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poetry by:

Guy Beining
Christopher Buckley
Dick Higgins
Michael McClure
Ralph Nelson
Rochelle Ratner

revision by:

Clayton Eshleman

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Andrei Codrescu

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No. 3 (October 1976)

editor: Douglas Messerli

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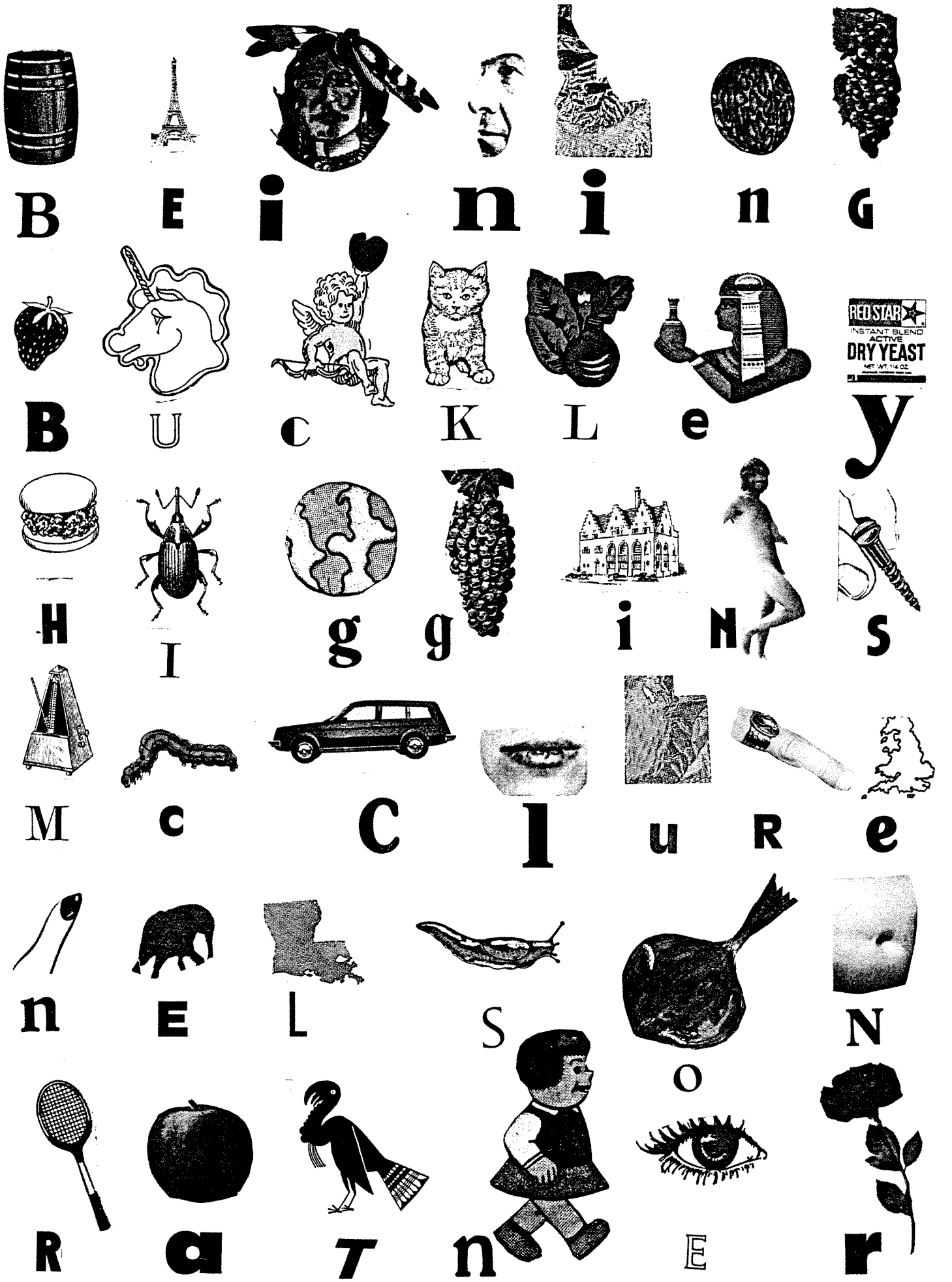

B E i n i n G
B U c K L e y
RED STAR
INSTANT BLEND
ACTIVE
DRY YEAST
H I g g i N S
M c C l u R e
n E L S N
O
R a 7 n E r

HOURGLASS FRAGMENTS

his pockets gathered

the seasons taste

dust, twigs, sands, leaves water.....

old vacuous hands .

get my mini veil & cloak

over rod

in secret looks

old cunt-nag

w/berry bowl eyes ,

years kneeling in lot tug

of old dust

on pores.

