THE ALEMBIC

PUBLISHED SEASONALLY

by the

STUDENTS OF PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

May 1969 Volume L
JOHN KEVIN BARRY  Editor-in-Chief

W. JEFFERY TACY  Associate Editor

STEPHEN J. GUMBLEY  Assistant Editor

JOHN E. LORANGER  Art Editor

CHRISTOPHER P. DURNEY  Literary Editor

JOHN F. HENNEDY  Faculty Advisor
CONTENTS

POETRY

3 TO THE TELLER OF FAIRY TALES
MARK GRENIER

4 AN ELEGY ON THE MOST RECENT DEATH OF ST. GREGORY VII OR THE PRICKLY PEAR IS DEAD
DANIEL MARCUS

5 OF FROST AND FLOWERS
MARK GRENIER

7 PRAYER
CHRIS DURNEY

11 THE DARK SIDE OF THE FLOWER
JACK PARILLO

12 GUNSHOTS RATTLE . . .
CHRIS DURNEY

16 HER’S
JOHN CASHMAN

17 A NAKED CHILD IN THE BLOSSOMS
CHRIS DURNEY

18 SMOKE
JOHN CASHMAN

19 PLEASE DO, LORD
STEPHEN DUCLOS

20 SPRINGTIME FANCY
STEPHEN GUMBLEY

21 MYOPIA
BRIAN SIMMONS

23 THE ONE QUARTET
ROY PETER CLARK

26 YESTERDAY’S GARBAGE
MICHAEL CICCONE

28 THERE IS NO ONE . . .
ARTHUR MARANDOLA

29 TIROS II
PAUL F. FERGUSON

EDITORIAL

1 THE ROMAN EUNUCH - PRIESTS
JOHN KEVIN BARRY

PHOTOGRAPHS

6/17
10/18
OLGA OTERO

ART

14 OP DRAWING
KEN FRAME

COVER DESIGN
KEN FRAME
The Roman Eunuch - Priests

In the beginning of the Gospel of St. Matthew, dealing with the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven and the evangelical discourse of Christ, we are given by our Lord a description of the true disciple.

It is not those who say to me, "Lord, Lord," who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of the Father in heaven. When the day comes many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, cast out demons in your name, work miracles in your name?" Then I shall tell them to their faces: I have never known you; away from me you evil men." (Mt 7:21-23)

Is it not strangely paradoxical that Jesus should declare those persons who work miracles in His name to be evil and unworthy of salvation? The meaning of His statement is not so difficult to understand. For Jesus has just finished preaching of the SPIRIT of the "children of the kingdom," an attitude of mind and heart so revolutionary that it commands us to seek a divine ideal, godly in its nature and perfection.

You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Mt 5:48)

And yet unless a man is moved in spirit and acts upon Christ's teaching, he will be no more than a hypocrite before God.

But everyone who listens to these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand. (Mt 7:26)

In many ways the Church today is like the house built on sand when the rain comes down, the gales blow and the house is struck, she is without power, castrated and impotent! Surely we know that God has guaranteed the Church's continuation; yet as what: a prostitute to the state and society, compromising Christ's laws and teachings for the pleasures of expediency or the fear of persecution. The Bishop of Rome, successor of Peter bemoans the abandonment of orthodoxy in the Church; yet he does not speak against a war which by every standard of justice taught by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church is immoral. He does not condemn or threaten
with excommunication Catholic Christians who sublimate their souls to militarism, and fascism while denying the human rights of their fellow man.

Perhaps the Christian ideal has been found too difficult for the priests of the Church. And yet one can hardly say that it has ever been really tried in our time. If the external actions of the Church today in anyway reflect the inward ideal of her members, true Christianity is in grave danger. It can only be self-deception to believe that man has in the last half century come closer to a fraternal society and Christian life. On the contrary, man is now a master of destruction motivated by fear and hatred which drives him to construct newer and greater weaponry.

There is little in the history of social progress which in some way, openly or indirectly, did not result from the influences of Christianity. Yet unless the Church abandons Her fears, be they the threat of persecution or the loss of temporal power, She will be like the hypocritical Pharisees who be-moaned the blood of the prophets and holy men, not by acts of love, sacrifice and prayer but by building massive and ornate tombs in their memory.

_Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who build the sepulchres of the prophets and decorate the tombs of holy men, saying, 'We would never have joined in shedding the blood of the prophets, had we lived in our fathers’ day.’ So! Your own evidence tells against you! You are the sons of those who murdered the prophets!_ (Mt 23:29-32)

_John Kevin Barry_
To the Teller of Fairy Tales

No more of handsome princes! Must you insist
That unblemished men alone can court receipt
Of love — scale towers, break spells, kiss lips unkissed,
And fit glass slippers on beloved feet?
What, then, of us — misshapen men who weep
To learn that love’s the province of the fair?
Cannot a leper kiss his love from sleep?
Cannot a hunchback climb Rapunzel’s hair?
You argue: “Suitors so deformed must fail
To win requital.” Such love strains faith, it seems;
And yet, what love more apt for fairy tales,
Which chronicle, not credos, but our dreams?
No more of handsome princes. Tonight, at least,
Recount for us how Beauty loved the Beast.

MARK GRENIER
An Elegy on the Most Recent Death of
St. Gregory VII

or

The Prickly Pear Is Dead

In the name of the Father,

   And of the Son,

And of the Holy Spirit who is transfigured
As a marble monument of our time.

    Amen.

I saw Him hanging there, in all His glory.
Huddled against the rain, under white hood
I stood and mourned as mourners would.
He neither glowed nor luminated, Father; was He glad?

Son,
The greatest of writers hath writ:
"How many things by season seasoned are
   By their right praise and true perfection."
Shall we season Him Father?
We’ll sing Mother’s rhyme!
Parsley,

Sage,

Rosemary and

Thyme.

We haven’t any Thyme, Father.
What say you to Rosemary?
   Upon each flake we’ll say a prayer,
   And thus by doing shun despair.

Here we go round the prickly pear . . .
In the name of the Father,

   And of the Son,

And of the Holy Spirit who is transfigured
As a marble monument of our time.

    Amen.

Father,
   Should the wind howl in April?

  DANIEL MARCUS

Four
Of Frost and Flowers

What is summer? And is it yet so named—
That sunny season which brought warmth, and you?
I’ve known no summer since that day you blamed
My eyes for seeing love where friendship grew.
July consorts with January air.
The sun is an icy lie. No rain can fall
That is not secret snow, disguised despair.
Summer? An impostor only fools would call—
But peace. I sadden you with frosty speech
That withers this rare flower you nurture still.
If I seek that which you can never teach,
At least instruct me in your summer skill.
You love me not, but let’s this flower mend.
No man is loved who is not first a friend.

MARK GRENIER
Prayer

I.
The sea is spread before me steeped in vital throbbing images that curl themselves about the rocks. Its knowledge — deep joyous ritual threatens me with freedom from the treasured mechanical waves that control me in cautious rhythm—
It dares me to escape my bondage like a run-away-merry-go-round horse that gallops ecstatically off his stand to eat the sweet new spring grass for the first time.

But I feel twisting, ripping, crying bones within me. The metal thin voices of my mind plead with me to beware of the abyss. Their mourning rises around me, a growing siren that warns me of the terror if ever once immersed.
I am frightened.
My hands are shaking.
My eyes behold constructed thoughts, assumed results that battle for possession of the acridity of my soul.
My throat is crackingly dry. I long for a drop of water.
II.

longing to be swallowed by the waves
she sits amidst the sparkling crash,
on the ancient seat of prayers . . .
the bejeweled grave of those,
who having toiled beneath the
brutal lash of thought,
surrender . . .
longing to be swallowed by the waves

she is a memorial of mankind
searching for its soul.
she waits to hear her other wandering
self whisper from this wave
or the next . . .
she waits to hear
and prays to listen.
mankind to speak to her,
hers purpose to interpret.
hers own voice is defunct
for now
she only drinks
the subtle crashing of the sea
that rains down life upon her mind.

she waits upon the rock.
her eyes are quiet as peace.
her smile is open for anyone
who wishes to jump inside
to wait with her . . .
when the next wave breaks
upon her head
she will be there
listening to a seashell
that the sea has left behind.
She is that crystal thought
and She personifies the prayer
sits silent
sits silent
to sink into the simple sea
longing to be swallowed by the waves.

Eight
III.
Perhaps she will nurture my hands
which rattle like winter branches
that struggle to bud in the April
wind. Perhaps I will ask her for
a drink and she will offer me the
nectar cup from which she sips . . .

