives on the same subject could achieve what Francis calls "successful fusion of emotion and object."

So, here follows the poems, with mine first:

*for darling Nanci, who  
all she's got to do is  
lay 'em on the table*

**if scientists can split atoms then  
why can't somebody cleave my tits?**

some women've got big ones with cleavage;  
"just the way I'm built," they say,  
which means it isn't all that natural  
if it's got to be commented on

but there isn't any way I've got cleavage;  
I can smile and lean toward him,  
shoulders forward to open this dress up  
but he won't even sneak a glance since  
there isn't hardly anything there;  
sad, isn't it, when playing games with poetry  
suggests what I don't have

maybe god really did  
cleave night out of day  
and darkness out of light,  
but I've got no cleavage at all  
except for this one big split after  
he's through kissing my little tits  
and moves lips up to my mouth



/same stanza/

big body between my legs as  
I rock back smiling spreading wide  
for his penis sliding in slow

I'd maybe forget about this lack of cleavage  
and pass for the model type  
wear dance tights  
be a graceful ballerina,  
but I've got big hips  
thick muscles in my legs  
a face too big to be delicate  
a face maybe so big it would even  
distract from that cleavage  
if I had any

but maybe I'm lucky I don't have cleavage  
since then there'd be other women jealous  
and they'd make fun of my breasts  
calling 'em knockers or jugs;  
besides, all the men I know say  
"more than a mouthful is a waste," and,  
"if it goes to the waist it's a waste"

they grab my ass hard when we dance,  
and when we're in bed and I feel  
his chest all over mine  
I don't know if it'd feel so warm  
us pressed this tight  
with a cleavage between us

fact is, I like my little breasts  
they're tight against my chest  
don't sag, don't hurt,  
and when I dance (I dance good  
I've got muscles in my legs)  
with these round hips  
and a big face  
I've got a smile clear across the room  
so you wouldn't notice no cleavage  
even if it hung all over me.

by Frances Baumli





And now, here follows my brother's poem. As I said, it is better than mine, although I must (out of loyalty to something in me) register my opinion that, however humorous it may be, it is not very fun:

*for Nanci, who  
wondered about  
my absent foreskin*

wearin' hip boots, wadin' deeper

She's got tits  
big enough to fill  
a five-gallon bucket

If a baby  
trying to nurse  
chawed terbaccy  
on her big ones  
I swear  
he'd drown

My main wonder though  
is how the hell she  
carries them  
two five-gallon buckets  
full to the brim  
when she ain't even got  
no handles.

by Francis Baumli

Well; this has been a most interesting exercise, given my usual, rather acute shyness about making public anything I have written.

I must take my leave from these pages. Again, I want to thank those who were kind enough to write me; this time, just please don't ask me anything about Francis, and as for your opinions about him, you can keep those to yourself. As for other letters, I will do my best to answer them, as Francis forwards them to me.

I am looking forward to a prosperous and happy year. I hope all of you have the same.

My very best!

*Francis*

\*\*\*\*\*ARTICLES\*\*\*\*\*

In 1986, I expended much less effort toward trying to publish. I have published a great deal, and now, it seems, I am much more interested in writing. And unfortunately, the time expended in trying to publish seriously detracts from the time one has for writing.

I did, however, publish 20 things in 1986--19 articles and a poem. Alas, no fiction.

What article was I most proud of? I suppose it was a thing called, "True Confessions of the Male Kind." Perhaps this is not the best thing I published this year, but it was published in company with several other very fine articles in a special issue of The University of Dayton Review. It is the company this article keeps which makes me feel so proud.

Earlier, in this edition of The Aviary, I referred to a letter to the editors of The Smithsonian which I wrote; its topic: Boucher. I here include this letter, as a sample of my writing, trusting that you will find it



enjoyable. One friend, to whom I showed the letter, commented, "Gawd! You write just like Boucher paints! They'll never publish it!" He was wrong about his first assertion, but right about the second.

I also am including a short exercise in the art of dispensing advice; I wrote this with the idea in mind of trying to start my own syndicated advice column. My wiser proclivities, however, deterred this ambition. Nevertheless, I am also enclosing this brief sally, trusting that it will impart a kernel, if not a nugget, of truth.