-Guy R. Beining

HOURGLASS FRAGMENTS

8

the soap box

opera opened

& sprayed the clan

eager & itchy for sorrow.

9

departing

in art department

in gnawing sense

of art & defecation

freaky stance of

old lady watering

trellis

& blotches of flower petals.

art a word

in natures receding head.

-Guy R. Beining

HOURGLASS FRAGMENTS

10

have nothing left
but the seeds to sow
the fishing tackle box
ajar.
terrible light of hooks
mire & damp coats.

11

the spice of horn
lips sucking
curling taste
a wise curse
to avowal things-
& the hemmlocks
looked dangerously open.

-Guy Beining

GIGANTIC weeds

brushed her tail

& golden bees

doVe

out of her

apple cord

center world.

-Guy Beining

DREAM'S SLEEP ALONE

Sleeping alone I turn to nothing
that reminds me of my own body,
how flesh loves to hold flesh in.

I give up nothing for what I get.
Rather, the past unfolds
like old movie posters or cards of the Tarot.
If I try to order them before I wake
the position of the future draws a blank.

I slide across the sky on my bare stomach
remembering breath on my skin,
hot as skin, my fingers burning, pulling
the wick from a candle when the wax runs.

Of course I am surrounded in a fog
as iron water knocks the boat's glass planks,
and there is a face slipping from sight.

We have all been betrayed,
but even when we reach for no one
the absence of kisses weighs on our hands.

And it gets to us, finds us like bad weather.
Like posters left in rain, there are only outlines
left fluttering beneath the lids of our eyes,
or what is seen on the surface of ice,
which is my face alone, faintly like smoke.

Our bodies are cups turning in sleep
and filling with the dark--the half-life
lived or waiting to be lived.
We taste it like a wine that is bruised,
like kissing the backs of our own hands.

--Christopher Buckley

EVANESCENT

Half-life of evening
and buds on the Coral tree
going faint as brake lights
up the road...

stars are needle points
shooting through, going slow,
like whatever it is
that absence leaves behind--

like the two cups
empty on my table,

like your eyes,
black suns burning in streams
toward the scattered flower
of my mouth...

-Christopher Buckley

jessie

i

"well ma, i'm not the only one who's doing it all!"

"i just had breakfast, don't expect me to help with the dishes!"

"no way, baby!"

"pa-a-a!"

ii

the child the wind is silent lies at her rest

the girl in the bed dreams in her rest

the child dreaming her dreams comes to her rest

the girl among toy animals lies at her rest

the child the wind is silent dreams in her rest

-Dick Higgins

west glover, vt
3 september, 1976

time's raging

time's raging

is it?

is it what it does

or how it is?

is raging what it is

or is it part of time?

what does time own

that's part of what it is?

was appolinaire appollo's

the apple of his eye?

who owned what?

and what idea?

-Dick Higgins

barton, vermont
2 september, 1976

DEMONIC

THE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO LOOK
at some living person's skull is demonic.
To imagine one's face smiling into eternity is demonic.
To be happy in feeling no allegiance is demonic.
To quit drinking on the verge of alcoholism is demonic.
To value one's time above all other things is demonic.
To find major pleasure in playful meat-thought is demonic.
To work by firelight in the day is demonic.
To believe in a systemless system is demonic.
To live by ellipsis is demonic.
I am a demon,
an angel,
an elf,
a
powerful
BEING
with a weakness for fear
and a boldness for DOING.

Fearless
things
attract
me
&
I
do them
quaking!

- - - - - - - - - -

LET ME SLIP THE BEAUTEOUS RUG
under my feet
and stand solid upon the softness
of sureness
that
it
is
all
darkly comic.
Even the feedback and shaking
are part of my laughter.
The light that gleams on the floor -- is light from my brow!

