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Poem

JOHN WALSH '66

I

Winter is called the death
of the year, as the afternoon,
like this one,
is felt to be the outer edge
of the day passed through.
The sun, red,
is falling,
like a huge burning rock
thrown high and far across
by a long-dead giant
who lived in the morning.
And the sun will fall
hauling the remains of light
in a net
leaving the land with us
black and cold.
The snow will soften
into grey
and muffle air
That's frozen like the earth,
impregnable.
The last few squirrels now
shiver at the sound of the clamping down
of ice, sealing the sun off
And trees shiver at death-winds
tugging
at iced, brittle branches
to snatch them off,
snapping sharp icicles.
Out of this,
I remember,
is to come the spring.
Winter
called the death of the year
partly waits,
I remember.
The water is sleeping
under ice on the pond
and the bush skeletons and bare trees
are pulled up tight around it
for protection.
But the snow that crunches beneath my feet
rings cold, distantly,
like the icicles that fall and shatter
spilling a slow sound and sunlight.
The pale snow is dizzying
and dry
under the white-dusted bulbs of street lamps.
The truth of this matter
is partly in memory
and partly here in the dying year
that’s falling into cold winter,
here in the struggling of this winter
in the cold joy of its own existence.
Ahead I see a statue of Lincoln
at the edge of the path, the back to me
and the sunlight softening one shoulder.
The stone figure,
frozen higher than a man’s height,
and facing with unliving eyes
into the sun, across the distance,
Poem

is the stone legend,
a myth of hope, the aiming
of the mind into god-dreams
searching for the past in the future.
and this seems to be
part of the meaning
of the winter.

III

As I walk back home
under the slim echoes
of sunlight left,
the streets and sidewalks
are covered smoothly with ice
under the snow.
My feet slide of themselves
and the balance
of my soul
is tilting
into fear.
A big furred dog
that I've passed quietly often
in the day and the summer
runs out barking at me,
and I am afraid of what
frightens him
in the nighttime winter.
Antigone

A Modern Transliteration in Three Acts

Peter Barrett

Dramatis Personae

ANTIGONE, a Freshman at Pawnbroke College
CREON, Director of the Affairs of Students at Pestilence College
HAIMON, a Sophomore at Pestilence and Creon's son.
ISMENE, a Sophomore friend of Antigone's at Pawnbroke.
CHORAGOS, leader of the CHORUS, and Dean of Boys at Pestilence.
PINKERTON GUARDS

ACT ONE

Antigone's room at Pawnbroke. Enter Antigone and Ismene.

ISM: Who'd you go out with last night?
ANT: Some kid named Haimon.
ISM: HAIMon?!?
ANT: Yes, Haimon. He turned out to be a great guy.
ISM: What do you mean, great guy?
ANT: He was outrageously fat. What do you think I mean? He was a really nice guy. He took me to a concert and then to dinner. But the thing that surprised me most was that he was so intelligent—he really was interesting and funny too. Actually, I sort of got carried away with the guy.
ISM: Oh, NO. You have got to be one of the most naive people in history.
ANT: You're one of the most cynical. Anyway, I was carried away until this incident.

ISM: Here we go. He took you for a drive at Riverside and you didn't like it because he was clums - - -

ANT: Will you shutup? It wasn't that at all. You probably won't believe this anyway. But we were stopped at this light and I had just decided that I really liked this guy and was going to show my appreciation for the great time I'd had when right out of the blue some kind of crazy BELL goes off in the car. And I says, "What's that a *Time Bomb?!" and he goes "OH, God no, it's alarm clock and - - -

ISM: ALARM CLOCK?? Antigone, you're psycho, you really are.

ANT: *Listen, will ya? So I says "Alarm Clock? What for?" and he goes "That means I've got only three minutes to get back to college!" and so I look at the clock and I figure okay, so he's got an early curfew and maybe they're strict about it, but this is *something else. Ismene, I look at the clock and it's three minutes to ONE!

ISM: ONE? Where does this kid go to school?

ANT: Pestilence—no, Provincialist. Or Penitence College, or something. *Frankincense, I don't know.

ISM: Never mind, I know where you mean.

ANT: So he *rips the stupid car around in a huge Uie and takes off for the other side of the city. And I says "WAIT a minute, kid! Aren't you going to take me back to Pawnbroke?" and he says "I'm sorry Ant, but I've got to make that curfew or I'm DEAD. You'll have to drive my car back and I'll come pick it up."
Then he slams his foot on the accelerator and screams back to Pestilence at about ninety miles an hour, jumps out the door in front of Robert Hall, leaves the car running and me sitting there, and he says “Gotta run. Sorry I'm doing this but I've got no choice”.

ISM: You have got to be KIDDING. Sure, I've heard of crazy dates and I've heard of crazy Pestilence rules, but this! Is this kid for real?

ANT: Yes! That's the thing! He was such a great guy until that stupid clock rang. I've never seen anyone get so excited! I thought The Bomb had dropped or something. But I really like the kid. I mean, he's sharp, funny and amazingly smart.

ISM: You're not going out with him again...

ANT: Yes, I am. I don’t know why, but I am. I really like the guy.

ISM: Antigone, you're crazy! This kid is bad enough, but you don’t know what that Pestilence College is like! They'll come over here and arrest you or something for keeping their boys out past their curfews and upsetting their delicate moral balances! You don’t realize it, but that place is a curse on any girl who gets involved with it.

ANT: You're ridiculous. You'd blow anything up five times its size if it was good for effect. I know several girls that have gone out with Pestilence boys, and they look like they're normal and uninjured to me.

ISM: I still say you're crazy and mark my words you'll think so too when the long arm of Pestilence decides you're guilty.
Scene One.  

ACT TWO  

The Office of the Director of the Affairs of Students. Enter Creon, Choragos and Chorus.  

CRE: I want you all to know that although I'm new at this job, and other new people are around, nothing will change from what it was. Pestilence College will go on being Pestilence College with the same fine tradition it has always had. The rules are the same, and if anything they will be enforced more strictly than ever. We must see to the welfare of our students down to the smallest minute detail. That is my job, gentlemen, and I intend to carry it out.  

CHO: Uh, Creon, there's one problem that's come up already that I think you should know about. It might be a bit touchy but I think in the light of your statements that I'll bring it to your attention. One particular student has flagrantly violated the Pestilence College rules. He has, first of all, been going out with some girl from Pawnbroke, but more than that, this girl has kept him out past the curfew five consecutive times! This student's name was brought to me by the prefect on his floor and I immediately decided to bring him before The Board. But then I guessed it would be best to check first with you--  

CRE: Name, just give me his name; I'll see to it right away.  

