THE ALEMBIC

Published Quarterly

by the

students of providence college

providence, R. I.

The ALEMBIC is published bi-monthly by the students of Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office, Providence, Rhode Island, December 18, 1920, under Act of March 3, 1879. Subscription $2.00 the year. "Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103. Act of October 3, 1917; authorized April 9, 1932." Printed at the Oxford Press, Providence, Rhode Island.
L. Bruce Porter '67
*Editor-in-chief*

Bryan V. Maguire '67
*Associate Editor*

Robert A. Hutson '67
*Prose Editor*

Dennis A. Wentraub '67
*Poetry Editor*

Robert J. MacDonald '67
*Art Editor*

Dr. Mario L. D’Avanzo
*Faculty Consultant*
The Ballad of Lee-Poo
   Stanley R. Azaro ‘69 .............................................. 5

Journal of Audubon Moonlight — Number One
   Stephen S. Moody ‘68 .................................................. 15

The Chinese Box
   Joseph Dolan ‘67 .................................................... 16

Poem
   Stephen V. Grillo ‘67 ................................................ 17

Photographs ............................................................. 19

On An Autumn Day
Reflections On Our Times
   George Peek ‘67 ..................................................... 31

Eros In Solitude
   L. Bruce Porter ‘67 .................................................. 33

Carriage of Iron
   Timothy Reardon ‘68 ................................................. 39

Drawings
   Stephen V. Grillo ‘67 ............................................... 41

Three Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke
   Translated by Joseph Dolan ‘67 .................................... 53

Art
   Robert J. MacDonald ‘67 .......................................... 4, 10, 14, 30, 32
**the ballad of lee-poo**

On distant island Baltimoa
Beneath the feared Mount Krakatoa
There lived a lad named Lee-Poo Poa
Whose father's name was Poo-Lee Poa

He loved a lass — the fair Isolder
Despite her being ten years older
He wished he could be somewhat bolder
And someday kiss and hug and hold 'er

Though little Lee-Poo was no boor
And many lasses could allure
The fair Isolder thought him poor
For all he owned was one lemur

Lee-Poo was by his love rejected
When un-fair Isolder interjected
"I'll marry once you have collected
The treasures I've always expected"

You must first traverse to bleary bog
On lonely island Chichipog
To find beneath a magic log
The golden tongue of Fru-Fru frog

Then climb Mount Krakatoa's peak
Where for my hope-chest you must seek
The Great Carbuncle of Pikapeek
For me it would be magnifique
But last you must peruse the ocean
To satisfy my final notion
In a whirlpool find a beauty potion
The famous Lumu-Lama Lotion

So hearken, Lee-Poo, to my demands
For now Isolder you commands
To put these treasures in my hands
And then announce the wedding bands

Now give me a kiss and say good-bye
I’ll be a good miss while you’re on the fly”

II

“Chichipog, Chichipog
Wherefore art thou, Chichipog?”
Cried Lee-Poo in the murky fog
The deadly Polynesian sea-smog
In quest of precious Fru-Fru frog

The sailors sailed the sea serene
Though through the fog was nothing seen
It spread a glow incarnadine
So calm, so schone, of monstrous mien

In such a foggy heaviness
Direction they could only guess
Their vision helped them less and less
So warily did they progress
Darkness wrapped them like a cloak
And then a ray of fortune broke
As suddenly they heard the croak
"Chi-chi-POG-chi-chi-POG"

Through murky fog through deadly dew
What led Lee-Poo?
"Chi-chi-POG-chi-chi-POG"
Through heavy smog survived by few
What led Lee-Poo?
"Chi-chi-POG-chi-chi-POG"
Toward Chichipog toward great Fru-Fru
What led Lee-Poo?
"Chi-chi-POG-chi-chi-POG"

And now the croaking louder came
"Chi-chi-POG-chi-chi-POG"
(From which the isle received its name)

The frog's own croak became the source
Of direction on the proper course
And soon they landed in full force
On Chichipog to gain its prized resource

"Chi-chi-POG-chi-chi-POG" grew bolder, bolder
And Lee-Poo's blood turned colder, colder
For now he was an awed beholder
Of the treasurer yearned by fair Isolder