A REPLY TO DAN HOFSTADTER'S  
"FRANÇOIS BOUCHER: HE SUMMED UP THE LIVES OF ARISTOCRATS"  
SMITHSONIAN (MARCH 1986)

*Letter to the Editors:*

Dan Hofstadter's article, "François Boucher: He Summed Up the Lives of Aristocrats" was, in my opinion, excessively critical of Boucher. Under the guise of promulgating an exhibition of the master's works, he took license with an analysis that bordered on being pejorative. I believe this is unfortunate in a forum such as Smithsonian; many a journal indulges criticisms of art, but too few periodicals devote themselves to the celebration of art. The Smithsonian commendably does the latter, and I felt that Hofstadter's article blemished the record somewhat.

I set forth a short, detailed reply to Hofstadter as follows:

Hofstadter's article on Boucher is historically insightful, delightfully prosaic, but unnecessarily negative. He belabors Diderot's criticisms of Boucher, but did not mention, much less heed, the fact that when Diderot received word of Boucher's death, he said, "I have spoken too much evil of Boucher. I retract.

Hofstadter wags his head over Boucher's, "false pastoral," clucks his tongue when, "the human figure becomes a decorative unit," and waxes superior when scolding Boucher because his work, "does not, like most great painting, preoccupy the thoughts of artists and amateurs."

Indeed Hofstadter is right when he says that Boucher does not, like Rubens, attain, "the expression of some richly suggestive action." And he is right to claim that Boucher does not, like the high-Baroque painters, portray a pageant, "adding up to an emotional sum." Moreover, it is true that Boucher offers little that would goad, "the modern sense of urgency." But Boucher's action is not suggestive precisely because it is so richly complete. Moreover, there can be no emotional sum to tally since the emotion is generously presented as a finished totality. And Boucher's paintings lack urgency for the simple reason that there is always an invitation to play.

Suggestive action, emotional determinateness, and urgency are all very fine for the rigors of aesthetic toil--toil which plumbs the depths and probes the heights of human feeling. But art born of toil must not scorn art that is busy at play; the ludic domain has claim to equal status in the echelons of beauty.

While Hofstadter would reduce Boucher's paintings to sensuality, humor, and theatrical effect, he does not understand that these three elements are but the material from which there can emerge another, unique quality which defines Boucher's aesthetic center. Moreover, he does not understand that these three elements, as Boucher uses them, retain not only charm but also dignity. Boucher's sensuality has a playful ambience too rarified to be base. His omnipresent humor eschews loud laughter for a benign, inviting smile. And his opulent theatricism provides an intimate setting where even the most voluptuous display remains chaste. The aesthetic center, in which all these materials participate, is a warm and joyful cheerfulness. Admittedly this quality is rather foreign to our modern age, where artists pursue destiny by plotting trysts with urgency. But a playful cheerfulness has been the muse of more than one artist's handiwork. Witness Raphael's Niccolini-Cowper Madonna. Keep in mind Haydn's Symphony No. 93 and his Surprise Symphony, Prokofiev's Sarcasms for piano, Miró's Three Women, and a plethora of other works. These are examples of cheerful art, done by artists who were often quite serious. But Boucher is the cheerful artist who seldom was serious. He is unique in that his creative powers do not emerge triumphant at the end of each artistic struggle, but rather, during each artistic foray, respond as friendly consorts from beginning to end.

A discerning axiology, upon carefully considering these matters, might pronounce artistic urgency puerile and take up cheerfulness as a profound definiens for beauty. Perhaps the cheerful spirit of Boucher's genius could then mollify somewhat the harried temperament of our contemporary art, and thus improve its chances for aesthetic surfeit, i.e., artistic success.



## THE "DEAR ABBY" ADDICTION

Allow me, first of all, to draw your attention to the newspaper column on the right. Truly, I think anyone who would write these self-styled consumerist gurus, asking for advice, is more than a little bit demented. As for the advice which then is handed out to these craven, beseeching souls, it is, as my friend Silly Billy would say, "not worth a possum fart." But questions of worth aside, how much accuracy--truth--is in these vague, simplistic, vapidly opinionated responses?

My response to the query at right, I assure you, would have been less quick to dismiss the issue with a hasty decision, and instead would have proffered insightful commentary along with any advice.