Lord! Let not this chalice pass me by,
but as I thirst in pain
give to me the plunging strength
to pour it o’er my head,
lest I thirst forever
in my prideful calculations. Amen.

[For all the blue blossoms in Mercy Hall.]

CHRIS DURNEY

Nine
The Dark Side of the Flower

It was . . .
was silent,
was silent spring yesterday.
Green grass was cool . . .
and promising,
balmy blades sheltered me, keeping evil away!
Nature’s green fingers were
covering my hair.
From my prostrate position I saw my world change.
    Days stumbled endlessly by,
    blinding my innocent stare.
    Each day offered gifts . . .
    they brought sunlight, uninhibited horizons and pardon.
But onward they limped, halting for only a moment.
Then the night.
She threw her black blanket over the garden,
having nothing to offer
    except her consent.
Merging blackness crept across the green grass,
while a solitary flower worshiped the sky.
I could
no longer escape the shadow
I stared at the sky
so dark . . . so cold
and there in the sky a billion burning hells winked at me.
I stretched my hand out from the torturing darkness,
but no one held it.
The darkness surrounded me
    with infinite power
as the burning phosphorous smiled from their coffin
I struggled
to free myself
from the thorns of the flower
who had revealed her dark side, while laughing at my sin.

JACK PARRILLO

Eleven
"If I lived like a soldier, it would have been a silly misapprehension to believe that I should live as a soldier; yes, if it is permissible to describe and define intellectually an emotional treasure as noble as freedom, then it may be said to live like a soldier but not as a soldier, figuratively but not literally, to be allowed in short to live symbolically, represents true freedom."

THOMAS MANN

Gunshots rattle roughly through bamboo, harsely the lead winds break and burn and tear their paths through the smoking air. The soldier lies trapped beneath this violent cover of heat and desperately clutches the earth to his chest. His tears are the only things left free to move as they trickle fearfully into the muddy ground. He can't know how old he is by the lines of dirt on his face. He can't see who he is, all he knows for sure is his prison of despair. No chance had he to live like a soldier. He always was the soldier pinned to the earth by the lead nails that threaten to crucify him there forever. He lives symbolically only hypothetically proudly and willingly saving our precious ideologies he functions for the preservation of a freedom he can never see among the bamboo people that mock him with their silent gazes as he shudders. But they do not know he is a puppet which is moved from above and that he is not to blame. He is not even free to question why but only free to dream that the deadly whistling in the sky is only the birds at home in Spring. Pray that he hears them again someday when he's living in some Like-a-soldier way.

CHRIS DURNEY

Twelve
Now a man named Simon had previously been practicing sorcery in that city and astounding the people of Samaria . . . And they gave heed to him because for a long time he had bewitched them with his sorceries. (Acts 8:9 & 11)
Urbs

Something speaks of
Struggling weeds between concrete sidewalks,
Papered nests clutching to window ledges or a broken mare pulling junk!

M. CICCONI
Her's

She lies,
a svelt rush rhythmmed white
   — waiting
   waiting.

She senses
a child lamb hungry for spring
   — I see her
   I feel her.

We use ourselves as gifts given long ago,
waxed attachment fused in time,
dancing slowly,
supple slowly,
ribbon tight for moments
dying.

JOHN CASHMAN
A Naked Child Dances In The Blossoms

A naked child dances in the blossoms softly in the breeze whose currents of warmth embalm his body—the sun-drenched flowers sparkle in the green and birds assault the once-emptied sky with their song—

Behind the window, she watches from her winter womb and rubs the sleep from her eyes. She sees her child dance and smiling softly strokes her belly, heavy with life again.

CHRISe DURNEY

OLGA OTERO
Smoke

Smoke did glide
in a flame of scent,
nearly overcoming it,
dashed by a breather,
his wind now colored,
guards the fragrance,
a subtle smell
captured then freed
as a child released from some red-eyed fop,
who insists he's merely searching for beauty,
and turns away howling through his eyes.

JOHN CASHMAN

Eighteen
Please Do, Lord

Remain within the tracks
Of the express to the west.
Don’t move from the incest
Of your right, there on the tracks.

Stay.
Wait til you can hear it
Around the turn spit
at you and say

With a laugh at your agape
Mouth,
"Look around and behind and south
To where was your escape."

"But my mother didn’t let me before,
And had me look at the nasty thorn,
the fornicating animal with horn,
On both sides, aft, fore."