A Bunga-Bung bug was quickly captured
With which Fru-Fru might be perhaps lured
Indeed its scent had Fru enraptured
To see the Bunga-Bung uncaptured
With care he aimed his lengthly tongue  
To snatch the juicy Bunga-Bung  
But as he did the trap was sprung  
Lee-Poo was ready with his blade  
And slit the tongue with no one's aid  
For his greed the frog had dearly paid

Sympathize with the poor Fru-Fru frog  
No longer croaking "Chi-chi-POG-chi-chi-POG"  
Until his tongue grows back no "Chi-chi-POG"  
No more a frog-horn in the fog

But Lee-Poo departed quite content  
For he had carried out his intent  
The golden tongue he duly sent  
To fair Isolder's gaudy tent

III

Back he came to Baltimoa  
To scale the feared Mount Krakatoa  
That brave young lover Lee-Poo Poa  
The pride of his father Poo-Lee Poa

As Lee-Poo climbed the volcano mumbled  
Like a pump primed it heaved and grumbled

Boom-a-gluck Boom-a-gluck  
The lava-muck the lava-muck  
Stark and steep stark and steep  
The mountain heap the mountain heap  
Pop pop pop Pop pop pop
The bubbling glop would never stop
Boom-a-gluck Boom-a-gluck
The lava-muck the lava-muck

But finally he reached the top
Of soot and sweat his brow he'd mop
He saw the cone was full of glop
Pouring out lava without a stop

The only way to find the buried lode
Would be by some ingenious mode
For Lee-Poo the volcano to goad
Into making itself erupt and explode

Ah, but Lee-Poo had a strange elixer
He brewed it in his own party-mixer
A wondrous sure-fire Eruption-Fixer
So use it, Poo, and then descend quick, Sir!

With wild abdomen Lee-Poo threw the potion
The lava-pool commenced a churning motion
An eruption started with much commotion
And spewed hot lava and land and ocean

What a noise! What a roar!
The volcano shot out rocks galore
And from its bowels the Carbuncle tore
And threw it down to Isolder's front door!
IV

Once more Lee-Poo sailed la mer
And ventured where no one else would dare
To enter a whirlpool he should beware
And get Lumu-Lama Lotion for Isolder fair

Three weeks they sailed a sea serene
As yet no whirlpool sighted or seen
Though hampered by seaweed thick and green
And menaced by monsters of menacing mien

Soon they heard the fearful sound
At last their object they had found
They saw the whirlpool swirling round
Just like a wrist-watch tightly wound

Whool-a-woom Whool-a-woom
See the whirlpool before them loom
Whool-a-woom Whool-a-woom
Swirling toward the whirlpool’s womb
Whool-a-woom Whool-a-woom
A mighty yawn a cavernous tomb
Whool-a-woom Whool-a-woom
The mammouth maelstrom moaned their doom

Lee-Poo leaped to the bottom of the brew
And found not one but phials two
Which one was right he wished he knew
So he snatched the one of the color blue
To fight the whirlpool he could not
But in his mind he plotted a plot
At its very bottom he found the spot
To reverse the whirlpool by tying a knot

A knot he tied where the whirlpool ended
Its mighty downward course upended
Slowly the lengthy spiral unbended
And upward the whirlpool’s way now wended

Onto his ship Lee-Poo went back
The un-whirlpool must needs back-track

But the un-whirlpool became a water-spout
And snatched the ship and tossed it about
The sailors began to scream and shout
It seemed their luck had all but run out

The water-spout carried them over the sea
To Baltimoa Island as safe as can be
Lee-Poo who’d found the treasures three
Now hoped to marry his lady

V

Once he’d landed from the surging ocean
Lee-Poo brought Isolder the longed-for lotion
Though neither had the faintest notion
That it was a very strong love potion

For in the whirlpool Poo’s life seemed forsaken
And in his haste his choice of phial mistaken
Lama-Lumu, not Lumu Lama, he had taken
A potion that could Isolder’s love awaken
Isolder thought it the lotion of beauty
And quickly doused her face profusely
Under the potion’s spell whom did she first see?
The father of Lee-Poo, old Poo-Lee!