--October, 1973

-Michael McClure

REMEMBERING READING OLSON AND DUNCAN IN 1957

I REMEMBER THEM
as physical
feelings
for
we
are
real
SPIRITS.

TO HAMMER DOWN OUR ACTS
with nails of memory
destroys
the facts
of what we are!
WE
SWOOP
&
SWIRL
IN SPACE.
TIME IS A NOSE
we slide on naked,
laughing
or weeping, in our body's rooms.

BUSES CRASH PAST AND DOGS HOWL WITH THE FIRE SIRENS!

THE DEMONIC
IS TO GIVE ONE'S SELF
PEACE
&
REST
for growing.
All things we have ever done and known are glowing
gently in our flesh. Baby's smiles
in muscle pads. New York in
a million neurons. Fields of waves
and ancient plains.

The breath
of
pets.

- - - - - -

OLD ROMANCE DANCES IN OUR THOUGHTS
with gauzy veils
& billowings of mist.

--October, 1973
-Michael McClure

VIEJA

My wife is becoming an old hag.
Her nipples are like carved wood
on her flat breasts,
and she lost another tooth this week.
But her laugh still rises
from deep between her legs, like all womens,
and she still listens to my jabberings.
Cranky and eccentric,
she can put up with a man better.
In an hour we will be side by side
deep in the rows of vines,
she will be a dark, distilled drop
of sun in the shade
of her straw hat, following
the cresent of her grapeknife.
My wife is like a guayaba
all inside herself, like
a mango tree living a secret life
within the walls of the patio.
5:00, time to get up.
Setting the clock back on the floor,
I move close to watch the birds
of sleep fly, and whisper, Vieja!

-Ralph Nelson

HERE IN HUELVA

The school doors open
and the schoolgirls pour out.
Like crows, the nuns hop
along after the sweet sparrows.
I touch that soft inch
between their legs
with the tip of my umbrella.
Nun's opposite, priest's
opposite, I'm just like them,
dedicated to sorrow, never doing
anything I'd like to do.
I'm here in Huelva for one
rainy day, soon to leave behind
the stormy coast Columbus
sailed from, the schoolgirls
on their way home as night falls,
and the clock in the tower
of San Pedro with hands
that never move.

-Ralph Nelson

SELF-PORTRAIT

Naked, I leave the dreaming cabin,
and climb the path between the trees.
On the cliff I squat like an eye of hate:
enemies travel on nights like these.
The full moon is drunk in the trees,
the earth's hide twitches under my grip.
Coming out of a house thick with sleep,
shaking off the heavy breasted woman,
I see myself on the hill. Come down,
I call. Moon, mouth of grief, no answer.

-Ralph Nelson

INVOCATION

St. Mermaid, the moon is full.
By this late in the night
you should be rock-bound,
drawing a white pearl comb
through your sea green hair.

When I was young, I remember,
the village was filled with you.
Deep into the night I would prop up
in bed, straining to keep awake
for my parents' stories.

Come and take your place,
the moon is lonely.
The stars need your sweet voice
to guide them, and the tides
refuse to flow without you.
Every other saint has let me down.
I, too, want to rise from the deep
while the whole world looks up to me.

-Rochelle Ratner

LESSON

The young dogs gather round
and watch my capture.
Tired bodies strain to keep alert.
They follow the incisions
with their tongues,
soothing me,
washing the blood off.
This is the treat they get
for remaining faithful.
Front row seats.
And tonight the men
feed them grandly.
They will sleep by the fire,
maybe even curl up on the bed.
From my death
they are learning what love is.

-Rochelle Ratner

SUMMER 1973

On the screened-in porch
wearing pajamas

you're so exhausted
you don't hear
the creaking steps.

My parents didn't say
I might step over --
afraid you would wait
and I wouldn't want to.

-Rochelle Ratner

FRUITS

Men buy and sell what the earth gives.
And you pay dearly for it:
the produce piled up high
in the outer office --

plenty for everyone.
The market is your only link
with the past.
How long has it been,
thirty years since you had a stall there?

In those days
there were over twenty stalls.
Today you count them:
three.

Mr. Palmisano's sons have taken over,
though they treat you kindly
as their father's friend.
No matter what the cost,
fruits each season.