CHO: All right, if you insist. His name is Haimon...  

CRE: MY SON? No. Impossible. (pause) Well! I'll see to this personally! Who is this girl?  

CHO: Well, we investigated this thoroughly of course, and our secret service undercover plainclothes Pinkerton discovered her name is Antigone.
CRE: I want her brought here immediately. We'll see what this witch from Pawnbroke is doing to my son.

Scene Two.
The Same. Enter Creon.
CRE: All right, Choragos, bring her in.

Enter Choragos leading Antigone by a dogchain.
CRE: Now, young lady, what do you have to say for yourself? You are responsible for putting my son's college career in jeopardy! I haven't witnessed such crafty sabotage of a power structure since I left the CIA!

ANT: I suppose I should have known it would come to this. I was warned of it, but I still don't believe it. Here I am, a comparatively innocent Pawnbroke girl minding my own business, trying to go out with a guy I like under impossible situations and conditions. And then the final absurdity comes crashing down today on my little universe. I drive casually over with a friend to see Haimon; we get stopped two inches inside the gate for speeding by a Pinkie with radar or something, who then follows very slyly up the drive, waits for us to park and slaps us with another violation for parking in the wrong place. We get in the car and begin to leave very disgusted when this crazy maniac in his idiotic black Chevrolet comes screaming around the corner and runs us off the road. The next thing I know he's got the two of us all chained up and he brings us squealing to Sharkskins Hall in his pseudocruiser and hauls us up here. Don't ask me to explain myself. I wish you'd explain to me why Ismene and I were given such an amazingly strained welcome.
CRE: Young lady, you have so many counts against you it is incredible. You have probably broken more rules in a one hour period than any single person in the history of Pestilence College. Choragos, take this all down, please:

First, speeding on campus
Second, parking violation
Third, risk of injury to a faculty member
Fourth, violation of dress code - - -

ANT: What! Now wait a minute. What’s this dress code bit?

CRE: Well, look at you! An outrage to seen on campus! Shorts which expose your legs! A disgusting sweatshirt and of all things a sportshirt. You have no socks on, and you failed, before coming in here to comb your hair, which by the way is outlandishly long!

CHO: Yes, who do you think you are, DANIEL BOONE?!

CRE: Miss, do you know the meaning of conformity?

ANT: Do you know the meaning of academic freed - - -

CRE: A Communist! You lousy Commie-fink, trying to corral my son and undermine this college! You and your friends in California are a fine bunch! Write that down, Choragos. Sixth: Suspected of being a Dirty Rotten Commie Rat and trying to start a Student Revolt at Pestilence College.

As I was saying, Miss Antigone, on this campus we conform. We certainly didn’t ask you to come here, and if you don’t like it you could have left except for your final violation, your magnum opus, shall we say? You have kept my son out past his one o’clock curfew
five times in a row! Do you realize that he could automatically be dismissed or at the very least placed on Permanent D.P.? From now on that child is marked. He will be watched like a hawk for the remainder of his days here at Pestilence College. One false move and he's out! OUT! Oh, I'm terribly sorry, Miss Antigone, but you cannot leave now! You must go before the Board and answer to every one of your offences.

CHO: What about the other girl, this Ismene?

CRE: I don't want to see another Pawnbroke girl's face in the next thousand years! Send her away, and tell her she is in permanent exile from this land.

ACT THREE

Creon's Office. Enter Creon, Choragos and Chorus as the jury, Antigone and Haimon, under guard of Pinkertons.

CRE: Let all of you bear witness to this hearing. The charges have been read. The defendant stands guilty as charged. Does anyone dare to come forward and prove the contrary?

HAI: Yes! It's my fault! Antigone is not to be bl----

CHO: OBJECTION! The witness is prejudiced, his testimony is inadmissible, irrelevant and improper! I move the case be closed.

CRE: Sustained and granted. Does the defendant have anything to say in her own defense?

ANT: YES! THE WHOLE THING IS A FARCE! I DON'T EVEN ATTEND THIS----

CHO: OBJECTION! Who could be more prejudiced than the defendant herself?
Antigone: a modern translation

CRE: True enough. Sustained. Will the jury please deliberate? Fine. Have you reached a verdict?

CHORUSMEMBER: Yes, your honor. The Chorus—the jury, excuse me—finds the defendant guilty as charged.

ANT: FRAUD! TILT!

CRE: Add that outburst to the offences. Will the defendant please rise. Bah! Sit down, I can’t stand to look at you clothed so badly! By the powers granted me by Pestilence College, I hereby sentence Antigone to one week of hard nutrition at Robert Hall Cafeteria.

HAI: NO! YOU CAN'T! She’ll die! She’s not used to that garbage! She’ll get food poisoning and DIE!

ANT: Is it that bad? My God, I will die! This is preposterous!

CRE: Take the prisoner away, Choragos!

(Choragos handcuffs Antigone and begins dragging her away. Haimon breaks loose from the Pinkertons and runs to her sobbing.)

HAI: O, Antigone, gone away so fast? We were just getting to know each other! O, this is too, too cruel! (turning on Creon) You hard-hearted old man! Have you no mercy? For ages after this the legend will be handed down. Don’t you want to stop it? That Haimon’s old man was nothing but an old man, a dirty old man!

CRE: Pah! Take him away too. He’s to be put on D.P. for the rest of his life! So all things are justified and so all evil comes to naught. Punishment has been meted out, and peace again reigns in Pestilence.

CURTAIN.
Journal Square to 33rd

Bob Hutson '67

A man on a subway train:
Unseeing, unsensing, unknowing.
A transient in the realm of motion,
A poet of the unconscious.

He sits with his eternal stare transfixed—
Upon the dirty window opposite;
Upon the fleeting, rushing, screaming
Wind of exterior darkness all punctuated
With periodic twinkling light;
And upon his own face, there, hanging in the window.

And in the end there is a speeding train
Hurtling, burrowing with bashed and blunted nose
In to the uncertain certainty of the pitch-black subway—
And in the end there is a man
Who sees not where he goes nor where he's been,
But only the blurred signs and the fleeting lights
And perhaps his face pasted in the darkness.
Neucomb

Stephen S. Moody

It was a bright, sunny, almost warm, mid-Spring mid-morning, and I had just come out of the Student Union building feeling like hell since I had spent the first half of the morning losing exactly three-fourths of the cash I had allotted myself for the remaining month. I mean I felt worse than hell; I had gambled on an inside straight and lost. I had gambled on an Ace-high and lost . . . I had even lost on a full house. I had lost on every conceivable combination you can imagine. It had been the worst game of poker I had ever lost in.

