

ARCHIPELAGO

An International Journal of Literature, the Arts, and Opinion
www.archipelago.org

Vol. 6, No. 2 Summer 2002

Speech: Senator RUSSELL FEINGOLD
On Voting Against the U.S.A. Patriot Act

The Great Novel: MIGUEL DE CERVANTES
DON QUIXOTE
tr. from the Spanish by Edith Grossman
with Translator's Note

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The Waiting Room
tr. from the Czech by Norma Comrada

Fiction: JUAN TOVAR
Dominion of Canada
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PRASENJIT MAITI: *Calcutta Poems*

ÖZDEMİR ASAF: *Nine Poems*
tr. from the Turkish by George Messo

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What War Is

Endnotes: Lies Damned Lies; The Colossus (Part 2)

Recommended Reading: (1) Joan Schenkar, Marilyn Johnson;
(2) Kevin McFadden interviewed about anagrammatic poems

Letters to the Editor: John Casey on the Farm Hall transcripts; et al.

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Acknowledgements/permissions: Miguel de Cervantes, DON QUIXOTE: The three chapters are from the forthcoming translation of DON QUIXOTE, by Miguel de Cervantes, translated from the Spanish by Edith Grossman, to be published in 2003 by ECCO, An Imprint of HarperCollins. We are glad to acknowledge that these chapters and notes and the Translator's Note appeared in *Conjunctions* 38, Spring 2002 <<http://www.conjunctions.com>>. / Karel Čapek, "The Waiting Room": ©copyright Karel Čapek; translation©copyright Norma Comrada. From Karel Čapek, CROSS ROADS, tr. Norma Comrada (Catbird Press, July 2000) With permission of Catbird Press <<http://www.catbirdpress.com/bookpages/cr.htm>> / Juan Tovar, "Dominion of Canada" ©Copyright 1982, 1988, 1992, 2002 by Juan Tovar. Translation copyright©2002 by Leland H. Chambers. From CREATURE OF A DAY, to be published in October of 2002 by McPherson & Company <<http://www.mcphersonco.com>>. CRIATURA DE UN DÍA has appeared in three editions in Mexico since 1974. The text for the English translation was revised and expanded and, until a new edition appears in Spanish, is definitive. Published with permission. / Poems by Özdemir Asaf from DUNYA KACTI GOZUME (1955): 'Myth'. From SEN SEN SEN (1956): 'It wasn't Me', 'Sisyphus', 'As IF', 'Her Hair', 'I Used to Watch You'. From YUMUSAKLIKLAR DEGIL (1962): 'Dum' From YALNIZLIK PAYLASILMAZ (1978): 'The Story of the Cat Playing with the Candle Flame,' 'Title'. Poems ©copyright Özdemir Asaf and ©copyright Adam Yaylinari Publishers, Istanbul. Copyright permission for translation of Özdemir Asaf into English has been given by his publisher. Translations ©copyright 2002 George Messo.

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Contributors

Özdemir Asaf was born in Ankara, Turkey, in 1923. At an early age he moved with his family to Istanbul where he attended Galatasaray College and Kabatas, later studying in the Faculty of Law and Economics at Istanbul University. Asaf's first poems began to appear with the "Garip," or "Strange," movement, a new literary aesthetic lead by Orhan Veli, Oktay Rifat, and Melih Cevdet Anday, which aimed to break free of elitist Ottoman Divan poetry, with its formal restrictions and idealized romantic subjects. This "New Wave" laid emphasis on the commonplace, a poetics of daily life, conveyed in simple forms and arresting directness of address, more suited to the nuances and rhythms of daily speech. It was a formative period, and one which was to have a profound modernizing effect on Turkish poetry. The unexpected death of Orhan Veli in 1950, however, marked yet another new departure, the "Second New Wave," no less radical than the first. Simplicity gave way to more complex free verse, and where the address had once been public, for the Second New Wave this became deeply personal. The paradoxical simplicity and obscurity of Asaf's work owes itself in part to his fusion of the driving impulses of both First and Second New Wave aesthetics. Though often cited as a poet of the Second New Wave, Asaf's playful, experimental logic, the aphoristic pithiness of his short poems placed him in a category of his own: an avant-garde poet everyone could read. In his lifetime Asaf won substantial critical acclaim for the uniqueness of his work and earned a large readership. Since his death his reputation and his readership have continued to grow. His first five collections, printed in a single volume, have extended to sixteen editions. In 2001, Asaf's entire works were re-issued in their original single volume form by Adam Books, Istanbul, to mark the 20th anniversary of the poet's death. His major poetry collections include: DUNYA KACTI GOZUME (The World Caught My Eye, 1955), SEN SEN SEN (You You You, 1956), CICEKLERI YEMEYIN (Don't Eat The Flowers, 1975), YALNIZLIK PAYLASILMAZ (Loneliness Can't be Shared, 1971) and BENDEN SONRA MUTLULUK (The Happiness After Me, published posthumously in 1983).

Karel Čapek (1890-1938) was the leading writer in Czechoslovakia between the wars, an important novelist, playwright, journalist, story writer, children's writer, humorist, and translator. Best known in English for his works with science-fiction premises, particularly the play "R.U.R.: Rossum's Universal Robots" and the novel WAR WITH THE NEWTS, he was best loved at home for his essays and *feuilletons*, his stories, his books for youngsters, and his TALKS WITH T.G. MASARYK. Scholars and other writers considered his philosophical trilogy of novels, published in English as THREE NOVELS, the pinnacle of his career. President Masaryk and he were the most important figure in Czech life in the 1930s, calling on their countrymen to preserve their democracy as one neighbor after another gave in to fascism, and he remained the principal symbol of democracy under the German occupation and during the years of communism. Most of Čapek's works were published almost immediately in English, and his plays appeared on Broadway soon after they appeared in Prague. Čapek's wife, Olga Scheinpflugova, who was there, wrote that in 1937, after writing THREE NOVELS and WAR WITH THE NEWTS [both published in the U.S. by Catbird Press in 1990], Čapek was approached unofficially by a representative of the Nobel Prize Committee and asked to write something that was not controversial. (Čapek, a vocal critic of Hitler, had just satirized him viciously in WAR WITH THE NEWTS; the Swedes wanted nothing less than to offend Hitler.) Čapek replied dryly, "I have already written my doctoral dissertation." He died the next year, only a few months before Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia. A collection of his stories, CROSS ROADS,

translated by Norma Comrada, will be published in July by Catbird Press
<<http://www.catbirdpress.com/bookpages/cr.htm>>.

Leland H. Chambers <lechambe@du.edu> is a translator of modern and contemporary Latin American and Spanish fiction. An emeritus Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Denver, he directed the Comparative Literature Program (1967-83) and was editor of its literary magazine, *Denver Quarterly* (1977-83). Among the authors he has translated are Jorge Stamadianos, Carmen Boullosa, Julieta Campos, Enrique Jaramillo Levi, and Ezequiel Martínez Estrada. His translations of short fiction from Spanish have appeared in more than twenty-five literary magazines. His translation of Juan Tovar's CRIATURA DE UN DÍA was one of the two winners of the 2000-2001 Eugene M. Kayden Translation Award.