-Rochelle Ratner

REASSURANCES
(for Doris Clanton)

The first sounds a child hears
delight him,
and after that
it's simply imitation.

Too easy a trap to fall into,
yet the drawl is calming.
As a game
I try to give your voice
face:

you are old and grey
(no, silver);
your body is thin;
you stand erect,
wear glasses

a typical grandmother figure.
Your skin is soft
though wrinkled
and your eyes look down
instead of meeting mine.

You would offer a place to stay,
but your husband is sick;
thank you, no.

You insist, of course,
you have an extra bedroom
while your breath lingers a bit
to make its vacantness
obvious.

-Rochelle Ratner

ATLANTIC COAST LINE

The bell sounds:
Welcome to Florence

and my grandfather
raises his head from the pillow
while some little old man
climbs aboard to extend the welcome.

Food is really all he cares about,
not that this town sprang up
just to serve the railroad
halfway to Miami.
Not that I'd visit here later.

By the time he passed through
the trains had dining cars.
But he might have looked out the window.
Passengers still load and unload.

-Rochelle Ratner

*

3:00 p.m. readings from
the National Weather Service

Temperature 76 degrees
Humidity 50%
Barometer 30.02
T.H.I. 70

Partly sunny and pleasant this afternoon
and Wednesday
High both days around 80

A woman's recorded voice
says that over and over. Sweetly.
For as long as I'm willing to listen.

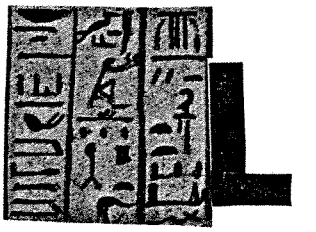
Every hour on the hour, readings change.

From my own point of view
it's cold out. Feels damp and refreshing.
Wind makes the day more responsive,
easy to breathe.

Either I'm too busy or too lonely.
So many things to do all of a sudden.
It's like the cold
pushing in against the blankets
till I can't sleep
for the thought of what the heat's done.

-Rochelle Ratner
(from THE LULLABIES)

Re-vision



DRAFTS OF

"FOR MILENA VODICKOVA"

Clayton Eshleman

ESSAYS

DRAFTS OF "FOR MILENA VODICKOVA"

Draft 1

what do you mean by "happy"
Milena asks? I punctured
a hole in Donald Duck
& saw maggots crawling
on a sleeping Peruvian
Indian boy, I saw I some-
how stood on him,
his father's shoulders,
a man who must find
gold for Donald & his nephews
to take back to Anaheim,
& then sell products back to Peru
the Indians cannot afford.
I'm implicated because I
work & make an American
salary? But I don't--yet
my standard of living is much
closer to that of Sammy Davis Jr.
than /broken off/

13 July 76

Draft 2

for M. Vodickova

What do you mean by

"happy" Milena asked

& I thought of Kafka's enormous

correspondence with a beetle,

on his back

under insurance policy(s),

the endless complications of legs

become abstract, telegraph wires

[Cont./no stanza break

lines, legs of correspondence so

he was only a head & his Milena

a head & their bodies

strung out entwined language

between the poles. Now I'd

like to think my happyness

was at least partially formed

by reeling back into my body

some of the lost Kafka human body--

like pulling in a swordfish?

* The air encysted

with man's rejection of pleasure,
people's
their refusal to let
as well as his/tejection/of/death,
death coil sweetly through them,
and so between the poles

the strung out genitals are

bedbugged with death and all of us,
touch
when we actually/do make/love

have that bedbug on our backs?

So/then/for/me/Happyness

(is this reeling in & imagining)

of what I do reel in, that ⟶ the child's cry does come in my
window
I/am/reeling/in and that I wince as I reel.

&/not/on/the/phone/so/to/speak

all/day/&/night/letting

[Cont./no stanza break

my/life/stretch/&/tesoung

in/space,

morning of July 14. 76

* Except I'll never get all
of it in,
for what I have on my line
is also what just occured
outside my window

outside/the/window

tussel of a mother & child's
voice
sound of a switch

and as if the cry was pulled

out of the switch sound itself--

his terror under
her eyes
the dinosaur of/her/size
suddenly

Draft 3

for M. Vodickova.