Anyway, I had just come out of the Student Union casino and who did I run into but ol’ Neucomb. When I saw him coming and knew I couldn’t possibly avoid him, I swore like crazy and just convinced myself that I should prepare for the most disastrous run of bad luck since the Original Sin. But I decided, too, that Neucomb would catch hell from me; it would sort of satisfy the craving for revenge—I mean really cruel revenge—I had at the moment. So I hailed Neucomb.

“Hail, Neucomb!” I yelled. “Nuke, you old bastard, how are you?”

“I’m all right, David,” Neucomb replied. He was shunning me; I could tell. His voice was too dry. He was shunning me. He should have been angered because I called him a bastard. He must not have heard me. Neucomb objected to outlandish inaccuracies in speech. He hated that sort of thing. He didn’t object so much to being called a bastard (which he wasn’t); it was simply that one bastardized a sacred symbol of communication when he was purposefully and grossly inaccurate. Neucomb did not talk too much. Still I could tell that he was shunning me.
The Alembic

"Well, you don't look so great, Nuke. Something bothering you? Having trouble with your women?" I thought I'd just spear him with that because Neucomb was the contemptus mundi type. The idea of asking Neucomb if he was having woman troubles was so absurdly incongruous that when I realized what I had said I couldn't keep from laughing. It just floored me. But Neucomb didn't even blush.

"I'm sorry, Nuke," said I, "I didn't mean to be sarcastic. I was just —"

"Never mind, David. You needn't apologize for that; if anyone should be sorry about the things he has said, you should. But don't attempt it; don't tax your . . . intellect."

"See here, Dacus. I was trying to be a good guy about it. You don't have to get old over a little thing like that. But I'm big; I'll forget it. Where are you headed?"

"I was thinking about some coffee at the Union. Care to join—"

"Sure, but not in there." Wait! I thought. Did Neucomb Filamore Dacus III just invite me to join him for coffee . . . in the Student Union? I looked him square in the face, right into his beady brown eyes (for the first time since I had ever known Neucomb even). I lowered my eyes, then asked:

"Say that again, Neucomb, slowly."

And Neucomb started to repeat the words slowly.

"Stop!" I shouted. "All right, Neucomb. But let's have coffee somewhere other than the Student Union. Okay?"

"Anything you say, David."

I took another look at Neucomb. Yes, it was Neucomb. But, no, it wasn't either. Neucomb just didn't decide to have coffee at the Student Union. Neucomb never
Neucomb went into or even near the Student Union. Never. I really doubt that he ever drank coffee except maybe at breakfast when that was all there was to drink. There just wasn’t anything coffeeish or Studentunionish about Neucomb. Neucomb had sense; as a matter of fact, Neucomb was a goddam genius. Neucomb was definitely bookish.

“Come on, Neucomb. We’ll take my car and buzz over to Sir Robert’s.”

Sir Robert’s Cafe represented the best in the way of Student Unions; but it went on to top that by doubling as a beer joint after six-thirty, complete with brawls, knifings, and an occasional rape. Nevertheless, during the day it served coffee and English muffins or Bagels to the most exclusive college sets. Rarely did anyone but campus athletic heroes, campus big-shots of the leader genus, Intra-Fraternity Council officers, and a very very few intellectuals enter its authentic-type swinging doors. I qualified since I was the IFC Athletic Chairman. Neucomb qualified because I saw fit to bring him and because he was an oddity, which would no doubt boost my prestige among the elite to soaring heights.

Neucomb had remained quiet for the five or six minutes it took us to drive to Sir Robert’s. But, of course, it wasn’t unusual for Neucomb to be silent. At first I assumed he was just thinking, like he’s supposed to; then, for the splittest second, it seemed that he was brooding over something. That would be pretty damn hard to prove, though. I mean it’s not easy to decipher the distorted lines and expressions which are all cramped up in that relatively small space you’d have to call Neucomb’s face. Neucomb has an enormous head. God, it’s gigantic compared to his short and slightly overweight trunk. But all his human-like features—eyes, nose, mouth, pimples—are smashed into the
smallest little plot in the lower-front section of his... hell, massive cranium. And so when Neucomb smiled he could be squinting or something else... dilating his nostrils or something. You just couldn’t tell.

Before we entered Sir Robert’s I asked him if he’d ever gotten over that fixation he was supposed to have had on one of the prostitutes that used to hang out in front of the place in the evenings.

“What?” he asked perplexedly.

“Oh, hah. Nothing; I was just making a joke,” I said, confirming my suspicion that it had been another fraternity rumor. I felt kind of bad about that, sincerely. “Just walk on in, Nuke.”

Undoubtedly, Neucomb was not impressed by the atmosphere inside Sir Robert’s; at least, he never said anything about it one way or another. But Sir Robert’s just wasn’t an impressive place. Sir Robert’s was more homey; I mean it was comfortable, anyway. It was like... well, in critical language, it was like a cattle car wired for sound with tables and booths and a bar, and all. It wasn’t dirty or anything, but it gave that woody effect: sawdusty and old dark-stained woody, I mean. And there were initials—at least fifty—on the top of every table and on the walls of the booths, but there weren’t too many obscenities since there were always girls in the place. I really don’t see what difference that made, to be honest. But there weren’t too many profanities etched in the woodwork and that lent a certain kind of collegiate distinction to the place; you know, we could all be proud of that together. It was sort of nice.

It was just a little under “crowded” in there, and by the time Neucomb and I had managed to arrest the attention of Sir Robert, have him come over to our booth, and give him our orders, I had also managed to greet most of
Neucomb

the clientele with subtle winks and slights of the hand. We had ordered coffee and English muffins. When Sir Robert walked away, he must have made a face or something because there were some laughs from the tables he faced. Sir Robert always impressed me as being a "dirty old man."

"Ever been in here before, Neucomb?" I asked just to be saying something.

"What?"

I raised my voice just a little (to be heard over the jukebox, since I knew that was the problem). And it sort of answered the question, too. Neucomb hadn't ever been in anything even similar to Sir Robert's. "I said: have you ever been in here before?" I repeated out of courtesy.

"No," he said. "But I've thought about these places before and I must admit that I have a rather vivid and accurate imagination. It's quite as I had imagined it would be, you know?"

"No kidding?" Despite the sound of that type of bland interjection, I was interested in what he thought about us.