The Lama-Lumu had worked all right
Isolder loved Poo-Lee at very first sight
For the new-found lovers the day was bright
But the poor victim of the potion’s slight
Would never against true love dare fight

When they saw the tears in Lee-Poo’s eyes
They gave him as a small consolation prize
The golden tongue of enormous size
With which to wipe his weeping eyes

But finally they gave him the love compote
For which he had risked his life and boat
In the use of which his days he’ll devote
Perhaps another girl’s heart he’ll smote
And a worthier love-match for himself promote

VI

On little island Baltimoa
Upon the map a protozoa
Occurred this tale of Lee-Poo Poa
And his lucky father Poo-Lee Poa

Let not this ballad romances smother
Since Isolder finally wed another
Think on it this way and no other
Lee-Poo lost a wife but gained a mother

Stanley R. Azaro ’69
The echoes whispered through vaulted shadows rising to windows in the dome, where moonlight lay peacemeal—shattered by intimate trees.

By Stephen S. Moody '68
the chinese box

Fifty-four movements it takes to open this box;  
I’ll gladly let you try, but take this warning:  
Even I have trouble with the combination  
And the directions it came with are no help at all.  
The basic pattern of moves is easily learned,  
But you mustn’t trust it too much, or else  
You’ll carom by the subtle imperfections  
In wood and catch which make this box unique,  
Openable only to devotees of such  
Curiosities or perhaps to the very lucky.  
Moreover, it responds to me only rarely,  
And at the oddest times and places—at night,  
When trees creak and their branches claw at the moon,  
Or perhaps from behind mansard windows over-looking rainy streets in spring; Or by  
Candlelight in chambers fit for throbs of passion—  
On such or similar occasions, I take it out  
And open it in fifty-four swift movements,  
Fingers flying, scarcely looking at it,  
Too fast to remember the full sequence,  
Or to tell you where the pattern failed.

By Joseph Dolan ’67
This metaphorical March the lion still rages, struts and stretches, yawns and growls, uncontested by foe, unwarmed by summer’s bed. Then he’ll go out like a lamb— when the great mother comes out of the April shower, softens, and sprawls envitably about the countryside’s new green.

She’ll give birth to a new world, and they’ll always remember mama, and how He went out like a lamb.

Janus: A man must leave something besides an unsatisfied wife and a forgetful brood of mama-bleating children.

This metaphorical March the lion yet rages, struts and stretches, yawns and growls, vanquisher of foes, warmed by summer’s bed. Then he’ll go out like a lamb— when the great mother comes out of the April shower, hardens, spawns the countryside, and runs its wet color scheme.

By Stephen V. Grillo ’67
Photographs
on an autumn day

Whithered, crisping, like a burned bacon,
    a small leaf fluttered down.
I could not help but see its life,
    now dead, wasted perhaps—
I reflected a moment, touched;
Insignificant thing, I thought,
And crushed it to a powder.

reflections on our times

"Look!"
She cried. And I ran
In time to see—
The cruel, tarnished, twisted mass,
Once intelligible,
Once real,
Reduced—
By the hand of Fate or Providence
Or Madness
To this mass;
All in the sake of progress
And art.

By George Peek '67
Eros In Solitude

By L. Bruce Porter ’67

In the drama of modern man that is Camus' The Fall, three expressions of the existential attitude encounter and expose themselves. Jean Baptiste Clamence's struggle to achieve a Sartrean self-affirmation amidst a Dantecosmos results in a consummate self-indictment the implications of which urge us onward toward a more fully realized and revealing utterance of the human situation. Dante, and Sartre are as much as Clamence the protagonists in this Camus' vision of man.