Norma Comrada has translated Karel Čapek's story collections TALES FROM TWO POCKETS and APOCRYPHAL TALES, as well as the play "The Mother" and several stories and feuilletons in TOWARD THE RADICAL CENTER: A Karel Čapek Reader (which volume includes the play "R.U.R."). She is a leading American authority on Čapek and has given many papers, published many articles, and done many readings across the country. She has retired from a long and varied career and lives in Eugene, Oregon. Her translation of stories by Čapek, CROSS ROADS, will be published in July by Catbird Press <<http://www.catbirdpress.com/bookpages/cr.htm>>.

The Hon. **Russell Feingold** (D-Wis.) <<http://www.senate.gov/~feingold/>> was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1992 and re-elected in 1998. There he serves on the Judiciary, Foreign Relations, and Budget Committees and the Special Committee on Aging. He was elected to the Wisconsin State Senate in 1982 and re-elected in 1986 and 1990, and was a practicing attorney in Madison, Wisconsin, from 1979 to 1985, at Foley & Lardner and La Follette & Sinykin. He is a graduate of Harvard University Law School, Juris Doctor with Honors, 1979; was a Rhodes Scholar, with Final Honours, School of Jurisprudence, Magdalen College, Oxford University, Bachelor of Arts with Honours, 1977; and from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, received the Phi Beta Kappa, Bachelor of Arts with Honors in 1975. He has two daughters, Jessica and Ellen, and his wife, Mary Feingold, has two sons, Sam and Ted Speerschneider. The Feingolds live in Middleton, Wisconsin

Edith Grossman has translated a number of remarkable works by major contemporary Spanish-language authors, including Gabriel García Márquez (LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA; NEWS OF A KIDNAPPING; THE GENERAL IN HIS LABYRINTH; OF LOVE AND DEMONS; et al.), Mario Vargas Llosa (THE FEAST OF THE GOAT; THE NOTEBOOKS OF DON RIGOBERTO; DEATH IN THE ANDES; et al.), Mayra Montero (THE LAST NIGHT I SPENT WITH YOU; THE MESSENGER; IN THE PALM OF DARKNESS), Álvaro Mutis (MAQROLL: THREE NOVELLAS), Augusto Monterroso (COMPLETE WORKS AND OTHER STORIES), Julián Ríos (LOVES THAT BIND), and the anti-poet Nicanor Parra. Her translation of Vargas Llosa's THE FEAST OF THE GOAT was nominated for the PEN/Book of the Month Translation prize this year. She is working on the new translation of DON QUIXOTE for Ecco/HarperCollins.

Prasenjit Maiti <pmaiti@vsnl.com>, born in 1971, is Senior Lecturer in Political Science at Burdwan University, West Bengal, India. Dr. Maiti's print publication credits include *2River View*, *Blue Collar Review*, *Circle*, *Green Queen*, *Harlequin*, *Hermes*, *Micropress Oz*, *Monkey Kettle*, *Nightingale*, *Page 84*, *Paper Wasp*, *Phoenix*, *Pocketful of Poetry*, *Poetry Church*, *Poetry Depth Quarterly*, *Poetry Greece*, *Promise*, *Pulsar*, *Skald*, *South*, and *The Journal*.

George Messo <leech@bilkent.edu.tr> was born in 1969. His books include FROM THE PINE OBSERVATORY (Halfacrown Books, 2000), FRAMING REFERENCE (Ed. Valerie Kennedy, 2001) and THE COMPLETE POEMS OF JEAN GENET (translated with Jeremy Reed). He has received a Council of Europe Translation Award for his versions of Rilke and is Hawthornden Fellow in Poetry for June/July 2002 at Hawthornden Castle, Scotland. His poems, translations, and reviews have been widely published. He is the editor of the international journal *Near East Review* and teaches at Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey. His two book-length translations of Özdemir Asaf, YOU YOU YOU and SELECTED POEMS, have yet to find a publisher.

Tracy Robinson <tracydeborah@hotmail.com> writes: "I am like a young red ant in a field of big names, working very hard and persevering. Twice recently, short stories went in *L'Embarcadère* by La Société Littéraire de Charlevoix. In July 2001, a Quebec literary prize was awarded to me by Beauchemin Éditeurs Ltée for a play that I wrote called 'Métamorphose.' If you want to know more, I study in the social sciences at Dawson in Montreal. I scalp tickets to lovers of retro punk. I love playing hockey and only watching it if Don Cherry hosts 'Hockey Night in Canada.' I want to start a co-ed hockey team but the College Board of Governors just shake their heads. We have strategy so at the next meeting, the outcome will be positive (for me and my friends). The short story that I sent to you is a fictional piece about a young Catholic girl and a British soldier in the context of Northern Ireland in January, 1972. My friends saw it as very harsh, whereas an old professor liked the humor and the anecdotes against reality ... and possibility."

Juan Tovar <pola@intertepoz.com>, born in the city of Puebla, Mexico, in 1941, is a writer of short stories, novels, and screenplays, as well as being a dramatist of note. He majored in chemical engineering at the University of Puebla and got involved with the Teatro Universitario there, transferring to Mexico City in 1962. In Mexico City he focussed on dramatic theory and composition, which he studied with Luisa Josefina Hernández and Emilio Carballido, and which he has taught in various schools and centers from 1967 to the present time. Among his many books of fiction are LOS MISTERIOS DEL REINO (1966; La Palabra y el Hombre Prize for short fiction; revised, 1992), LA MUCHACHA EN EL BALCON O LA PRESENSICA DEL CORONEL RETIRADO (1970; Primer Concurso Cultural de la Juventud Prize for a novel), and EL LUGAR DEL CORAZON (1974). Tovar has translated plays by Shakespeare, Stoppard, and Shepard, as well as poetry by Yeats, Hopkins, Malcolm Lowery, and Ted Hughes. The collection CREATURES OF A DAY, from which the story in this issue comes, has been translated by Leland H. Chambers and will be published in October by McPherson & Company <<http://www.mcphersonco.com>>.

Mary-Sherman Willis <cswillis.bellatlantic.net> writes and lives in Washington, D.C., with her husband and two children. She serves on the board of the Folger Poetry Series and is at work on a book. Her poems and reviews have appeared in *The New Republic*, *Poet Lore*, *The Plum Review*, among other publications.

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News of Our Contributors

The PEN Award for Poetry in Translation, for a book-length translation of poetry, was given in June 2002 to **Anne Twitty**, for her translation of ISLANDIA (Station Hill, <http://www.stationhill.org>), by the Argentinean poet **Maria Negroni**. The work of this

remarkable poet, and her gifted translator, has appeared twice in *Archipelago*. In Vol. 1, No. 1: *El Viaje de la Noche/Night Journey* <<http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-1/cage-e.htm>>. In Vol. 2, No. 4: *La Jaula Bajo el Trapo/Cage Under Cover* <<http://www.archipelago.org/vol2-4/negroni.htm>>.

Our Contributing Editor **Edith Grossman** is the translator of *THE FEAST OF THE GOAT*, by Mario Vargas Llosa (Farrar Straus & Giroux), which was nominated for the PEN/Book of the Month Club Translation Prize for a distinguished book-length translation published in 2001. She was honored at the awards ceremony, where Vargas Llosa received the PEN/Nabokov Award. Edith Grossman's translation of "Music to Forget an Island By," by the Argentine novelist Victoria Slavuski, appears in *Archipelago*, Vol. 2, No. 1 <<http://www.archipelago.org/vol2-1/slavuski.htm>>.