"Would have been," I just said, thus making my hypothetical response conditional, unformed. Allow me to instantiate the possibility, and thus bestow my bit of wisdom ... if not on the masses, then upon my most intelligent and loyal friends.

#####

Dear Likes To Travel,

It is obvious that you, and not financial concerns, are the problem. Vacations should be relaxing, private times during which married couples enjoy prolonged, energetic, and ecstatic sex together. Clearly, you bring your sister along as an excuse for avoiding those conjugal occasions during which your husband groans and you grit your teeth.

I suggest that you and your husband vacation without your sister and without the pets. Either that, or put the poodle, basset, and cat into one bed; while you, your sister, and your husband share the other bed. Then, as the basset mounts the cat and the poodle pants, your sister can give you a lesson in how to pleasure your husband.

DEAR ABBY: Will you please settle a long-standing argument my husband and I have been having with my sister, Clara? Clara is single and the three of us have been taking our vacations together. We always take one motel room with double beds in it.

We take our small poodle along and Clara takes her basset hound and a cat. My husband and I sleep in one bed and Clara sleeps in the other bed with her animals.

We always end up arguing about how much each of us should pay for the room. Clara says each person should pay one-third of the cost, and my husband says we should pay half and Clara should pay the other half. He figures that the two of us are using one-half of the bed space and Clara is using the other half.

We are planning another trip and need to know what you think about the way the room rent should be figured.

LIKES TO TRAVEL

DEAR LIKES: I vote with your husband. The cost of the room should be divided by two.

~~~~~

profinis

Yes; I know it. You don't have to levy accusations. The quality of this Aviary is not as good as that of previous ones. But please understand. I have been trying to keep this issue short, and unfortunately, constricting my prose tends to constrict my talents too. Moreover, there is this problem with insomnia--dreams make for interesting memories, but not for lucid tales. And then there is the fact that I felt in such a hurry during writing this Aviary. There is so much I am wanting to work on. I am eager to finish the current volume of my Phenomenology, and be on to the next, in hopes of one day at last finishing it. And then there are other duties. My editing. My daughter's homework. My passion for listening to classical music. My eager young wife who nightly awaits my presence in her bed. And then there is the state of my soul, which, if not mortal, has much to now atone for, and which, if mortal, has this insatiable concupiscence that consumes me. And, of course, there are these nightmares, and these phantasms which inhabit my every shred of consciousness. Mixed together in this insomniacal vertigo, they constitute a gruel that even the gods would dare not stir. But, of course, in the very act of communicating with you, I have, to some extent, bequeathed them to your care. I might apologize, but these days--and nights--I seem incapable of either contrition or regret.

So what now? Were I to seek surcease from my morbid fixations, would my soul profit? And if I am to seek respite from my many battles, where am I to find peace? Well, yes--of course! The meditatives and saints and even the priests and Bible thumpers would all remind me that peace lies somewhere within me. Which well may be the case, but there are other cosmic levels which also reside within; some would call them purgatory and hell. And as for this particular soul, already, that gruel has been stirred. The divisions of my internal cosmology have been erased; all is a phantasmagoria, fit for my viewing only. So perhaps I should keep these groanings and thrashings to myself.

Richard Selzer, in his Letters to a Young Doctor (p.38) said, "I have always preferred what people do alone or in the company of one like-minded companion to the shifts and rumble of the mob." Such is my own proclivity, my want, and my resolve. I intend to withdraw from the world even more, and although I shall not retire into myself completely, there will, for the future, be few people who will be allowed to view the nightly writhings of this sleepless monster.

But ... even monsters feel insecure, and amidst the delirium and toil of dreams that are not quite dreams, they pine for love, for companionship, for the healing touch. But who shall bestow this touch? Fellow companions? No; there are none. Saints? No; their souls are too tender and they flee aghast. That anonymous mob which always



flocks to every gruesome spectacle? No; they would consume me. My friends, and those who love me--read me? Ah; there you have it. The writer writes because he believes himself a monster, who can never be loved. But if people read him, and respond--even if their response be bilious and vile--this at least is a touch. Which, for a monster, is a welcome substitute for love.



Yours, most negligibly,

A stylized, abstract signature or scribble.