One of the more obvious and most telling aspects of this novel is its Dantean frame of reference. The dominant metaphor of Amsterdam as the Inferno is the most obvious of the many images and contentions Camus borrows from the Divine Comedy. In this exploitation of Dante lies one of the principal paths to the heart of Camus' story; for just as the Divine Comedy is the drama of the soul's choice, so is The Fall the story of a man's attempt to discover himself (self-affirmation) and the meaning of life. Dante's vision of hell is the soul's self-knowledge in all its evil potentialities; and as Dante travels deeper into the Inferno, he symbolically plunges ever deeper into the hidden places of the self. It is this same search that has led Jean Baptiste Clamence to Amsterdam:

For we are at the heart of things here. Have you noticed that Amsterdam's concentric canals resemble the circles of hell? The middle-class hell, of course, peopled with bad dreams. When one comes from the outside, as one gradually goes through those circles, life — and hence its crimes — become denser, darker. Here, we are in the
last circle . . . but you understand then why I can say that the center of things is here although we stand at the tip of the continent.¹

Clamence consciously exploits this image of himself as both Dante and Vergil in the Inferno that is Amsterdam. To himself he is the traveller (Dante) who goes through the depths of the Inferno in search of his true self and the meaning of his existence. To others, such as the listener in this novel, he is or at least attempts to be, human wisdom (Vergil) attempting to awaken man to a realization of his guilt and to assist man towards some state of natural perfection. Thus Camus skillfully utilizes various concepts inherent in the *Divine Comedy* to place Clamence in a perspective that will allow us to behold the tragic irony of his existence.

Let us see if we can follow how this works. Clamence exhibits a demoniacal type of natural “asceticism” which may be called *eros* in solitude; for his is a love that is mortally wounded by its own incapacity to love another, and thus he flies from others in order not to have to give himself to them. This is the nature of the self-love of *eros* in solitude: the ultimate and only good is the self. Now we see how Clamence is the living embodiment of Sartre’s “L’enfer c’est les autres!” Clamence, in rejecting every human commitment, preserves his freedom from everything that would limit it; but the price he pays is one of complete emptiness — his is a freedom without content. Ultimately, his is the affirmation of an empty shell.

The most obvious example of this is Clamence’s refusal to help the drowning woman. This was more than just a refusal to help another human being; it was the refusal to make a positive commitment to life. The water, river
and ocean, is in a sense a spiritual force; but it is best seen here as the great power of the vast unknown — eternity. In part then this is a refusal to come to grips with an eternal reality and all that such a commitment implies, but it is also the rejection of a human commitment. In his refusal to take the plunge, we see that his is a tragically ironic fall.

Camus seems to use the imagery and symbolism of the fall also in a Dantesque sense, for it works well with the theme of reality versus illusion. Hell, in Dante's conception, is simply the sin itself, experienced without illusion. Clamence's self-imposed inversion of reality is thus brutally yet brilliantly envisioned by Camus in the imagery of the "rocky funnel" and the "supreme summits":

"Let's pause on these heights. Now you understand what I meant when I spoke of aiming higher. I was talking, it so happens of the supreme summits, the only places I can really live. Yes, I have never felt comfortable except in lofty places."

"Striving to reach elevation minus eight hundred at the risk of getting one's head caught in a rocky funnel [an obvious reference to the Inferno] seemed to me the exploit of perverted or traumatized characters."

Notice the attitude and reference to the sea and humanity in this passage that reveals so much of Clamence's outlook on life:

"A natural balcony fifteen hundred feet above a sea still visible bathed in sunlight, on the other hand, was the place where I could breathe most freely, especially if I were alone, well above the human ants."

... after all, living aloft is still the only way of being seen and hailed by the largest number.
These words must be seen by the reader as greatly ironic, for here Clamence is really at his lowest. At the very bottom of the Inferno are Judas, Brutus and Cassius: Judas, as symbolic of spiritual treason — the betrayal of God and the destruction of the supernatural world order; Brutus and Cassius, as symbolic of treason against Man-in-Society — the betrayal of man and the destruction of human world order. This treason is the ultimate sin in Dante's conception, and it seems that Camus infers the same here; for in denying a drink of water to a dying man, Clamence grossly offends both the spiritual and the human:

Let's just say that I closed the circle the day I drank the water of a dying comrade.  