What do you mean by

"happy" Milena asked

and I thought of Kafka's enormous

correspondence with a beetle,

on his back

under insurance policy,

[Cont./no stanza break

DRAFT OF "FOR MILENA VODICKOVA"/Draft 3 cont.]

the endless complications of legs

become abstract, telegraph wires,

lines, legs of correspondence so

he was only a head and his Milena

a head and their bodies

strung out entwined language

between the poles. Now I'd

like to think my happyness

was at least partially formed

by reeling back into my body

some of the lost human body--

like pulling in a swordfish?

Except I'll never get all of it in,

for what I have on my line

also just occured outside my window,

tussle of a mother and child's voice

sound of a switch

and, as if the cry was pulled

out of the switch sound itself, ~~in~~

his terror under

her suddenly dinosaur eyes,

the air encysted with
frustration with muscular release
people's ~~rejection/of/pleasure~~

as well as their refusal to let

[Cont./no stanza break

DRAFT OF "FOR MILENA VODICKOVA"/Draft 3 cont.]

death coil sweetly through them,

and so between the poles

the strung out genitals are

bedbugged with death and all of us,

when we do touch,

have a bedbug on our backs.

Happyness in this reeling in and imagining

what I do reel in, that

the child's cry does come in my window

and that I wince as I reel.

14 July 76
Frenstat

Draft 4

Milena
VARIATIONS DONE FOR ~~M~~ VODICKOVA

What do you mean by "happy" /
my Czechoslovakian friend
~~Milena~~ asked, / and I thought of Kafka's

enormous / correspondence with a beetle, /

4 lines

on his back

under insurance policies,

the endless complications of legs

become abstract, telegraph wires,

lines, legs of correspondence, / til he was only

[Cont./no stanza break

DRAFTS OF "FOR MILENA VODICKOVA"/Draft 4 cont.]

a head / and his Milena a head /

and their bodies strung out entwined

language between the poles.

Now I'd like to think my happyness

is at least partially formed by reeling

back into my body some of the lost

human body that's been packed abstractly

into the air------like pulling in a swordfish?

Except I'll never get all of it in,

for what I have on my line

also just occurred outside my window

tussle of a mother and child's voice

sound of a switch

and as if the cry were pulled

out of the switch'es marrow

his terror

under her suddenly dinosaur eyes

encysted with frustration over muscular release

as well as her refusal to let

death coil sweetly through her.

Between the poles, the strung out legs & genitals are

bugged, like spy apartments, with death

and all of us, even when we really touch,

have a pack-sized bedbug on our backs.

[Cont./no stanza break

Interminable fish in a less & less

non-interminable ocean

where Donald Duck & his nephews set forth,

they're adventuring down to Peru for some gold

their fetish word for an Indian child's mind,

he has no way to produce it,

so they'll give him a few cents & shit it

back to Duckberg where it will become

a marvelous electric bedbug

the Indian father can import--

I'm happy because this impersonal guilt is at least felt & moving thru me,

because I've got enough of the conflict balanced in my arms,

because I wince when that child's cry pierces this room,

because there is no manikan of an American soldier

in the shop window of my American breast.

(seems final. 3:30 p.m.
Frenstat. 14 July 76)

Draft 5

...
where
back to Duckberg ~~will~~/it will become
a marvelous electric bedbug
the Indian father can import.
~~So/I/feel/having/been/given/I'm/feeling~~
He pays with what he does not have

[Cont./no stanza break

& the trees around me brighten,
a white American is not poor
no matter what he has or where he lives.
~~I/take/my~~
~~I/hold/my/happyness~~
Having been riven, I'm reeling in
but I'm riven again knowing
what the Ducks hourly bring back;
even tho I wince I can spontaneously
amalgamate the child's cry outside my window
into an imaginative frame
but the Peruvian Indian stands so deep
in a pit my house is erected over,
there are so many bones, so much exploitation
between, my personal happyness wilts
when I think of him--and it is not
that I lose the meaning of happyness
then, but what? /breaks off/

Thurs. 15 July 76

Draft 6 (final)

What do you mean by "happy"
Milena asked. I punctured a hole
in Donald Duck, Pollock's
"The Deep" came through,
South America
lay a black pool, a cenote
Donald & his nephews
are diving in, sunken treasure
my ass! That "gold" is
their fetish word for
an Indian boy's mind.
Can he produce it himself?
Like a rabbit out of a hat?
I see thru their sleight of hand
but ~~I/see~~ I'm still standing on
the boy's back. His every gesture,
in a ~~ce~~ field or asleep at night
brightens the California air,
so he's here, in power,
like a Russian soldier is
in power, the manikan
in ~~you~~ the shop window of
your Czechoslovakian breast.