"Look beyond without beer
To the hill past the thorn and animal.
People live there with hymnal and seminal.
They threw themselves from a track— with fear—

And felt the bushes’ brush to bleed,
And lingered in the dust awhile,
But once in could see sanely the stile
unseen from the rail’s stilted homestead.

Here you are in the way,
Remaining when you should have left.”
O God, when you run over him, bereft,
Flatten him within the tracks, filleted.

S. DUCLOS

Nineteen
Springtime Fancy

Apple blossoms
(pales of pinks and greens)
seem to bewilder
the ancient and gnarled
grey and crooked branches.
Of late, these heavy arching arms
have been expecting
this springtime fancy
of mother nature
to brighten and
resurrect
another stricken world

Feared more than all
the whipping winds
of frosty winter hours
soft and cloud-
or-pillow-fluff-like
blossoms blossoms
blossoms blossoms
blossoms blossoms
everywhere
in ones and twos
clustered feathers
in breeze and sunshine days

Harder for the twisted
aged and knotty arms
to hold (the
embarrassment, of course)
than all the round weighted
red fruit of summer

STEPHEN GUMBLEY

Twenty
Myopia

On the tracks of the trains
on the trestles of our brains
lies the white snow gently driven
from the depths of all the heavens
and the thoughts of frozen tunnels
empty into empty funnels
while the clouds of blue marshmallows
sing the reigns of happy fellows
where the rainbows softly glisten
and the dreamer has to listen
for the trees out in the meadows
drop the frost on stain glass windows
and the light is often hidden
and the eyes are kept forbidden
from the forest of the mind
where some visions are unkind.

Then arriving at the waters
of the lost and naked daughters
hear the nymphae cry hello
from the grape and yellow jello
and so begins the trip
on this strange relationship
with the winds of subterfuge
all the stars become so huge
and the earth is slowly spinning
while the sun is always grinning
from below and up above
at the sights of shattered doves
and to each he will bequeath
just his red and burning wreath.

Twenty-one
Coming back clear the landing
lose yourself in understanding
passing through the muddled gray
there is too too much to say
i will mingle with the birches
and decry the stagnant churches
in the woods there is a chapel
its devoid of bombs and shrapnel
jump aboard the locomotive
take your soul where it can live
in the hearts of flowing rivers
far from green frustrating shivers
and the light is never hidden
and nothing is forbidden
for your eyes are seeing all
as it was before the fall.

BRIAN SIMMONS
The One Quartet

Mr. Kurtz’s Delicatessen—
A penny for the old guy.

I. I am Everyman.
I eat the world.
I will consume banquets from your altars
Or dusty crumbs from your floor.
I need and will eat all.
I would give a good half-pint of my Jewish blood
For some delicious knishes,
Or that I might be destroyed in a blintz-krieg.
I would throw away my Roman nose
And my Aryan ears
For some lasagne and some Munich beer.
I would go from Slav to slave (how utterly foolish!)
To satisfy my crave for Hungarian goulash.
Fill me with egg foo
(From toes to my squinty eyes)
For my Asian young.
I need and will eat all.

II. All the world’s food is absorbed in me
The milk from a million mothers’ breasts
Fills my broad belly and spreads
Itself through my every bone and muscle.

My metabolism converts food to music to love.
The organs of my body sing the songs
of many countries;
They resound and echo against my cells’ walls
in infinite-part harmony.
My blood stream is the Zambezi or the Yangtze
and it flows to join the single voices in the
counterpoint of my body’s symphony.
III. I can be a cannibal.
I hate you,
The thought that Everyman’s hunger is not real.
I am hungry and you are not
I am hungary and you are not
May your alimentary canal cave in.
May your lymph nodes play in Dorian modes.
May your Body’s music devolve into umbilical chords.
I’ll eat anything that’s not you.
Because I am hungry,
and you are not.

IV. I am Everyman
I eat the world.
   This is the way the world ends
   This is the way the world ends
   This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a gulp . . .
   The way to Everyman’s heart
   is through his stomach.

ROY PETER CLARK

Notes on “The One Quartet”

Not only the title, but a good deal of the incidental symbolism is suggested by Mr. Eliot’s *Four Quartets*. Where the focus of Mr. Eliot’s poem was the effect of the Christ—event upon the course of world history, I have emphasized the effect which the eating of the world would have upon the digestive tract of Everyman. Also, while each of Mr. Eliot’s quartets is divided into five parts, I found it more amenable to common sense to divide my single quartet into four parts. Part I corresponds to the effect of the salivary glands upon the world-food. Part II concerns the journey of the world-food down the esophagus and into the stomach itself. Part III is obviously patterned after the world-food’s voyage through some 30 feet or so of intestine, while Part IV (as one can readily see) corresponds to the excretion of the world-food as waste matter.