"Yes. Not so much the arrangement and the colors and the other ethnic details, but more generally, the paradoxically unprivate privacy you enjoy here."

"What the hell are you talking about?" I asked.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I was referring to the noise, or music (hah), and how it isolates the couples from those at other tables or booths. Do you see?"

"Well, frankly, Neucomb, I don't." I was almost angry here.

"Do you notice, David, that although those young ladies there are in quite open view from our booth and in a relative proximity to it, still you cannot really feel crowded by them or even close to them because the music from the
the jukebox drowns out their words, their conversation? Don't you feel rather isolated from them, now that you notice it? Aren't you confident that they cannot hear what we say here? It is a feeling of privacy, don't you agree?"

"Yeah. Yeah, I see what you mean, Neucomb." I was really dazzled. "Privacy! Hell, man, you could just about propose to a girl right here in this booth in broad daylight. I mean you'd be alone, and all; and the place is romantic enough with all these initials and all this tradition and everything. Hell, yeah! Where'd you ever come up with that, Nuke? I mean how'd you ever picture it? God Almighty. And you've never been in a place like this."

When I looked over at Neucomb then, I almost choked. He had his mouth full of half an English muffin and about one-third of his cup of coffee. You can't imagine what that guy's face looked like then. But he gulped it all down so fast it didn't make any difference; it was like an instantaneous aberration or something.

"It was not too difficult, David," he began. "Just think of America, the Great Society it is. Privacy and noise share the expensive honor of being the two great symbols of our American affluence. And, theoretically, that is just our problem. Affluence. The deafening and incessant noise. The ultimate and unrelenting isolation. Americans find it impossible to understand one another, either because they would rather not communicate and jeopardize their isolation and privacy or because, if they ever try, the raucous noise drowns them out. Stereo, you know? Pitiable, don't you think?"

"I . . . well, I—"

"On second thought, though, I find this spot rather pleasant. Have you a cigarette?"
"Uh . . . yes. I mean, no. I don't smoke, but I can get you one with no difficulty." I jumped up and copped one of my pledges for the fraternity; he gave me a Winston or something, and I was back to the booth offering the cigarette to Neucomb.

"Thank you," he said. "From one of your pledges, I suppose."

"Yes."

"Do you consider him a luxury, a necessity, or a nuisance?"

"A little of all three, I guess. Why? Is there something to that, too?"

"No. Not really. I was just wondering if you took yourself seriously. It seems that you don't." He inhaled deeply and began to blow smoke rings. They were rather good ones, from what I have seen and know of them. I wasn't really shocked to see Neucomb smoking; I was impressed.

"Oh. Well, I — —"

"I used to, you know?" As he began, Neucomb looked up at me, then looked away. "I used to take myself so . . . damned . . . seriously. Every act for which I held myself totally responsible took on cosmic implications; I felt, very sincerely, that my genius commanded energies creatively equipotential with those of Einstein, Hitler, even Aristotle. Does that sound absurd?"

"Hell, no! Why? Should it?"

"I don't know, honestly." He paused a moment to study the filter on the burning cigarette. It seemed that he made a mental note of something before he continued. "While I subscribed to that opinion of myself, the reasons which substantiated the conclusion seemed sufficiently sound. I was, at the time, a seventeen year old junior, the
academic leader of my class, who found that the processes of education which I was being compelled to undergo at this great Eastern university were insufficient for my capacity as a student, were actually — and quite horribly — a hindrance to the exercise of my creative potential. These same processes were not only exhausting significant amounts of my preciously vital, valuable, volatile creative energies, but further, because I was bored by these processes, they were dulling my acute intellectual sensibilities causing me to expend again discernibly greater quantities of the energies of my genius on the utterly disgusting task of cleansing Truth of the vile, lacquerous deposits with which these vain procedures had discolored her.

"I found myself striving for a detachment from that inane, inept, inscrutable world of the antiseptic professors and their chattel-like herds of chthonic students, the both of which insensibly enjoy a gaudy pleasure revelling in their gigantic thoughts gouged out of an infathomable labyrinth when they were drunk on Athena's sweet wine. They drink Athena's wine, then they rape her.

"I attained to my beloved detachment, more and more so with every bittersweet step of the ascent to the heights of craggy Olympus. The climb exhausted me; it was more than I could physically endure, the pain I mean. But I was there at last and I began to soothe the poor Athena by singing for her the songs that came out of my attempts to resolve the insult wrought on the academic feminity of my genius, the beauty and creativity of my intellect, by the sterility — or rather, the absolutely neuter gender — of my academic milieu.

"I am a fool, David. You may laugh if you wish."

"NO! . . . no, Neucomb," I asserted. "How can I
“Neucomb”

laugh?” I didn’t understand what the hell you were talking about; but I promise I won’t laugh.”

“Thank you. Now, is there a Men’s Room in this place?”

I rushed Neucomb off in the direction of the Men’s Room and settled back in the booth and began carving Neucomb’s initials into the table top with a spoon.

“Well! Don’t speak or notice or anything, David.”

“Laura. Where did you come from?” Laura was the girl I was dating; she rated at Sir Robert’s because she was dating me and that, too, boosted my image among the elite. Laura was a beautiful girl.

“I’ve been sitting over there for the last twenty minutes watching your friend talk you under the table. Who is he, anyway?”

“That’s Neucomb,” I replied somewhat proudly. “He’s kind of a hard guy to know or like or anything like that, but he really demands your respect. Of course, I always thought it was a lot easier to respect someone than it is to like him. Sit down. I’ll introduce you to him when he comes back.”

“He looks like a real screamer to me,” Laura said. “But if you like him I guess I can.”

“Sure. You’ll like him. Laura, did you ever notice how isolated—”

Sir Robert, the doting old lecher, was approaching the table with more gusto than I’d ever seen him use. That’s what stopped me. He came right up to me at the booth.

“Your friend in there, David? In the Men’s Room?”

“Yeah.”

“The kid just killed himself.”

“Oh God damn.”
Visions
John A. Thompson '66

I
A straw-green tufted spread
fades into grey and hides
my desert of gently undulating Chaos.
Drifting into the unexplored nightmare,
open before me,
吸引着我的无辜的灵魂，
U.S. 40,
coil-writhing
in man-made sun-agony,
feigns ignorance of to-morrow.
Reluctant at first, the strangely propelled
and sliding from the crest of one hill
into the parabolic start of the next,
I am sucked into darkening oblivion.
A sudden light—
pink soft radiance
of cooling night air—Where?
Behind me,
mirror framed against darkness
and reflected too late
—yet prompting senseless remorse
that too soon fades
and leaves me alone with blackening nature,
my thoughts, and the road.

