

THE PROSE POEM: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Volume 3 | 1994

The Committals Michael Benedikt

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Michael Benedikt

THE COMMITTALS

So, finally, all at once, after all these years of relative detachment, I, too, became "committed to" something; and took a position on it. An "Urgent Public Issue" concerned me at last! How "Politically Correct" I felt! But then I started to think it over a second time; and right away I became bored to tears and/or Death with it. Take that dull issue away, oh please take it away!—I was ready to sacrifice my life to that issue, but now it's putting me to sleep already! Should I wait a couple of years—and perhaps then, like most "Urgent Public Issues," it will pass from the public eye completely, and nobody will care about it anymore? Oh, look!—already, it completely disappeared! "Thank you!," I say to nobody in particular. "But just what was that issue in the first place," several voices ask in chorus, doubtless out of mere random curiosity, but otherwise from out of nowhere. "I don't know," I answer, "it doesn't matter anyway—because thanks to the tediousness of that issue, I guess I must have become so bored with the whole concept of 'Commitment' itself, that already I've forgotten just what I was once so concerned about... —By the way: sometimes I think I don't drink enough water—don't you think my voice is starting to sound sort of a little bit raspy?" "What?—what did you mean by that?" "Not much, really; essentially, I'm changing the subject... Anyway: 'Swallow to Survive' is what my Doctor tells me. He's a real Medical Expert, my Doctor! He has this enormous, expensive office in the Art Gallery District. The big, glass-encased building directory in the big brass frame in his lobby reads: 'Gallery of New Art,' 'Gallery of Old Art,' 'Painting and Sculpture of The Centuries'; and 'Dr. Charles E. Shoe.' Isn't that great, I say to myself when I go visit him once again, and, after greeting me with a few perfunctory words, once again he starts talking on the telephone—I've got this huge, pressing medical problem with my attention-span, and the only thing my Doctor says to me is 'Swallow to Survive'—and for *that* he brags that he went to college for 8 years and spent two years of internship submerged in a bathysphere 1000 feet under the Atlantic Ocean? 'Oh really now, Mr. Doctor,' I tell him when he finally gets off the telephone, 'that's just too much! But what's that you say now, Mr. Doctor? You say that since I won't drink enough water for my own sake, I should 'Swallow for

Everlasting World Peace and Environmental Health The Whole World Over"? What? For 'World Peace *Everlasting*' ? And for Environmental Health *The Whole World Over*? Okay—for that, believe me, you can Count on Me: please just hurry up and pass me the ends of those two enormous, overflowing firehoses from out there in the hall.' "