Part I
Line 1-2 : Genesis 1 : 1-5 (King James version)
6-8 : Jew of Malta IV, i, 43-44

Twenty-four
a "Knish" is a Jewish potato that goes good with chicken soup. A "Blin tz" is a Jewish pancake, often filled with fruit, sometimes with cheese. Here it is used as a phallic smybol.

11: "Bella femma que ride, vol dire borsa que piange, e una vacca que fuma."

Marine

14-16: These three lines, as they deal with Oriental food, are written in Haiku, the traditional Oriental verse form.

Part II
19: V. Spenser's Epithalamian
22: cf. Twelfth Night I, i, 1-15

Part III
31: Nothing personal

Part IV
41: Everyman here has certainly changed from a Christ-figure (Line 1) to more of a Falstaff figure. I will not deal here with the problem of whether or not Falstaff is a Christ-figure.
43: T. S. Eliot's Hollow Men
47-48: This is the poem's moral.
Yesterday's Garbage

Yea, we walk through the alleys of our hopelessness
between the ghettos of our despair
among the discarded mattresses
— twisted
— soggy
— disemboweled
Among the broken glass of our dreams
— glittering yet
— shattered.
We walk upon the glass
— ritual of life
hearing the crunch bouncing
off the walls
only to echo our plight.

We walk in the jungle of abandoned rubble
— a society
  forgotten and/or
  ignored,
Among the abandoned televisions
— cracked
— hollow shells of our disillusionment,
Among yesterday's garbage
— fermenting rot and
— filling the fat rats
who drag their heavy bellies
between the walls
— hardly seen
but deeply felt.

We roam within the walls
of our condition
— barrier and/or
  defense

Twenty-six
while the windy silence is but broken
by the train
passing by our jungle
screaming with her suburban cargo;
leaving only the exhaust of their
—indifference and/or
  unawareness
to settle on our backs.
Yea, we walk through the alleys of our hopelessness
where Black
—is a lack
and White
—the all.
We seek the true and the right
be it black and/or
  —white,
the integrated gray of our dilemma.
We extend our hands
beyond the ghettos of our mind
—black-gloved
  —closed and/or
open hand
seeking another
to be lifted
where follows
—identity
  —dignity
—brotherhood
  and/or . . . .

M. CICCONE

Twenty-seven
There Is No One . . .

there is no one
to talk to
not even the clouds
will listen,
and when it rains
they drench me
(wet, cold, stinging).

it is not
like in summer.
they bathed me
then, opening
in answer
to my loneliness
(gently,
sweetly).

warm falling rain
renewing
the earth and me.

now it is
cold, the clouds hang
like lead, and
darken the sky.

now there is
loneliness, alone
AND
there is no one
(there can never be)
there is not anyone
(there cannot ever be)
anyone
no one
to talk to.

ARTHUR MARANDOLA

Twenty-eight
Tiros II

High above the earth,
Observed only by a few random scientists
At Palomar and perhaps Kennedy,
It sails, in the service of man,
A wanderer in space.

Thousands of meteorites,
So small they could scarcely be seen
If there were eyes up here to see,
Have bombarded its surface
Until it has finally become a shape
Held together by a few remaining atoms.

Yet still it beams back signals
Telling Mr. R. T. Jones of Redondo Beach, California,
That today might be the day to take the wife and kids for a drive;
Mrs. Iolande Adams of Baton Rouge, La., that the day will be too wet to wash the car;
Bill Baxter and Mike Morton of Boston, Mass.,
That this will be a great weekend to go down
And look for a piece of ass on the Cape.

In a few more orbits
A microscopic particle will stop its voice,
And in a few more orbits
It will re-enter the earth's atmosphere, attracted by gravity,
And be consumed.
(But don't be concerned for its end was expected.)

And the phenomenon will be recorded in a notebook somewhere
By a few random scientists
At Palomar and perhaps Kennedy,
While Mr. Jones and Mrs. Adams,
And Misters Baxter and Morton
Will never know what happened.

PAUL F. FERGUSON

Twenty-nine