[Cont./no stanza break

I reel, having been riven,
Irreal, when I face
my happyness with his,
I face it with him
like a mason faces a wall
& its hideous to feel
my happyness finished with him
but since he is the power in this air,
I trowel. I puncture,
reel, & trowel, stages
of testing the armature of
my happyness which is
enchaste with Caryl.
I set her in the hollow
of the stone around which
I make my path, as if
the dying bull of man
were merely a dog looking
for a place to lie
or Tiger de Sambo
a yellow blur, Pollock
again, vitally abstract
to draw Americans away
from that Indian boys back.
Something keeps going
down in me, a horned
animal, then struggling
up again onto its feet,
it seems I make my path
through its struggle
unable to know if the ~~kn~~ sword
plunged in patriarchy
has also penetrated
~~my~~ manhood. Down
in me, Pollock's
cathedral in which the priest
if he turned around
might have a face partially
covered by a yellow
bill, under his cassock
a white genitaless
balloon ~~of~~ a bottom.
for

on the bus from Frenstat to Prague. 17 July 76

[Cont.

A note on the composition:

This past July I spent 2 weeks in Frenstat, Czechoslovakia teaching an English Language Seminar co-sponsored by The American State Department and the Czechoslovakian Ministry of Education. I became friends with one of the students, Milena Vodickova, who teaches German in a high-school in Olomouc. I guess I said during one of our talks that I was a happy person, for my sense of hwere the poem began is when she asked me what I meant by that word. I tried to explain, but was not satisfied by what I said, I think because I did not confront the world outside of Caryl and my relationship. I had been reading Dorfman & Mattelart's How To Read Donald Duck, Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic, at the time, and when I started to write the problem of how could I justify feeling happy knowing I was an American, and whether I liked it or not, a part of an exploitative machine, immediately came up. I tricked myself into bringing Kafka into Draft 2, perhaps because he was once involved with a woman named Milena and my Czech friend's name was Milena too--or perhaps because Kafka's tortured "correspondence" relationship with his Milena seemed to me so different from my relationship with Caryl. Kafka did not really have anything to do with my problem, and I think Drafts 2, 3, and 4 all go off and do not resolve because I was substituting him and Milena for myself and Caryl. I remember being bothered through these drafts because Caryl did not come into the poem, and it seemed that she should--somehow--since she is the person most responsible for whatever happyness I feel. Because of the Kafka problem in the poem I allowed myself, intentionally I think, to be distracted when I was writing and to allow at one point what was taking place outside to come in, to sort of wedge itself into the writing and see what effect it would have. I was sitting in my room at the time and suddenly heard a woman and a child arguing and then, almost at the same moment, heard her hit the child and drag him on down the road outside the dorm. Occasionally letting "what is happening outside" into a poem works, but usually it does not, and signals to me, once I become aware I have done it, that the poem-in-progress was off before the "happening" was allowed in. Anyway, once I had it in I was for the time being stuck with it, and tried to make something out of it, by in a rather odd way complimenting myself. Once I did that, the poem was really stuck, and the 4th Draft is a good example of the way a piece can inflate given an ego-inflation at work within it. At the point I finished that Draft I thought the poem was completely finished and very good (another sign of inflation). I copied it out and gave it to Milena the next time I saw her. As soon as I had handed it to her, I knew it was off, and once again started trying to explain to her what I meant by happyness. The next day I realized that the

[Cont.

victim with the Disney comic book had to be faced, and that the Kafka material plus the child-hitting incident had to be taken out. I saw that I had made a mistake in trying to resolve the matter i.e., there was no possible way to justify feeling happy the moment I thought of the comic book victim (who had been somewhat obscured by the hit child). While I did not think of it at the time, I now recall a passage in Northrop Frye's Fearful Symmetry which made a profound impression on me when I was studying the book in Kyoto in 1963, and which must lie in some way in back of my attempt to resolve the happyness problem. Frye is speaking of Enion (page 279, Beacon paperback edition):