Katherine McNamara, the Editor and Publisher of *Archipelago*, is the author of "Organizing a Literary Magazine as the World Changed: The Formation of *Archipelago*," which has just appeared in *WITHOUT COVERS://literary_magazines@the_digital_edge* <<http://www.sla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/sycamore/misc/bookproject.html>>, a *Sycamore Review* Book Project, edited by Lesha Hurliman and Numsuri C. Kunakemakorn. *Sycamore Review* is published at Purdue University. Her essay was included with those by editors of the nationally distributed books and small magazines *The Cortland Review*, *The Drunken Boat*, *The Iowa Review*, *Jacket Magazine*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Literary Review*, *Leonardo's Horse*, *The Missouri Review*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *Poets & Writers*, *Postmodern American Fiction*, *Postmodern Culture*, *River Styx*, and *ZYZZYVA*, and of course, *Archipelago*.

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Other News

An e-mail from **The Black Documentary Collective** <BlkDocCol@aol.com> (PO Box 33, Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012) informs us: "The Black Documentary Collective (BDC) provides people of African descent working in the documentary film and video field with the opportunity to meet socially; network professionally; promote each others' work and exchange ideas in order to generate productions. The BDC also advocates on issues impacting Black documentarians.

"We welcome new members in the New York metropolitan area who are willing to develop the BDC through the vision of the membership in the spirit of collective work and the collective concept of organization. Membership is open to people of African descent engaged in the production and/or service of documentary film and video, including students."

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Letters to the Editor

John Casey writes about "Copenhagen" and the Farm Hall transcripts, regarding "The Colossus," Vol. 6, No. 1.

To the Editor:

The only detail in your description (in your last "Endnotes," Vol. 6, No. 1) of how the Farm Hall transcripts came to me that might need clarification is that the other guy moving furniture was Jonathan Logan. I hadn't heard anything about the controversy over whether Heisenberg was a moral hero or whether the German effort to build an atomic bomb wasn't up to the job. Logan wanted to see if a lay reader could make anything of the transcripts. It was pretty clear to me that the German scientists were smart enough, but that the communication and trust between the Nazis and the scientists wasn't good enough to develop an enterprise as vast as the American Manhattan Project.

In any case I'm glad the subject came up between you and me and that you published enough of the transcripts to give your readers a sense of the German scientists' conversation.

As ever,

John Casey

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University of Virginia

Charlottesville Va. 22903

The novelist John Casey (SPARTINA; THE HALF-LIFE OF HAPPINESS) is a Contributing Editor of Archipelago.

A reader exits.

To the Editor:

I feel some disappointment in reading this magazine. It is very arch, but not much in the way of originality or even of world. It is filled with pretentious European junk writings, often vulgar and silly. Sorry.

Mary Kay Baker

New York City

ON OPPOSING THE U.S.A. PATRIOT ACT

Senator Russell Feingold

Editor's note: In an address given October 12, 2001, to the Associated Press Managing Editors Conference at the Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Sen. Feingold (D-Wis) explained why he, alone among United States Senators, voted against the Administration-sponsored "U.S.A. Patriot" Act. The text below followed his introductory remarks.

[T]his conference comes at a tragic time for our country. Let us first pause to remember, through one small story, how September 11th has irrevocably changed so many lives. In a letter to *The Washington Post* last Saturday, a man wrote that as he went jogging near the Pentagon, he came across the makeshift memorial built for those who lost their lives there. He slowed to a walk as he took in the sight before him – the red, white and blue flowers covering the structure, and then, off to the side, a second, smaller memorial with a card.

The card read, "Happy Birthday Mommy. Although you died and are no longer with me, I feel as if I still have you in my life. I think about you every day."

After reading the card, the man felt as if he were "drowning in the names of dead mothers, fathers, sons and daughters." The author of this letter shared a moment in his own life that so many of us have had – the moment where televised pictures of the destruction are made painfully real to us. We read a card, or see the anguished face of a grieving loved one, and we suddenly feel the enormity of what has happened to so many American families, and to all of us as a people.

We all also had our own initial reactions, and my first and most powerful emotion was a solemn resolve to stop these terrorists. And that remains my principal reaction to these events. But I also quickly realized that two cautions were necessary and I raised them on the Senate floor within one day of the attacks.

The first caution was that we must continue to respect our Constitution and protect our civil liberties in the wake of the attacks. As the chairman of the Constitution Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee, I recognize this is a different world with different technologies, different issues, and different threats. Yet we must examine every item that is proposed in response to these events to be sure we are not rewarding these terrorists and weakening ourselves by giving up the cherished freedoms that they seek to destroy.

The second caution I issued was a warning against the mistreatment of Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, South Asians, or others in this country. Already, one day after the attacks, we were hearing news reports that misguided anger against people of these backgrounds had led to harassment, violence, and even death.

I suppose I was reacting instinctively to the unfolding events in the spirit of the Irish statesman John Philpot Curran, who said: "The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance."

During those first few hours after the attacks, I kept remembering a sentence from a case I had studied in law school. Not surprisingly, I didn't remember which case it was, who wrote the opinion, or what it was about, but I did remember these words: "While the Constitution protects against invasions of individual rights, it is not a suicide pact." I took these

words as a challenge to my concerns about civil liberties at such a momentous time in our history; that we must be careful to not take civil liberties so literally that we allow ourselves to be destroyed.

But upon reviewing the case itself, *Kennedy v. Mendoza-Martinez*, I found that Justice Arthur Goldberg had made this statement but then ruled in favor of the civil liberties position in the case, which was about draft evasion. He elaborated:

“It is fundamental that the great powers of Congress to conduct war and to regulate the Nation’s foreign relations are subject to the constitutional requirements of due process. The imperative necessity for safeguarding these rights to procedural due process under the gravest of emergencies has existed throughout our constitutional history, for it is then, under the pressing exigencies of crisis, that there is the greatest temptation to dispense with fundamental constitutional guarantees which, it is feared, will inhibit governmental action. “The Constitution of the United States is a law for rulers and people, equally in war and peace, and covers with the shield of its protection all classes of men, at all times, and under all circumstances.... In no other way can we transmit to posterity unimpaired the blessings of liberty, consecrated by the sacrifices of the Revolution.”

I have approached the events of the past month and my role in proposing and reviewing legislation relating to it in this spirit.

And so we must redouble our vigilance. We must redouble our vigilance to ensure our security and to prevent further acts of terror. But we must also redouble our vigilance to preserve our values and the basic rights that make us who we are.

The Founders who wrote our Constitution and Bill of Rights exercised that vigilance even though they had recently fought and won the Revolutionary War. They did not live in comfortable and easy times of hypothetical enemies. They wrote a Constitution of limited powers and an explicit Bill of Rights to protect liberty in times of war, as well as in times of peace.

There have been periods in our nation’s history when civil liberties have taken a back seat to what appeared at the time to be the legitimate exigencies of war. Our national consciousness still bears the stain and the scars of those events: The Alien and Sedition Acts, the suspension of habeas corpus during the Civil War, the internment of Japanese-Americans, German-Americans, and Italian-Americans during World War II, the blacklisting of supposed communist sympathizers during the McCarthy era, and the surveillance and harassment of antiwar protesters, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., during the Vietnam War. We must not allow these pieces of our past to become prologue.

As this morning’s panel has discussed, even in our great land, wartime has sometimes brought us the greatest tests of our Bill of Rights.