II
Languishing smoothness—
deathlike sultry shadows
slip round and engulf me
And U.S. 40 stretches on till tomorrow
and time stops in horror
while the night's moist, clutching palm

24
Visions

folds about me and carries me on into timelessness.

Dull red blood sheets over my brain
and twin yellow orbs rush fluidly over the heaving sighs
of a striped serpent,

A sun-blackened wench screaming desire
in the slippery redness
of her gasping sigh,

Moaning my death
with every heaving curve of her endless length,

While night-puddles of death slip past like the hiss-rushing wind
and are drowned in their own darkness.

And screaming temptations slip silent fingers along my oil-slick shell to press their wailing spirit mouths against my moist forehead.

III

I gasp, pounding and burning,
and each feeble ache-slowed motion smears salt-dry unwept tears over my chapping, white-streaked soul;

And U.S. 40 slithers past pits of despair, unwinding her slim flickering tongue to the sun;

While on endless plains of empty oceans a blue-green melancholy sobs and sighs and slips from the jaundiced back of unyielding sand.
Waiting For Godot

Dennis A. Wendraub

Samuel Beckett's Absurd tragi-comedy, *Waiting for Godot*, was first produced in Paris in 1952. Like the unknown author of the *Book of Job*, this Irish playwright seeks to define in his drama a situation which is essentially static, for like his Old Testament predecessor, Beckett is attempting to explain the nature of the human condition itself.

Beckett deals with a reality and a truth more basic than the superficialities of culture and custom of any one age, for the meaning of what it is to be human underlies this veneer. Written in a unique age wherein the cultural beneficiaries of some 5000 years of civilization could be substantially wiped out, literally with the press of a button, *Waiting for Godot* stands as one man's disconcertingly sober view of the meaning of man's life and its attachment to his cosmos. Ultimately the play may be read as a pessimistic reassessment of the inherent truths molded by the anonymous author of the *Book of Job*.

The important personages are Vladimir (Didi) and Estragon (Gogo), two Chaplinesque tramps who wait impatiently for a mysterious character whose name is Godot. Godot is apparently a landowner, yet his actual existence is only nebulously affirmed; it is implied by the two raggedly dressed characters that Godot's arrival, which is doubtful at best, will dynamically alter their squalid state. Every hint is given that both figures are estranged from grace and that *GODot*'s arrival will mean salvation. Gogo and Didi occupy themselves, meanwhile, with seemingly disconnected, irrelevant and meaningless actions such as struggling with tight fitting shoes; it is only in retrospect that such actions are seen as a collective comment on the insignificance and triviality of their existence. The expected ar-
rival of their landLORD is never more than a hope, and the very ridiculousness of Gogo and Didi suggests to us that they are vainly deluding themselves; and when it occasionally looks as if their hope will be realized, they are appalled at the fortuitous nature of salvation. Gogo and Didi represent Christian mankind, while Pozzo and Lucky, who also appear briefly, suggest a rich Nietzschean materialist and his exploited intellectual tool.

Beckett’s play lacks a logically ordered dramatic movement; there is neither beginning nor end in an Aristotelian sense. When the curtain falls Gogo and Didi are still waiting in anticipation. The unity of the play is not a structural one based upon a strictly organized series of episodes, rather its unity is one of theme; and the theme of the play is that of man Waiting. . . . *Waiting for Godot* aims for a unity of oneness in an attempt to become a Symbol. The Beckett “still” picture — like Chekhov in the *Cherry Orchard* or the *Trojan Women* of Euripides — continually radiates a theme and does not conclude with one in its final scene. Erasing the individualizing veneer of person, place, and time the playwright has created a stark and uncompromising tableau of humanity. Thus the play’s characters are depersonalized to the point of becoming symbols; the setting—“a country road, a tree”—is meant to be everywhere; the time of the play is also indeterminate. When one of the characters decides to “leave,” he cannot, because there is no place to go; that is, he is already there! In every sense or dimension, the stage has become a symbol for the boundaries of humanity. In a short exchange Gogo and Didi describe their fate and that of mankind, as it is understood by Samuel Beckett in this play.

**Didi:** All mankind is us . . . Let us represent worthily for once the foul brood to which a cruel fate consigned us! . . . What are we doing here,
that is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in this immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot. . .

Gogo: Ah!
Didi: We have kept our appointment. . . How many people can boast as much?
Gogo: Billions.
Didi: You may be right.

It may be inaccurate to view Beckett as desirous of assuming a strong stand as to the ultimate theological implications which his play suggests; he is merely attempting to present a detached view of the human situation stripped of its artifice and pomp. *Waiting for Godot* is a startling insight into a world too often deluged and deluded with artifical literature, with its gratifying, but often false, dream world—narcotic of happy endings and easy answers.

However objective his initial intention, the gloomy implications of Beckett’s play seem inescapable; the play’s very confrontation with the meaning of reality is in fact the first premise for its analysis. If we acknowledge the courage of Gogo and Didi—their sense of humor—we cannot also help but realize their fundamental ineffectuality in improving their lot. All Gogo and Didi can do is wait; that is their reality. The first line of the play seems to sum this up, “Nothing to be done.” And if there is externally injected salvation—and salvation, the play implies, may be the ultimate and necessary self-delusion in a world where endeavor is useless—it seems but a matter of chance.

One of the thieves (Calvary) was saved. . . It’s a reasonable percentage.

The structure of the play points out the eternal sameness of man’s state. The second act of this two-act play is
Waiting for Godot

the substantial inverse of the first. Were one to view Beckett's play on a number of evenings an unavoidable awareness of absolute monotony might be experienced. In symbolic fashion it tells us that the basic truth of man's situation—his waiting—never changes. Beckett prevents the boredom and triviality of his on-stage "passions" from becoming infectious by coating his tragedy of situation with farce. Yet the tonal quality of the play's theme is unrelenting in its darkness. Comedy becomes functional for Beckett when it serves to satirize a Christian of today. Gogo sums up what is for many of us the only significance of over twenty centuries of religious heritage,

The Bible . . . (He reflects) I must have taken a look at it. . . I remember the maps of the Holy Land. Coloured they were. Very pretty. The Dead Sea was pale blue. The very look of it made me thirsty. That's where we'll go, I used to say, that's where we'll go for our honeymoon. We'll swim. We'll be happy.