> The world of nature is a completely callous world, and Enion, seeing her children suffering in a life of pain, cannot understand what has happened. She knows only that she can never be comforted as long as pain exists, and that she will not cease to be a wandering and mourning spirit until nature has become again the "happy garden-state" it once was, and in which the vision of God seeing the sparrow fall with concern for its suffering is not a mere "augury" of the state of innocence but its realization. She is the "vain shadow of hope" which finds everything short of a complete apocalypse hopeless. She is the part of our minds which dimly realizes that all pleasure is at least partly a dream under an anesthetic. Something is always suffering horribly somewhere, and we can only find pleasure by ignoring that fact. We must ignore it up to a point, or go mad; but in the abyss of consciousness, to which Enion has been banished, there lurks the feeling that joy is based on exclusion, that the Yule log can blaze cheerfully only when the freezing beggars in the streets are, for the moment, left to freeze.

So in Draft 5 I took up the Disney material again trying to mesh it with happyness rather than trying to resolve happyness. Not much happened, so I left the poem, assuming that when it was ready to resolve itself it would let me know. Two days later the Seminar terminated, and all of the teachers were bused back to Prague, about a 6 hour ride. I was very tired, having been up most of the night partying with some of the students, and at first tried to sleep. I had brought Frank O'Hara's study of Jackson Pollock with me thinking it might be possible to make use of it in talking about American life with students, but I had not used it in any of my classes. I had glanced at it from time to time while in Frenstat and once I think had had a quick notion that Pollock's abstractness was somehow connected to the cartoon world of comic books. But I was too impressed

[Cont.

with Pollock so the notion disappeared before being thought about. Suddenly on the bus I wanted the O'Hara book and read the text quickly very absorbed. Then I tried to sleep again, but couldn't, and as the bus lurched along (in awful heat) the poem started coming back, as if it were all cracked, in pieces. I started out again (Draft 6) and did what seemed very daring at the time: I allowed Pollock to come right in on the tail of Donald immediately which threw a kind of warp into the whole process, making it even more complex but also floating it off Kafka and the hit child. I wrote very slowly over a period of about 2 hours, and once Donald was discovered as a hidden "imago" of Pollock's abstraction I felt I had no more to write. Two weeks later, back in Los Angeles, I read only Draft 6 to Caryl and she felt it worked. Since that is the "test" these days, I copied it out of my notebook.

-Clayton Eshleman
September 26, 1976.

Codrescu

theory

ELECTROMAGNETISM: THE LAMENT OF A HERMETIC

In the file called "raw poetry" there is a corpse that won't stay dead. Daily I pick at it. Take a hold of the inner core: lay your hand solidly on the hunk of the approaches to the door. This hunk of approaches, these highways by which stray humorists might sneak into the poem and tear it to shreds, this hunk, this lump, what do you do with it? At this very moment perhaps, hundreds of my contemporaries have closed their fist on a similar hunk. How do they dispose of it? How bar the windows? Bolt the doors? Stuff the laundry chute? Poetry, it appears, is in need of better garbage disposal.

The flesh is dense, no light beams through the tight fist.

But suppose a friend walks in, with an extended hand. Do you shake it, risking an invasion of populism? Or do you shake your fist at the cold you don't have suggesting that a balled handkerchief full of germs lives in your hand? In any case, sooner or later, the hunk must be disposed of. There is talk of new hope, with electromagnetism.

-Andrei Codrescu

HUMORISTS ON THE WAR PATH

There is nothing funny about it. If there is even a hole through which a funny man could crawl into the poem, you are through. An oft quoted solution is that the poet assimilate both jobs: be funny and poetical too. This way, for every dote there is an antidote. Line by line, the aesthetic is followed by the anaesthetic. At once, there is no need to bar access to the poem. Anyone can come in and find their malevolent work already accomplished. After spending years perfecting their Trojan horse, humorists find the gates open and the population dead. For example:

A HUMAN TOUCH MISUNDERSTOOD

The Cat was observing the Rule of Silence.
I touched him and he bit me.

The Stone was observing a Fast.
I sat on it and I was burnt.