For example, during the Civil War, the government arrested some 13,000 civilians, implementing a system akin to martial law. President Lincoln issued a proclamation ordering the arrest and military trial of any persons “discouraging volunteer enlistments, [or] resisting militia drafts.” Wisconsin provided one of the first challenges of this order. Draft protests rose up in Milwaukee and Sheboygan. And an anti-draft riot broke out among Germans and Luxembourgers in Port Washington. When the government arrested one of the leaders of the riot, his attorney sought a writ of habeas corpus. His military captors said that the President had abolished the writ. The Wisconsin Supreme Court was among the first to rule that the President had exceeded his authority.

In 1917, the Postmaster General revoked the mailing privileges of the newspaper the *Milwaukee Leader* because he felt that some of its articles impeded the war effort and the draft. Articles called the President an aristocrat and called the draft oppressive. Over dissents by Justices Brandeis and Holmes, the Supreme Court upheld the action.

During World War II, President Roosevelt signed orders to incarcerate more than 110,000 people of Japanese origin, as well as some roughly 11,000 of German origin and 3,000 of Italian origin.

Earlier this year, I introduced legislation to set up a commission to review the wartime treatment of Germans, Italians, and other Europeans during that period. That bill came out of heartfelt meetings in which constituents told me their stories. They were German-Americans, who came to me with some trepidation. They had waited fifty years to raise the issue with a member of Congress. They did not want compensation. They came to me with some uneasiness. But they had seen the government's commission on the wartime internment of people of Japanese origin, and they wanted their story to be told, and an official acknowledgment as well.

Now some may say, indeed we may hope, that we have come a long way since the those days of infringements on civil liberties. But there is ample reason for concern. I have been troubled in the past month by the potential loss of commitment to traditional civil liberties.

As it seeks to combat terrorism, the Justice Department is making extraordinary use of its power to arrest and detain individuals, jailing hundreds of people on immigration violations and arresting more than a dozen "material witnesses" not charged with any crime. Although the government has used these authorities before, it has not done so on such a broad scale. Judging from government announcements, the government has not brought any criminal charges related to the attacks with regard to the overwhelming majority of these detainees.

For example, the FBI arrested as a material witness the San Antonio radiologist Albader Al-Hazmi, who has a name like two of the hijackers, and who tried to book a flight to San Diego for a medical conference. According to his lawyer, the government held Al-Hazmi incommunicado after his arrest, and it took six days for lawyers to get access to him. After the FBI released him, his lawyer said, "This is a good lesson about how frail our processes are. It's how we treat people in difficult times like these that is the true test of the democracy and civil liberties that we brag so much about throughout the world."

Now, it so happens that since early 1999, I have been working on another bill that is poignantly relevant to recent events: legislation to prohibit racial profiling, especially the practice of targeting pedestrians or drivers for stops and searches based on the color of their skin. Before September 11th, people spoke of the issue mostly in the context of African-Americans and Latino-Americans who had been profiled. But after September 11, the issue has taken on a new context and a new urgency.

Even as America addresses the demanding security challenges before us, we must strive mightily also to guard our values and basic rights. We must guard against racism and ethnic discrimination against people of Arab and South Asian origin and those who are Muslim.

We who don't have Arabic names or don't wear turbans or headscarves may not feel the weight of these times as much as Americans from the Middle East and South Asia do. But as the great jurist Learned Hand said in a speech in New York's Central Park during World War II: "[T]he spirit of liberty is the spirit which seeks to understand the minds of other men and women; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which weighs their interests alongside its own without bias"

Was it not at least partially bias, however, when passengers on a Northwest Airlines flight in Minneapolis three weeks ago insisted that Northwest remove from the plane three Arab men who had cleared security?

Of course, given the enormous anxiety and fears generated by the events of September 11th, it would not have been difficult to anticipate some of these reactions, both by our government and some of our people. And, of course, there is no doubt that if we lived in a police state, it would be easier to catch terrorists. If we lived in a country that allowed the police to search your home at any time for any reason; if we lived in a country that allowed the

government to open your mail, eavesdrop on your phone conversations, or intercept your email communications; if we lived in a country that allowed the government to hold people in jail indefinitely based on what they write or think, or based on mere suspicion that they are up to no good, then the government would no doubt discover and arrest more terrorists.

But that probably would not be a country in which we would want to live. That would not be a country for which we could, in good conscience, ask our young people to fight and die. In short, that would not be America.

Preserving our freedom is the reason that we are now engaged in this new war on terrorism. We will lose that war without firing a shot if we sacrifice the liberties of the American people.

That is why I found the antiterrorism bill originally proposed by Attorney General Ashcroft and President Bush to be troubling.

The proposed bill contained vast new powers for law enforcement, some seemingly drafted in haste and others that came from the FBI's wish list that Congress has rejected in the past. You may remember that the Attorney General announced his intention to introduce a bill shortly after the September 11 attacks. He provided the text of the bill the following Wednesday, and urged Congress to enact it by the end of the week. That was plainly impossible, but the pressure to move on this bill quickly, without deliberation and debate, has been relentless ever since.

It is one thing to shortcut the legislative process in order to get federal financial aid to the cities hit by terrorism. We did that, and no one complained that we moved too quickly. It is quite another to press for the enactment of sweeping new powers for law enforcement that directly affect the civil liberties of the American people without due deliberation by the peoples' elected representatives.

Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed at least to some extent, and while this bill has been on a fast track, there has been time to make some changes and reach agreement on a bill that is less objectionable than the bill that the Administration originally proposed.

As I will discuss in a moment, I concluded that the Senate bill still does not strike the right balance between empowering law enforcement and protecting civil liberties. But that does not mean that I oppose everything in the bill. Indeed many of its provisions are entirely reasonable, and I hope they will help law enforcement more effectively counter the threat of terrorism.

For example, it is entirely appropriate that with a warrant the FBI be able to seize voice mail messages as well as tap a phone. It is also reasonable, even necessary, to update the federal criminal offense relating to possession and use of biological weapons. It made sense to make sure that phone conversations carried over cables would not have more protection from surveillance than conversations carried over phone lines. And it made sense to stiffen penalties and lengthen or eliminate statutes of limitation for certain terrorist crimes.

There are other non-controversial provisions in the bill which I support – those to assist the victims of crime, to streamline the application process for public safety officers benefits and increase those benefits, to provide more funds to strengthen immigration controls at our Northern borders, expedite the hiring of translators at the FBI, and many others.

In the end, however, my focus on this bill, as Chair of the Constitution Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee in the Senate, was on those provisions that implicate our constitutional freedoms. And it was in reviewing those provisions that I came to feel that the Administration's demand for haste was inappropriate; indeed, it was dangerous. Our process in the Senate, as truncated as it was, did lead to the elimination or significant rewriting of a number of audacious proposals that I and many other members found objectionable.

For example, the original Administration proposal that was dropped contained a provision that would have allowed the use in U.S. criminal proceedings against U.S. citizens of information obtained by foreign law enforcement agencies in wiretaps that would be illegal in this country. In other words, evidence obtained in an unconstitutional search overseas was to be allowed in a U.S. court.