The irony here is double, for Clamence's first betrayal is that of himself. He refuses to take the plunge into himself to discover his real self, or in the least he is a Dante who has fathomed deepest hell and yet adamantly refused to learn its lesson:

I reached the Southern Zone with the intention of finding out about the Resistance. But once there and having found out, I hesitated. The undertaking struck me as a little mad and, in a work, romantic. I think especially that underground action suited neither my temperament nor my preference for exposed heights . . . I admired those who indulged in such heroism of the depth, but couldn't imitate them.  

The true significance of his name becomes apparent in the comment. "... my career as a false prophet crying in the wilderness and refusing to come forth." The self-imposed and freely willed nature of his betrayal is affirmed by his own words:
To be sure, I knew my failings and regretted them. Yet I continued to forget them with a rather meritorious obstinacy.9

His very existence becomes an inferno for him: the inner burning agony of guilt increases as one descends in the Inferno, and at the same time it becomes colder with the freezing of every conception—the finality and immutability of the soul's choice. Clamence says to his listener, "Open the window a little, please; it's frightfully hot. Not too much, for I am cold also."10

Clamence's complete perversion is seen in the spiritual tyranny he attempts on those about him. We have seen how he knows that spiritual goods are greater than the material, and that it is possible for him to love selfishly in the very act of depriving himself of material things for the benefit of another. He maliciously cultivated charity so as to please himself with a sense of satisfaction and to gain the applause of others. We see moral tyranny at work in the very opening scene of the novel, in which he helps a stranger so that the man will feel obliged to invite Clamence to sit and talk with him. He later admits his ulterior motives when he says:

However, I have a superiority in that I know it and this gives me the right to speak. You see the advantage, I am sure. The more I accuse myself, the more I have a right to judge you. Even better, I provoke you into judging yourself, and this relieves me of that much of the burden11 . . . But I bend, because I continue to love myself.12

Finally, in all its awesome ugliness, we see the power of a self-love that has turned into self-hatred and which, in adoring itself, adores the monster by which it is consumed:
But they sign, according to him, because they love themselves, and they hail nothing at all because they loathe themselves.\textsuperscript{13}

And in these following lines are juxtaposed the simple human aspect of evil that characterizes Francesca da Rimini with the cosmic power of the self-adoring evil of Judas. Here is the easy giving-in, the inability to say, "No," and the intense self-pity:

I permit myself everything again, and without the laughter this time. I haven't changed my way of life; I continue to love myself and to make use of others. Only, the confession of my crimes allows me to begin again lighter in heart and to taste a double enjoyment, first of my nature and secondly of a charming repentance . . . I pity without absolving, I understand without forgiving, and above all, I feel at last that I am being adored.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{1}Albert Camus, \textit{The Fall} (New York, 1956), p. 14-15. \textsuperscript{2}op. cit., p. 23. \textsuperscript{3}op. cit., p. 24. \textsuperscript{4}ibid. \textsuperscript{5}op. cit., p. 25. \textsuperscript{6}op. cit., p. 126. \textsuperscript{7}op. cit., p. 122. \textsuperscript{8}op. cit., p. 147. \textsuperscript{9}op. cit., p. 76. \textsuperscript{10}op. cit., p. 137. \textsuperscript{11}op. cit., p. 140. \textsuperscript{12}op. cit., p. 76. \textsuperscript{13}op. cit., p. 134. \textsuperscript{14}op. cit., p. 141-143.


Clanging, rambling carriage of iron
Holding her wares of hapless faces,
Lifeless forms with blank expressions
Padded out in synthetic laces.
Bulging and pregnant with her lifeless carry,
She rolls her hulk over monotonous tracks
Nudging forward then winding back,
While the indifferent glance in isolation.
Stopping, she spits sparks of fire and shrieks,
Then opening numerous jowls,
She pours out the hard:
She dribbles out the meek.
Empty, motionless at her station,
Waiting for those who seek transportation,
Silently groans a mechanical lass
From indigestions of the past.