My Trousers were in a Dream.
The zipper zapped me.

They are forgetting me everywhere.
60 years ago I was a published poet.

This poem is completely open, the hunk of its approaches is intact, its tentacles are paved. Cynics and humorists find themselves in an already devastated landscape. The worst has already happened. Even souvenir hunters are dismayed.

By now the humorists have suffered enough defeats. They have become ironists. In this they are encroaching directly on poetic territory. If successful they will generate enough confusion to find themselves one day in the presence of a poem which is, either through the forgetfulness of the poet or the skill of their irony, open. Perhaps they are lucky to arrive in the poem at the precise moment the poet lets the hunk of approaches drop to shake hands with a friend. They find:

MEMORIES OF LAST WEEK

1 The festish leapt into my personality
2 and made itself a little place to sleep.
3 The hollow of my mind was filled with blue.
4 I was bundled in nerves like a bat.

[cont.

5 Swarms of angels sucked out every pimple,
6 making a vast shshsh with their wings.
7 In the slush, the stomach awoke.
8 I was invaded by cells I could not stroke.
9 I was in Philadelphia, I was in Chicago.
10 It poured torrents on the road.
11 I was drawing a disease of meaning on a carton
12 with the blood of a toad.
13 Serious interruptions tore huge holes in the fabric.
14 A sense of wonder creapt into my loss.
15 Perhaps there are factories for making faces.
16 I made a huge face out of the cul-de-sacs I inhabited.
17 There were cells thickening, bronze vases sweating
18 on the inside, big, cool beads of viscuous consistency,
19 a doodle of hairs spouting from the knees of children.
20 I was there for a job, I was murdered instead..

Line 20 is obviously a last-ditch, desperate effort to draw a curtain over the poem which is all approaches, accessibility, vulnerability and draftiness. The poem leaks so much, in fact, that reality has long ago escaped through the cracks. Abandoned by reality it has the musty desolation of a recital by a dead piano player on the site of his triumphs a hundred years before. The hunk of approaches the poet was holding in his hand when his friend's effusiveness lowered his guard was no more no less than the entire poem. He was dreaming of electromagnetism to get rid of it. But it is too late. The ironists are inside. There are two of them, one age 23, the other aged 64. The young one is a male, the old one a female. Their names are "23" and "64".

23: This man whines from 4 thru 20. Wouldn't it have been better if this fetish, instead of leaping into his mind, would have leapt into the mind of his girlfriend? Then he could have bundled her in nerves like a bat, invaded her with cells he could not stroke and thickened her cells... and he would have never known what <u>he</u> was up to.

64: The fetish <u>did</u> leap into his personality from his girlfriend. The only problem is that both the fetish <u>and</u> his girlfriend jumped out of a story by Alberto Moravia which is as out of date as "factories for making faces" or "viscuous consistency" whatever that means.

23: The worst thing is the singsongy little aria that runs through it. The whole thing is predictible from line 3 and it makes absolutely no discovery.

64: If he hadn't murdered himself in the last line, I would have

[cont.

done it for him.

23: Let's get out of here. This place is giving me the creeps. It rained torrents indeed! There is no weather.

64: How would you like to sleep with me? I could get your poems published...

That's not very funny. But it could devastate a poet. He will never again let anyone in a poem. He makes a pilgrimage to the source of his hermeticism. It is still there, the source, bathed in the wounded light of his childhood.

-Andrei Codrescu

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Correspondence received from Judson Crews, Theodore Enslin, Clayton Eshelman, Ruth Krauss, Michael Lally, David Loberg, Paul Metcalf, John Perlman, Don Skiles, Stephen Stepanchev and Paul Violi.

Correction: Part IV, line 3 of Don Skiles' "Sleeping Poetry: Burning of the Library at Alexandria," should read "Of comets turned out through holes," rather than as printed.

Peter Frank announces a change of address. His new address is: 80 North Moore Street #120, NYC, (212) 349-6193.

For the December issue of <u>Là-Bas</u> I want to print a list of all new books by <u>Là-Bas</u> poets for 1976. Please drop me a note with the names of any new books you've published this year. Hopefully, this would help everyone keep up with the most exciting new poetry. Thanks.

Send notes, new poetry, revisions, reactions, information--whatever to:

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