Another provision would have broadened the criminal forfeiture laws to permit – prior to conviction – the freezing of assets entirely unrelated to an alleged crime. The Justice Department has wanted this authority for years, and Congress has never been willing to give it. For one thing, it touches on the right to counsel, since assets that are frozen cannot be used to pay a lawyer. The courts have almost uniformly rejected efforts to restrain assets before conviction unless they are assets gained in the alleged criminal enterprise. This proposal, in my view, was simply an effort on the part of the Department to take advantage of the emergency situation and get something that they’ve wanted to get for a long time.

The foreign wiretap and criminal forfeiture provisions were dropped from the bill that we considered in the Senate. Other provisions were rewritten based on objections that I and others raised about them. For example, the original bill contained sweeping permission for the Attorney General to get copies of educational records without a court order. The final bill in the Senate requires a court order and the certification by the Attorney General that he has reason to believe that the records contain information that is relevant to an investigation of terrorism.

Another provision increased penalties for conspiracy to the level of the penalties for the underlying crime. I was concerned that this might bring the federal death penalty into play for conspiracy. The provision was modified to make life in prison the maximum penalty for conspiracy.

And the definition of “federal terrorism offense,” originally a laundry list of federal crimes that in some instances might, but in most instances would not, relate to terrorism was significantly narrowed.

So the bill the Senate passed last night was certainly improved from the bill that the Administration sent to us on September 19, and wanted us to pass on September 21. But again, in my judgement, it did not strike the right balance between empowering law enforcement and protecting constitutional freedoms. Let me take a moment to discuss some of the shortcomings of the bill that we passed in the Senate very late Thursday night, by a vote of 96-1. And I guess you know by now who the “one” was.

First, the bill contains some very significant changes in criminal procedure that will apply to every federal criminal investigation in this country, not just those involving terrorism. One provision would greatly expand the circumstances in which law enforcement agencies can search homes and offices without notifying the owner prior to the search. The longstanding practice under the Fourth Amendment of serving a warrant prior to executing a search could be easily avoided in virtually every case because the government would simply have to show that it has “reasonable cause to believe” that providing notice “may” “seriously jeopardize an investigation.” This is a significant infringement on personal liberty.

Notice is a key element of Fourth Amendment protections. It allows a person to point out mistakes in a warrant and make sure that a search is limited to the terms of a warrant. Just think about the possibility of the police showing up at your door with a warrant to search your house. You look at the warrant and say, “yes, that’s my address, but the name on the warrant isn’t me.” And the police realize a mistake has been made and go away. If you’re not home, and the police have received permission to do a “sneak and peak” search, they can come in your house, look around, and leave, and may never have to tell you.

Another very troubling provision has to do with the effort to combat computer crime. The bill allows law enforcement to monitor a computer with the permission of its owner or operator, without the need to get a warrant or show probable cause. That's fine in the case of a so called "denial of service attack" or plain old computer hacking. A computer owner should be able to give the police permission to monitor communications coming from what amounts to a trespasser on the computer.

As drafted in the Senate bill, however, the provision might permit an employer to give permission to the police to monitor the emails of an employee who has used her computer at work to shop for Christmas gifts. Or someone who uses a computer at a library or at school and happens to go to a gambling or pornography site in violation of the Internet use policies of the library or the university might also be subjected to government surveillance – without probable cause and without any time limit.

I am also very troubled by the broad expansion of government power under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, known as FISA. When Congress passed FISA in 1978 it granted to the executive branch the power to conduct surveillance in foreign intelligence investigations without meeting the rigorous probable cause standard under the Fourth Amendment that is required for criminal investigations. There is a lower threshold for obtaining a wiretap order from the FISA court because the FBI is not investigating a crime, it is investigating foreign intelligence activities. The law currently requires that intelligence gathering be the primary purpose of the investigation in order for this lower standard to apply.

The bill that passed the Senate last night changes that requirement. If it becomes law, and there is every reason to believe with a Senate vote of 96-1 that it will, the government will only have to show that intelligence is a "significant purpose" of the investigation. Even if the *primary* purpose is a criminal investigation, the heightened protections of the Fourth Amendment won't apply.

It seems obvious that with this lower standard, the FBI will try to use FISA as much as it can. And of course, with terrorism investigations that won't be difficult because the terrorists are apparently sponsored or at least supported by foreign governments.

But the significance of the breakdown of the distinction between intelligence and criminal investigations becomes apparent when you see the other expansions of government power under FISA in this bill. One provision that troubles me a great deal is a provision that permits the government under FISA to compel the production of records from any business regarding any person if that information is sought in connection with an investigation of terrorism or espionage.

Now we're not talking here about travel records pertaining to a terrorist suspect, which we all can see can be highly relevant to an investigation of a terrorist plot. FISA already gives the FBI the power to get airline, train, hotel, car rental and other records of a suspect.

But under the Senate bill, the government can compel the disclosure of anyone – perhaps someone who worked with, or lived next door to, or went to school with, or sat on an airplane with, or has been seen in the company of, or whose phone number was called by the target of the investigation.

And under this new provisions *all* business records can be compelled, including those containing sensitive personal information like medical records from hospitals or doctors, or educational records, or records of what books someone has taken out of the library. This is an enormous expansion of authority, under a law that provides only minimal judicial supervision.

Under this provision, the government can apparently go on a fishing expedition and collect information on virtually anyone. All it has to allege in order to get an order for these records from the court is that the information is sought for an investigation of international terrorism or clandestine intelligence gathering. That's it. On that minimal showing in an ex

parte application to a secret court, with no showing even that the information is *relevant* to the investigation, the government can lawfully compel a doctor or hospital to release medical records, or a library to release circulation records. This is a truly breathtaking expansion of police power.

As some of you know, I raised a few of these issues during our debate on the bill on Thursday night. I had to wage war with my own leadership over the previous two days to get that opportunity. The leadership of both parties wanted to take this bill, which was never considered or voted on in the Judiciary Committee, and ram it through the U.S. Senate without a single amendment being offered.

In the end, the high water mark for my three amendments was 13 votes – that was on the amendment to the computer trespass provision. Prior to that vote the majority leader of the Senate stood up and implored the Senate to vote down all of my amendments, not on their merits, but because a deal had been struck on this bill.

This was not, in my view, the finest hour for the United States Senate. The debate on a bill that may have the most far reaching consequences on the civil liberties of the American people in a generation was a non-debate. The merits took a back seat to the deal.

Let me turn to a final area of real concern about this legislation because I think it brings us full circle to the cautions I expressed on the day after the attacks. There are two very troubling provisions dealing with our immigration laws in this bill.

First, the Administration's original proposal would have granted the Attorney General extraordinary powers to detain immigrants indefinitely, including legal permanent residents. The Attorney General could do so based on mere suspicion that the person is engaged in terrorism. I believe the Administration was really over-reaching here, and I am pleased that Senator Leahy was able to negotiate some protections. The Senate bill now requires the Attorney General to charge the immigrant within seven days with a criminal offense or immigration violation. In the event that the Attorney General does not charge the immigrant, the immigrant must be released.

While this protection is an improvement, the provision remains fundamentally flawed. The Senate bill, even with this seven-day charging requirement, would nevertheless continue to permit the indefinite detention in two situations. First, immigrants who win their deportation cases could continue to be held if the Attorney General continues to have suspicions. Second, this provision creates a deep unfairness to immigrants who are found not to be deportable for terrorism but have an immigration status violation, such as overstaying a visa. If the immigration judge finds that they are eligible for relief from deportation, and therefore can stay in the country because, for example, they have longstanding family ties here, the Attorney General could continue to hold them indefinitely.