Timothy Reardon ’68
Drawings

By Stephen V. Grillo '67
Three Poems

OF

RAINER MARIA RILKE

Translated by Joseph Dolan '67

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), a native of Prague, is considered by most critics the greatest lyric poet of modern Germany. The center of much of his work is the mystical dependence of God on man and man on God. Rilke never ceases to explore this, for him, ever-changing relationship. Characteristic of his later work is also a new kind of objectivity. Indeed, Rilke created a new kind of poetry, the Dinggedicht, or "thing-poem," which he himself distinguished from his earlier work by calling them "experiences," rather than "feelings." He spent hours observing animate and inanimate objects until he grasped their essential nature. "The Flamingos," and "Archaic Bust of Apollo" are samples of this type, dating from 1908. "You, Neighbor God" (1899), and "Autumn Day" (1902), are typical of his earlier, more emotional lyricism.
Du, Nachbar Gott, wenn ich dich manchesmal
in langer Nacht mit hartem Klopfen store —
so ists, weil ich dich selten atmen hore
und weiss: Du bist allein im Saal.
Und wenn du etwas brauchst, ist keiner da,
um deinem Tasten einen Trank zu reichen:
Ich horche immer. Gib ein kleines Zeichen.
Ich bin ganz nah.

Nur eine schmale Wand ist zwischen uns,
durch Zufall; denn es konnte sein:
ein Rufen deines oder meines Munds —
und sie bricht ein
ganz ohne Larm und Laut.
You, neighbor God, if I disturb you from time


during the long night with my vigorous knocking,

it's because I don't hear you breathe very often

and know: You are alone in that big room.

And if you need something, there's no one there
to put a drink within your reach.

I'm always listening. Give a little sign.

I'm quite close by.

Only a thin wall is between us,

by accident; for it could be:

a call from either you or me

And it collapses

without the slightest sound or fuss.
herbsttag

Herr: es ist Zeit. Der Sommer war sehr gross. Leg deinen Schatten auf die Sonnenuhren, und auf den Fluren lass die Winde los.

Befiehl den letzten Fruchten voll zu sein; gib ihnen noch zei sudlichere Tage, drange sie zur Vollendung hin und jage die liezte Susse in den schweren Wein.

Wer jetzt kein Haus hat, baut sich keines mehr. Wer jetzt allein ist, wird es lange bleiben, wird wachen, lesen, lange Briefe schreiben und wird in denn Alleen hin und her unruhig wandern, wenn die Blatter treiben.
autumn day

Lord: it is time. Summer was magnificent.
Cast your shadow on the sundials,
and let loose the winds in the fields.

Command the last fruits to be full;
give them two more days of more southerly weather,
push them towards perfection and chase
the final sweetness into the heavy wine.

He who has no house now, builds none.
He who is now alone, will long remain so,
will watch, read, write long letters,
and will wander restlessly back and forth
in the streets, when the leaves start up.
archaischer torso apollos

Wir kannten nicht sein unerhörtes Haupt
darin die Augenapfel reiften. Aber
sein Torso glüht noch wie ein Kandelaber,
in dem sein Schauen, nur zurückgeschraubt,
sich halt und glänzt. Sonst konnte nicht der Bug
der Brust dich blenden, und im leisen Drehen
der Lenden konnte nicht ein Lacheln gehen
zu jener Mitte, die die Zeugung trug.

Sonst stünde dieser Stein entstellt und kurz
unter der Schultern durchstichtigem Sturz
und flimmerte nicht so wie Raubtierfelle;

und brach nicht aus allen seinen Randern
aus wie ein Stern: denn da ist keine Stelle,
die dich nicht sieht. Du musst dein Leben andern.
We were not acquainted with his unheard-of head, 
where his actual eyes were formed. But 
his torso still glows like a candelabrum 
in which his vision, merely withdrawn inside,

perdures and gleams. Otherwise the curve 
of the breast couldn’t blind you, nor in the easy turn 
of the hips could a smile go 
to that center, which carried the powers of generation.

Otherwise this stone would have stood defaced and abrupt 
under the diaphanous drop of the shoulders 
and would not have shimmered so like some predatory’s pelt;

and would not have broken out of all its bounds 
like a star: for there is no part of it 
which doesn’t see you. You must change your life.
providence college