It is humorous because it is true, and because it is true it ought to hurt.

Perhaps the ultimate meaning of Beckett's play is that humanity is a very piddling crew of Chaplinesques whose absurdity is underlined by their grave concern with the same inane problems and dilemmas in all ages, given expression in Gogo's struggling with his shoe, while WAITING . . . for all eternity for a GODot whose only "reality" rests in the mired illusions of a corporate Christian mentality.

For Beckett, the reason for man's suffering lies beyond the scope of his play. That this Irish playwright can recognize the burdensome weltschmerz, that he apparently feels, in a world of silver screen escapism and super spy wish ful-
fillment is, he would agree, task enough. Beckett provides no clear answers, he seeks only to define the situation and to let others begin from there. Thus the reason for man’s suffering is left unanswered. The playwright does not seek to comfort; he shuns what he feels to be naive and presumptuous answers or quick relief.

In *Waiting for Godot* there is no consolation for Gogo and Didi in their squalid condition. And yet the painful reality which Beckett paints for our consideration has been answered, I suspect, in the *Book of Job* where—if we delete the inappropriate epilogue with its tag of sentimentality with regard to the restoration of Job’s goods—the central character asks similarly profound questions. Job also suffers when the story concludes yet he is comforted in his sorrow that a spiritual Agent is nevertheless at work in the universe. The premise which is established in *Job*, that Authority and a Plan do exist, although it does not automatically mean that every individual will not suffer, is absent in the slapstick, disordered vacuum of Beckett’s *Godot*. Job suffers and yet he is consoled; Gogo and Didi suffer but they are not comforted in their sorrow. At the conclusion of *Waiting for Godot* the situation has not changed. When the curtain falls the Lord and landowner has not arrived to his world fief. Thus a deus ex machina ending is not incorporated. Beckett’s anticlassical drama renounces such a device as utilized by the classical dramatists and seen also in the Whirlwind scene of *Job*. For just as Samuel Beckett rejects an age old dramatic convention, so then would he seem to reject the theological principle which it might necessarily affirm.
To Dream

LOUIS EMOND '65

To ply the cold, abysmal passages;
To crawl from the stifled, frozen bowels;
To slither from the firm, confining depth
Upward toward the light;
Upward through the dirt,
The frost constricted crust,
Out into the dank, the grey, the sullen mist of dawn;
To slip from the tomb, the life in death,
Into the death of after-birth;
To feel my own and the morning's dew;
To cringe in the sudden chill—
To feel a shudder;
To sense my body move without a tightness,
Without a hold, except that below;
To feel that lower hardness pass
Even for a moment with the frost;
To know again the primal mud;
To glide through the slime and leave a trail
That day will mark as mine;
To wind upon the fluid ground
Until the dry day,
Until the sun has risen,
Then to stretch forth my tongue
And taste dust;
To bend my body and move forward;
To feel my muscles inch along the ground;
To rub my breast raw upon the rocks
And leave small portions of my life
Upon the stones;
To seek the bush; to wind about its base
And weave amid its many vines;
To pull myself up upon the thorns—
To feel pain;
To sense the sharp but vital sting;
To coil myself inextricably in torment;
To seek the rose;
To smell the fragrance
Even as the evening shrouds its blush;
To know the gnawing, comforting agony
Even as the frost invades my wounds;
To uncoil with the death of night;
To see the first rays
Crown the bloom with fragile lace;
To watch the rising sun melt it
Into sparkling gems,
Pendant from the spreading blush,
A bloom untouched, unwilted
By that solid cold;
To know stiffness once again;
To stare insensate—
To watch the growing warmth of day;
To be hard, inert,
A branch upon a bush of supple vines,
Transfixed upon the growing thorns;
To watch the dew course my outstretched tongue
And taste nothing. . .

JOHN WALSH '66

Unidentified flying objects sighted
Over Portugal and other places
Recently were promptly identified
By the newspapers and others as
Unidentified Flying Objects.
New York – My Way

James Napier ’66

During the first few days of his visit to my home in northern New Jersey, Bill, my lanky, blue-eyed, college friend from Woodstock, Vermont, persistently had asked me for a tour of those two parts of New York City of which he had heard so much, Wall Street and Forty-Second Street. His long, thin face lost some of its Yankee stoicism and hinted at a mild impatience. I don’t especially like driving in New York, but I finally realized it would be less trouble than listening to Bill’s increasingly more insistent pleas. On Wednesday I agreed, and we started for New York.

Driving from New Jersey in an old, overworked Mercury, we crossed the George Washington Bridge and turned south on to the West Side Highway—a broad, riverside ribbon of concrete. While I fought with the surrounding traffic, Bill gyrated this way and that, trying to see everything at once. Both the riverside and the city side of the highway provided dozens of views of metropolitan activity. My Vermont friend first directed his attention to the yachts of the Knickerbocker Boat Basin on the Jersey side of the Hudson and Palisade Park on the cliff above it, and then he turned to see Grant’s tomb and Morningside Park on the edge of the city. The screech from a tugboat towing sand-laden barges brought his attention back to the river for a moment, but then he was again viewing the city and the expensive apartments of New York’s Riverside area. As the buildings got taller and the Empire State Building loomed nearer, he sank down in his seat and peered across the steering wheel and out the driver’s window in order to get the entire building in view. I tapped him on the shoulder and motioned
The Alembic

to the riverside of the highway. He turned in that direction and saw the piers of New York. The American Ranger sat quietly in the water, its glistening superstructure reflected in the oily, green-gray liquid. The oak-brown cargo booms rose from the deck at bizarre angles, and the bulging cargo nets swung gracefully toward the waiting longshoremen. Farther down, at Pier 76, the Scandinavian Queen disgorged American and Nordic passengers with a throaty grumble from its horn. In between the piers we could see a Grace Line boat out on the river, showing the isle of Manhattan to its passengers. Bill smiled when he realized that he and the car were part of the view they were seeing. Then his attention was turned to the skyline of New York. These cold, impressive buildings stirred his curiosity, and he wanted to know what was inside the shell of the skyline.