The second provision in the bill that deeply troubles me allows the detention and deportation of people engaging in innocent associational activity. But the Senate bill would allow for the detention and deportation of individuals who provide lawful assistance to groups that are not even designated by the Secretary of State as terrorist organizations, but instead have engaged in vaguely defined "terrorist activity" sometime in the past. To avoid deportation, the immigrant is required to prove a negative: that he or she did not know, and should not have known, that the assistance would further terrorist activity.

This language creates a very real risk that truly innocent individuals could be deported for innocent associations with humanitarian or political groups that the government later chooses to regard as terrorist organizations. Groups that might fit this definition could include Operation Rescue, Greenpeace, and even the Northern Alliance fighting the Taliban in northern Afghanistan. This provision amounts to "guilt by association," which I believe violates the First Amendment.

And speaking of the First Amendment, under this bill, a lawful permanent resident who makes a controversial speech that the government deems to be supportive of terrorism might be barred from returning to his or her family after taking a trip abroad.

Now here's where my cautions in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks and my concern over the reach of the anti-terrorism bill come together. To the extent that the expansive new immigration powers that the bill grants to the Attorney General are subject to abuse, who do we think is most likely to bear the brunt of that abuse? It won't be immigrants from Ireland, it won't be immigrants from El Salvador or Nicaragua, it won't even be immigrants from Haiti or Africa. It will be immigrants from Arab, Muslim, and South Asian countries. In the wake of these terrible events, our government has been given vast new powers and they may fall most heavily on a minority of our population who already feel particularly acutely the pain of this disaster.

The anti-terrorism bill that we considered in the Senate this week highlights the march of technology, and how that march cuts both for and against personal liberty. Justice Brandeis foresaw some of the future in a 1928 dissent, when he wrote:

"The progress of science in furnishing the Government with means of espionage is not likely to stop with wire-tapping. Ways may some day be developed by which the Government, without removing papers from secret drawers, can reproduce them in court, and by which it will be enabled to expose to a jury the most intimate occurrences of the home. . . . Can it be that the Constitution affords no protection against such invasions of individual security?"

We must grant law enforcement the tools that it needs to stop this terrible threat. But we must give them only those extraordinary tools that they need and that relate specifically to the task at hand.

In the play, "A Man for All Seasons," Sir Thomas More questions the bolder Roper whether he would level the forest of English laws to punish the Devil. "What would you do?" More asks, "Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?" Roper affirms, "I'd cut down every law in England to do that." To which More replies:

"And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you – where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat? This country's planted thick with laws from coast to coast . . . and if you cut them down . . . d'you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then? Yes, I'd give the Devil benefit of law, for my own safety's sake."

We must maintain our vigilance to preserve our laws and our basic rights.

You and I have a duty to analyze, to test, to weigh new laws that the zealous and often sincere advocates of security would suggest to us. This is what I have tried to do with the so-called anti-terrorism bill.

Protecting the safety of the American people is a solemn duty of the Congress; we must work tirelessly to prevent more tragedies like the devastating attacks of September 11th. We must prevent more children from losing their mothers, more wives from losing their husbands, and more firefighters from losing their brave and heroic colleagues. But the Congress will fulfill its duty only when it protects *both* the American people and the freedoms at the foundation of American society. So let us preserve our heritage of basic rights. Let us practice that liberty. And let us fight to maintain that freedom that we call America.

Editor's note: see also

Hon. Russell Feingold: Senate Web site <<http://www.senate.gov/~feingold/>>

University of Virginia Center for Politics and Government

<http://www.goodpolitics.org/html/pubs/pubs_main.htm>. On April 14, 2002, Sen. Feingold gave a shorter version of the speech, above, at the University of Virginia; pictures available

<http://www.nutsandboltsguide.com/orwell.html>.

Library of Congress, "Legislation Related to the Attack of September 11, 2001"

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/terrorleg.htm>

Library of Congress, "HR3162: Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT ACT) Act of 2001" <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d107:h.r.03162:>

Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression <http://www.tjcenter.org/>

First Part of the Ingenious Nobleman
Don Quixote of La Mancha

Miguel de Cervantes
Translated from the Spanish by Edith Grossman
with Translator's Note



CHAPTER I

*Which describes the condition and profession of the famous nobleman
Don Quixote of La Mancha*

Somewhere in La Mancha, in a place whose name I do not care to remember, a nobleman lived not long ago, one of those who has a lance and ancient shield on a shelf and keeps a skinny nag and a greyhound for racing. An occasional stew, beef more often than lamb, hash most nights, eggs and abstinence on Saturdays, lentils on Fridays, sometimes squab as a treat on Sundays — these consumed three-fourths of his income. The rest went for a light woolen tunic and velvet breeches and hose of the same material for feast days, while weekdays were honored with dun-colored coarse cloth. He had a housekeeper past forty, a niece not yet twenty, and a man-of-all-work who did everything from saddling the horse to pruning the trees. Our nobleman was approximately fifty years old; his complexion was weathered, his flesh scrawny, his face gaunt, and he was a very early riser and a great lover of the hunt. Some claim that his family name was Quixada, or Quexada, or there is a certain amount of disagreement among the authors who write of this matter, although reliable conjecture seems to indicate that his name was Quexana. But this does not matter very much to our story; in its telling there is absolutely no deviation from the truth.

And so, let it be said that this aforementioned nobleman spent his times of leisure — which meant most of the year — reading books of chivalry with so much devotion and enthusiasm that he forgot almost completely about the hunt and even about the administration of his estate; in his rash curiosity and folly he went so far as to sell acres of arable land in order to buy books of chivalry to read, and he brought as many of them as he could into his house; he thought none was as fine as those composed by the worthy Feliciano de Silva, because the clarity of his prose and complexity of his language seemed to him more valuable than pearls, in particular when he read the declarations and missives of love, where he would often find written: *The reason for the unreason to which my reason turns so weakens my reason that with reason I complain of thy beauty.* And also when he read: . . . *the heavens on high divinely heighten thy divinity with the stars and make thee deserving of the deserts thy greatness deserves.*

With these words and phrases the poor gentleman lost his mind, and he spent sleepless nights trying to understand them and extract their meaning, which Aristotle himself, if he came back to life for only that purpose, would not have been able to decipher or understand. Our nobleman was not very happy with the wounds that Don Belianís gave and received, because he imagined that no matter how great the physicians and surgeons who cured him, he would still

have his face and entire body covered with scars and marks. But, even so, he praised the author for having concluded his book with the promise of unending adventure, and he often felt the desire to take up his pen and give it the conclusion promised there; and no doubt he would have done so, and even published it, if other greater and more persistent thoughts had not prevented him from doing so. He often had discussions with the village priest — who was a learned man, a graduate of Sigüenza — regarding who had been the greater knight: Palmerín of England or Amadís of Gaul; but Master Nicolás, the village barber, said that none was the equal of the Knight of Phoebus, and if any could be compared to him it was Don Galaor, the brother of Amadís of Gaul, because he was moderate in everything; a knight who was not affected, not as weepy as his brother, and incomparable in questions of courage.

In short, our nobleman became so caught up in reading that he spent his nights reading from dusk till dawn, and his days reading from sunrise to sunset; and so with too little sleep and too much reading his brains dried up, causing him to lose his mind. His fantasy filled with everything he had read in his books, enchantments as well as combats, battles, challenges, wounds, courtings, loves, torments, and other impossible foolishness, and he became so convinced in his imagination of the truth of all the countless grandiloquent and false inventions he read, that for him no history in the world was truer. He would say that El Cid Ruy Diaz had been a very good knight but could not compare to Amadís, the Knight of the Blazing Sword, who, with a single backstroke, cut two ferocious and colossal giants in half. He was fonder of Bernardo del Carpio because at Roncesvalles he had killed the enchanted Roland by availing himself of the tactic of Hercules when he crushed Antaeus, the son of earth, in his arms. He spoke highly of the giant Morgante because, although he belonged to the race of giants, all of them haughty and lacking in courtesy, he alone was amiable and well behaved. But, more than any of the others, he admired Reinaldos of Montalbán, above all when he saw him emerge from his castle and rob anyone he met, and when he crossed the sea and stole the idol of Mohammed made all of gold, as recounted in his history. He would have traded his housekeeper, and even his niece, for the chance to strike a blow at the traitor Guenelon.

The truth is that when his mind was completely gone, he had the strangest thought any lunatic in the world ever had, which was that it seemed reasonable and necessary to him, both for the sake of his honor and as a service to the nation, to become a knight errant and travel the world with his armor and his horse to seek adventures and engage in everything he had read that knights errant engaged in, righting all manner of wrongs and, by seizing the opportunity and placing himself in danger and ending those wrongs, winning eternal renown and everlasting fame. The poor man imagined himself already wearing the crown, won by the valor of his arm, of the Empire of Trapisonda at the very least; and so it was that with these exceedingly agreeable thoughts, and carried away by the extraordinary pleasure he took in them, he hastened to put into effect what he so fervently desired. And the first thing he did was to attempt to clean some armor that had belonged to his great-grandfathers and, stained with urine and covered with mildew, had spent many long years stored and forgotten in a corner. He did the best he could to clean and repair it, but he saw that it had a great defect, which was that instead of a full sallet helmet with an attached neckguard there was only a simple headpiece; but he compensated for this with his industry, and out of pasteboard he fashioned a kind of half-helmet that, when attached to the headpiece, took on the appearance of the a full sallet. It is true that in order to test if it was strong and could withstand a blow, he took out his sword and struck it twice, and with the first blow he undid in a moment what it had taken him a week to create; he could not help being disappointed at the ease with which he had hacked it to pieces, and to protect against that danger, he made another one, placing strips of iron on the inside so that he was satisfied with its strength and, not wanting to put it to the test again, he designated and accepted it as an extremely fine sallet.

Then he went to look at his nag, and though its hooves had more cracks than its master's pate and it showed more flaws than Gonella's horse, who *tantum pellis et ossa fuit*, it seemed to him that Alexander's Bucephalus and El Cid's Babieca were not its equal. He spent four days thinking about the name he would give it, for — as he told himself — it was not seemly that the horse of so famous a knight, and a steed so intrinsically excellent, should not have a worthy name; he was looking for the precise name that would declare what the horse had been before its master became a knight errant, and what it was now; for he was determined that if the master was changing his condition the horse too would change its name to one that would win the fame and recognition its new position and profession deserved; and so, after many names that he shaped and discarded, subtracted from and added to, unmade and remade in his memory and imagination, he finally decided to call the horse *Rocinante*, a name, in his opinion, that was noble, sonorous, and reflective of what it had been when it was a nag, before it was what it was now, which was the foremost nag in all the world.

Having given a name, and one so much to his liking, to his horse, he wanted to give one to himself, and he spent another eight days pondering this, and at last he called himself *Don Quixote*, which is why, as has been noted, the authors of this absolutely true history determined that he undoubtedly must have been named Quixada and not Quexada, as others have claimed. In any event, recalling that the valiant Amadís had not been content with simply calling himself Amadís but had added the name of his kingdom and realm in order to bring it fame, and was known as Amadís of Gaul, he too, like a good knight, wanted to add the name of his birthplace to his own, and he called himself *Don Quixote of La Mancha*, thereby, to his mind, clearly stating his lineage and country and honoring it by making it part of his title.

Having cleaned his armor and made a full helmet out of a simple headpiece, and having given a name to his horse and decided on one for himself, he realized that the only thing left for him to do was to find a lady to love; for the knight errant without a lady love was a tree without leaves or fruit, a body without a soul. He said to himself:

“If I, because of my evil sins, or my good fortune, meet with a giant somewhere, as ordinarily befalls knights errant, and if I unseat him with a single blow, or cut his body in half, in short, if I conquer and defeat him, would it not be good to have someone to whom I could send him so that he might enter and fall to his knees before my sweet lady, and say in the humble voice of surrender: ‘I, lady, am the giant Caraculiambro, lord of the island Malindrania, defeated in singular combat by the never sufficiently praised knight, Don Quixote of La Mancha, who commanded me to appear before thy ladyship, so that thy highness might disposed of me as thou chooseth?’”

Oh, how pleased our good knight was when he had made this speech, and even more pleased when he discovered the one he could call his lady! It is believed that in a nearby village there was a very attractive peasant girl with whom he had once been in love, although she, apparently, never knew or noticed. Her name was Aldonza Lorenzo, and he thought it a good idea to call her the lady of his thoughts, and searching for a name that would not differ significantly from his and would suggest and imply that of a princess and great lady, he decided to call her *Dulcinea of Toboso*, because she came from Toboso; a name, to his mind, that was musical and beautiful and filled with significance, as were all the others he had given to himself and everything pertaining to him.



CHAPTER II

*Which tells of the first sally that the ingenious Don Quixote
made from his native land*

And so, having completed these preparations, he did not wish to wait any longer to put his thoughts into effect, impelled by the great need in the world that he believed was caused by his delay, for there were evils to undo, wrongs to right, injustices to correct, abuses to ameliorate, and offenses to rectify. And one morning before dawn on a hot day in July, without informing a single person of his intentions, and without anyone seeing him, he armored himself with all his armor and mounted Rocinante, wearing his poorly constructed helmet, and he grasped his shield and took up his lance and through the side door of a corral he rode out into the countryside with great joy and delight at seeing how easily he had given a beginning to his virtuous desire. But as soon as he found himself in the countryside he was assailed by a thought so terrible it almost made him abandon the enterprise he had barely begun; he recalled that he had not been dubbed a knight, and according to the law of chivalry, he could not and must not take up arms against any knight; since this was the case, he would have to bear blank arms, like a novice knight without a device on his shield, until he had earned one through his own efforts. These thoughts made him waver in his purpose, but, his madness being stronger than any other faculty, he resolved to have himself dubbed a knight by the first person he met, in imitation of many others who had done the same, as he had read in the books that had brought him to this state. As for his armor being blank and white, he planned to clean it so much that when the dubbing took place it would be whiter than ermine; he immediately grew serene and continued on his way, following only the path his horse wished to take, believing that the virtue of his adventures lay in doing this.