Goaded by his enthusiastic pleas and prodded by the insistent traffic, we reached the Chambers Street exit within a few minutes. With a feeling of substantial pride, I fought and won the right of way to the exit road from a challenging taxicab, and we drove on to Chambers Street. The heart of the wholesale and surplus district of New York. There, thin, telephone booth wide stores huddle together in ghettoed protection, and paradoxically heap their odd-lot wares and chrome-plated trash on the store front sidewalks, like scattered poultry meal. I explained to Bill that the meal awaits the many gullible visitors to New York, who consider the city so much a fantasy come true that they believe almost everything they see and hear. The New Yorker passed by on this June morning with an indifferent glance, while some barnyard tourists sifted and picked through the jumble of junk. We came to the end of Chambers Street where it turns on to Broadway. Turning south, we drove past City Hall, a marble palace in a
surrounding park, like a small detour sign in the city’s unquenchable thirst for progress and expansion. Ten blocks down we reached Wall Street, that hive of activity too busy to be concerned with anything but itself.

Actually, we knew we were approaching it, while still many blocks north. The buildings became taller, shutting off much of the day’s heat. They were aided by the cool, salty breeze from the Hudson which blows across the Battery. The streets became endless rows of parked cars, but there was, luckily, a parking space for us in front of a custom book shop offering a calfskin bound copy of *Moby Dick* for $22.95. Bill walked up to the shop window and stared at that book for several minutes. Finally, a little puzzled, he turned to me and said with Yankee logic, “A book like that is just a decoration. I’d be afraid to touch it.” Suspecting that the executive who bought it would merely add it to his collection of status symbols, I nodded in agreement.

Bill and I ambled down to the corner. We stopped while Bill viewed the surrounding buildings with an upturned head. Standing there, with the tall, silent buildings rising around him, Bill realized why others have applied the term “Canyons of New York” to this area. For all the ticker-taped, debit and credit, buy and sell frenzy behind its massive walls, Wall Street is one of the quietest places in the city. These are the streets of an older New York, narrower and less conducive to traffic, where only the higher forms of exchange are dealt with—stocks, bonds, and souls. Here there is no exchange of common goods, no haggling of the market place, no jostling in the crowded store aisles, no heavy trucking delivering supplies. Even the crafty deals pass through carefully washed and manicured hands rather than grimy, calloused ones, and
backstabbing operations are deftly performed to the soft, metronome sound of the ticker-tape. The neo-classic facade of those solemn and secure financial institutions also contributes to the street that cold and ponderous security of an Egyptian tomb. Wall Street is never really warm, not even on the hottest July day. The wet breeze from the battery acts as a silent, ghostly street cleaner. Yet that same breeze is what shatters the spectral gloom. Its fresh dampness snapped us awake like a cold morning shower and reminded us that Wall Street tolerates no sleep, only activity. Invigorated, our nostrils became aware of the faint trace of ozone and tar, reminiscent of the aftermath of a summer thundershower. The cool tingle in the air also honed our vision to its sharpest degree of observation. These towering temples of finance became almost too clear, too solid, too much a part of reality for Bill. He was drawn toward the stonework. As his fingers ran over the rough, cold, bark-like granite, the building taunted him with its inanimate truthfulness. The street was a clearing in a grove of stone Redwoods not unlike Bryant's forest temple. Like the Redwoods, Wall Street will continue to survive and grow through the generations with little concern for those who enter and leave its walls. Both are awe inspiring in their disregard for humanity, but, somehow, Wall Street is the most awful because, spawned by humans, it is a man made structure that lacks human warmth, sentiment, or understanding.

We wandered around the Wall Street area waiting for the beginning of the lunch hour and its crowds. Bill wanted to see the people themselves. At ten, the preparatory workers, the ones who start at six in the morning to prepare the day's business, began to filter on to the streets for their lunch hour. By 11:30 the sidewalks were filled with clots of gaily dressed secretaries and Brooks Brother-
ed groups of executives. Bill and I saw so many distin-
guished gentlemen that they were indistinguishable from
one another. They discussed golf scores, ulcers and bus-
iness deals among themselves in loud, self-conscious voices,
As we walked around we heard snatches of conversation.
“So look, Steve, why don’t you drop up to Westport this
weekend and we’ll shoot a little golf?” “. . . and then the
guy says ‘Well wait till you see his wife!’” (nervous laugh-
ter and they look up at the buildings as if they were seeing
them for the first time). Others started to talk, then faded.
They bantered about, trying to defeat the echo and pres-
ence of the buildings.

While they were drinking their lunch at the exclusive
bar and grill at the corner, our interest shifted to other
things. Secretaries in imitation Dior dresses walked hur-
riedly toward Nassau Street and the rows of bargain shops
and self-service cafeterias. Some talked of diets, others
of clothes, all of trivialities. The main topic was one
common to all young womanhood, getting a man. Since
we had stopped to watch and listen, I stepped to the side
of a building, but Bill stood out in the thick of the crowd.
I knew it was a mistake. Poor Bill, he looked like a salmon
trying to swim upstream. Inexperienced in slipping
through New York crowds, he was like an unsuspecting
male caught in a Ladies Bargain Day sale at Macy’s. Un-
daunted, Bill tried to hold his ground, but I knew that he
would never win. I grabbed hold of him and ushered him
back to the car. From the safety of the steel-shelled
vehicle, I asked him what he thought of Wall Street. He
was silent for a moment as he rubbed his side, and I di-
rected the car into traffic. “Well,” he said with a carefully
measured drawl, “its all mighty interesting, but I don’t
think the people have to be so rude.”
I smiled. "Bill, you haven't seen anything yet!"

Traveling north on Broadway, we noticed that the noonday heat increased rapidly. Five miles uptown at Forty-Second Street the warm air moved sluggishly, but not the people. The crowds were even thicker than on Wall Street and not nearly so genteel in their manners. I cautioned Bill about this. These lunch time herds race to reach nowhere as quickly as possible, so I did not want a repeat of Bill's Wall Street experience. Forty-Second Street is enough of a shock and mystery to the tourist without compounding it. From Ninth Avenue to Fifth Avenue, Forty-Second Street presents a tawdry spectacle to all that will gather round and listen or look. As we drove by, I pointed out Marble Collegiate Church and the New York Public Library which stand sentinel on either end to check any continued growth of that spectacle. I knew we would never find a parking space in the street, so I drove on to a small, seventy-five cents an hour parking lot between Eighth and Ninth Avenue. After receiving the proper receipt, we began to walk. We stopped for a moment at the corner of Forty-Second and Eighth. A revivalist preacher, shabby, tattered, and wine stained, stood on a soap-box, an American flag by his side. He was speaking of the soul to the few who would listen to the mechanically recited verses from the Bible. Like Dante viewing the gates of Hell, he tossed a glance at the dozens of movie marquees, second-hand book stores and bargain shops that line the block. They are an existence in themselves.

The marquees, of course, stood out the most, and each promised us the most in sensual enjoyment. We left the preacher to his sonorous recitation and walked past the movie houses toward Seventh Avenue. Exterior posters displayed lurid scenes with "Positively For Adults Only"
slashed across them. An adult is anyone with a dollar twenty-five. Bill stared in disbelief. Next door was one of the many second-hand book shops that specialize in “back-issue magazines” of a certain variety. Middle-aged men twittered purposelessly in and out, still in their winter overcoats that smelled of stale tobacco and nervous perspiration in the early summer air. As we passed, we could see them slowly wandering about inside, their eyes dancing furtive glances at the insides of pornographic magazines and each other. It’s not an agreeable sight. “The proper reaction is pity,” I said.

He nodded. “Yes, I guess so.”

“Come on, there is more to see.” I half-led him across the street, where a Syrian merchant stood in front of a store that offered a close-out sale of Japanese radios, tape recorders, movie cameras, and other assorted equipment. There was an inviting smile on his face while he silently repeated the only prayer he knew, “Caviat Emptor.” He seemed very prosperous. I imagined that this was about his seventh close-out sale of the year. Bill was already eyeing a $7.98 transistor radio. Oh, the all believing tourist! “Bill, let me give you a little sound advice. The only thing that’s fairly true in New York is the prices. That radio is worth exactly seven dollars no matter how many seventy per cent off signs are placed near it. NEVER believe all you see or hear in New York.” I paused. “Is our lesson for today learnt?”

“Okay,” he smiled in reply.

At one o’clock the midday crowd was at its peak, but we decided to do a little crowd-walking. We were enveloped, pushed and jarred along by large clots of humanity. As our shoes scraped along on the unyielding pavement, large roof top billboard signs, or harsh glowing
neons bounced our attention from one point to another. Each shop we passed had a screaming radio which combined with the others on the street to produce an undulating cacophony of fragmented music. At certain points, sections of the crowd separated and stormed the entrance of a steak house or snack shop. The smells of charcoal singed steak, fried frankfurters and burnt pizza crust filled the nearby air. Quickly they blended into the unified smell of greasy smoke and engaged in combat with the thick odor of diesel oil, tar and exhaust fumes from the traffic in the street. The traffic itself was in the midst of a war of horns and brake screeches.

From Ninth Avenue to Fifth Avenue, Forty-Second Street blared out its message to our senses. The thick, noxious bus fumes, the cacophony of blasting radios, the glare, even in the daytime, of polychromatic neons, and the scratchy taste of dust, all of these enveloped our senses and caused a mild, artificial delirium.

At Fifth Avenue, the stone lions at the steps of the New York Public Library mark the beginning, once again, of sane civilization. We sat down to rest by the granite beasts. I stretched my legs down the span of three steps “Well, have you seen enough, Bill?”

“I guess so. Say, the theater district is just up the block, isn’t it? We could walk. . .

“Hold on there, Bill! I can only take this place in small doses. We can come back on Friday night and see Shakespeare in the Park.”

“Fair enough.”

“Say what makes you think that the theater district is worth seeing? You know, Broadway theater has really gone down hill. People used to go to a play to be enter-
tained and learn something; then for a while they went just to be entertained; now they just go to be distracted.” Bill's face looked a little glum. “Don't look so sad, we'll take a look at the district before the play Friday. There's nothing like seeing for yourself. For the present I think we have done enough building watching.”

“Yes and I'm getting a little hungry. I'm a little puzzled about one thing,” said Bill rubbing his head. “Do the people around here know what they are doing, or are they all a little crazy? I mean, they have all these marvelous buildings and yet they don't seem to know how to use them. These people are so phony and cold and rude, and what's worse, they seem to want to be that way. You could get more human sentiment out of an IBM machine.”

“Well, Bill, it may not be quite that bad, but I'm not about to argue the point. Let's get something to eat. I know a place over on Lexington that has great corned beef and the best Irish porter in town!”

A Whisper

**Stephen S. Moody '68**

I want to stand forever at this window,
Overlooking my moonless bay,
And listen as time and the sea
Methodically settle and resettle the sands of the beach.

I could listen to that melancholy whisper
'Til the breeze ceases which breathes it to me;
'Til the whisper itself dies,
Breathless in the heat of eternity's embrace.
Vesti la giubba
JAMES P. DOYLE ’66

Repelling the surge of the waves, you stood well grounded, Coxcomb blown out to sea, bells mute to the Reverberating sweeps of the onthrust.
The hollow depths of ebbing years, The murkiness of forgotten weeks, The shallowness of spent days Evoked cries of a ritual witnessed solely By the coral shoreline.
The once courtly robe, hanging by your side, Caught insignificant tears, unabsorbed by The suspended torrent that would overwhelm, But for your horrible beauty of being a dwarf— Too small for Neptune’s watery eyes.

Untitled
JOHN WALSH ’66

I
The morning smiles and invites me to a clear Awareness of the day. The mist is cool And drains hot sleep off as energies tear Through dry bone cells like bullets.

II
The day was deceitful, leading me through A monotony of unevents where the eye Cannot see change and time’s not felt although The minutes move and real things go by.

III
The morning sets down on the edge of time, preserves A cautious balance with its wings, and smiles. Its wide face blossoms out to the tips of wings That flop about and drip with mist, and smiles.
Lyric

Peter Barrett '68

I

The massive blur of running colors made
an intangible omelette melted down the gullet
and small brass pellets bounced in the ear:
it was the magnitude of music
exhaled from mouths of genius
that
awed me.

II

But the clatter of clarinets erased composure
stirring the dust on 5 old pianos asleep in the attic
dancing them through darkness on fractured legs:
it was the initial impact of strange violins
scraping themselves in leprous agony
that
mystified me.

III

The silent sunlight diffused through ice made
prisms of color to becloud cold trees
and embrace the highways of dazzled children:
I think it was the quiet wind
blown from lungs of genius
that
awed me.
The Alembic

IV

But the bending trees crashed heavily over
bending like striped old men who grasped
at children's directions, rushing into wild intersections:
it was their screaming at the madness movement
of countless horrible headlights
that
mystified me.

V

Still in the soft midnight someone
crawling through the corridors of a wrinkled forehead
began to create again the movement of music
allowing clarinets and violins each their own occasion
for the pianos danced in order under a healing light
and all of it
became me.

VI

But even in these waking dreams I find
no consolation in the twisting memories of life:
the repeating chimes of color and crashing trees
give them no position in the attic dance
but create only new commotion in an ever darker night
and all of it will
murder me.