And as our new adventurer traveled along, he talked to himself, saying:

“Who can doubt that in times to come, when the true history of my famous deeds comes to light, the wise man who compiles them will write, when he begins to recount my first sally so early in the day, in this manner: ‘No sooner had rubicund Apollo spread over the face of the wide and spacious earth the golden strands of his beauteous hair, no sooner had diminutive and bright-hued birds with dulcet tongues greeted in sweet, mellifluous harmony the advent of rosy dawn, who, forsaking the soft couch of her zealous consort, revealed herself to mortals through the doors and balconies of the Manchegan horizon, than the famous knight, Don Quixote of La Mancha, abandoning the downy bed of idleness, mounted his famous steed Rocinante and commenced to ride through the ancient and illustrious countryside of Montiel.’”

And it was true that this was where he was riding. And he continued:

“Fortunate the time and blessed the age when my famous deeds will come to light, worthy of being carved in bronze, sculpted in marble, and painted on tablets as a remembrance in the future. Oh thou, wise enchanter, whoever thou mayest be, whose task it will be to chronicle this wondrous history! I implore thee not to overlook my good Rocinante, my eternal companion on all my travels and peregrinations.”

Then he resumed speaking as if he were truly in love:

“Oh, Princess Dulcinea, mistress of this captive heart! Thou hast done me grievous harm in bidding me farewell and reproving me with the harsh affliction of commanding that I not

appear before thy sublime beauty. May it please thee, lady, to recall this thy subject heart, which suffers countless trials for the sake of thy love.”

He strung these together with other foolish remarks, all in the manner his books had taught him, and imitating their language as much as he could. As a result, his pace was so slow, and the sun rose so quickly and ardently, that it would have melted his brains if he'd had any.

He rode almost all that day and nothing worthy of note happened to him, which caused him to despair because he wanted an immediate encounter with someone on whom to test the valor of his mighty arm. Some authors say his first adventure was the one in Puerto Lápice; others claim it was the adventure of the windmills; but according to what I have been able to determine with regard to this matter, and what I have discovered written in the annals of La Mancha, the fact is that he rode all that day, and at dusk he and his horse found themselves exhausted and half-dead with hunger; and as he looked all around to see if he could find some castle or a sheepfold with shepherds where he might take shelter and alleviate his great hunger and need, he saw an inn not far from the path he was traveling, and it was as if he had seen a star guiding him not to the portals but to the inner towers of his salvation. He quickened his pace and reached it just as night was falling.

At the door there happened to be two young women, the kind they call ladies of easy virtue, who were on their way to Sevilla with some mule drivers who had decided to stop at the inn that night, and since everything our adventurer thought, saw, or imagined seemed to happen according to what he had read, as soon as he saw the inn it appeared to him to be a castle complete with four towers and spires of gleaming silver, not to mention a drawbridge and deep moat and all the other details depicted on such castles. He rode toward the inn that he thought was a castle, and when he was a short distance away he reined in Rocinante and waited for a dwarf to appear on the parapets and signal with his trumpet that a knight was approaching the castle. But when he saw that there was some delay, and Rocinante was in a hurry to get to the stable, he rode toward the door of the inn and saw the two profligate wenches standing there, and he thought they were two fair damsels or two gracious ladies taking their ease at the entrance to the castle. At that moment a swineherd who was driving his pigs — no excuses, that's what they're called — out of some mudholes, blew his horn, a sound that pigs respond to, and it immediately seemed to Don Quixote to be just what he had desired, which was for a dwarf to signal his arrival, and so with extreme joy he rode up to the inn, and the ladies, seeing a man armed in that fashion, and carrying a lance and shield, became frightened and were about to retreat into the inn; but Don Quixote, inferring their fear from their flight, raised the pasteboard visor, revealing his dry, dusty face, and, in a gallant manner and reassuring voice, he said to them:

“Flee not, dear ladies, fear no villainous act from me; for the order of chivalry which I profess does not countenance or permit such deeds to be committed against any person, least of all high-born maidens such as yourselves.”

The wenches looked at him, directing their eyes to his face, hidden by the imitation visor; but when they heard themselves called maidens, something so alien to their profession, they could not control their laughter, which offended Don Quixote, and moved him to say:

“Moderation is becoming in beauteous ladies, and laughter for no reason is foolishness; but I do not say this to cause in you a woeful or dolorous disposition; for mine is none other than to serve you.”

The language, which the ladies did not understand, and the bizarre appearance of our knight, intensified their laughter, and his annoyance increased, and he would have gone even further if at that moment the innkeeper had not come out, a man who was very fat and therefore very peaceable, and when he saw that grotesque figure armed with arms as incongruous as his bridle, lance, shield, and corselet, he was ready to join the maidens in their

displays of hilarity. But fearing the countless difficulties that might ensue, he decided to speak to him politely, and so he said:

“If, sir, your grace seeks lodging, except for a bed (because there is none in this inn), a great abundance of everything else will be found here.”

Don Quixote, seeing the humility of the steward of the castle-fortress, which is what he thought the innkeeper and the inn were, replied:

“For me, good castellan, anything will do, for
my trappings are my weapons,
and combat is my rest, etc.”

The host believed he had called him castellan because he thought him an upright Castilian, though he was an Andalusian from the Sanlúcar coast, no less a thief than Cacus and as malicious as an apprentice page, and so he responded: “In that case, your grace’s beds must be bare rocks, and your sleep, a constant vigil; and this being true, you can certainly dismount, certain of finding in this poor hovel more than enough reason and reasons not to sleep in an entire year, let alone a single night.”

And saying this, he went to hold the stirrup for Don Quixote, who dismounted with extreme difficulty and travail, like a man who had not broken his fast all day long.

Then he told his host to take great care with his horse, because it was the best mount that walked this earth. The innkeeper looked at the horse and did not think it as good as Don Quixote said, or even half as good, and after leading it to the stable, he came back to see what his guest might desire, and the maidens, who by this time had made peace with him, were divesting him of his armor; although they had removed his breastplate and back piece, they never knew how or were able to disconnect the gorget or remove the counterfeit helmet, which was tied on with green cords that would have to be cut because they could not undo the knots; but he absolutely refused to consent to this, and so he spent all that night wearing the helmet, and was the most comical and curious figure that anyone could imagine; and as they were disarming him, and since he imagined that those well-worn and much-used women were illustrious ladies and damsels from the castle, he said to them with a good deal of grace and verve:

“Never was a knight
so well served by ladies
as was Don Quixote
when he first sallied forth:
fair damsels tended to him;
princesses cared for his horse,

or Rocinante, for this is the name, noble ladies, of my steed, and Don Quixote of La Mancha is mine; and although I did not wish to disclose my name until the great feats performed in your service and for your benefit would reveal it, perforce the adaptation of this ancient ballad of Lancelot to our present purpose has been the cause of your learning my name before the time was ripe; but the day will come when your highnesses will command and I shall obey and the valor of this my arm will betoken the desire I have to serve you.”

The wenches, unaccustomed to hearing such high-flown rhetoric, did not say a word in response; they only asked if he wanted something to eat.

“I would consume any fare,” replied Don Quixote, “because, as I understand it, that would be most beneficial now.”

It happened to be a Friday, and in all the inn there was nothing but a few pieces of a fish that in Castilla is called cod, and in Andalucía codfish, and in other places salt cod, and elsewhere, smoked cod. They asked if his grace would like a little smoked cod, for there was no other fish to serve him.

“Since many little cod,” replied Don Quixote, “all together make one large one, it does not matter to me if you give me eight *reales* in coins or in a single piece of eight. Moreover, it well might be that these little cod are like veal, which is better than beef, and kid, which is better than goat. But, in any case, bring it soon, for the toil and weight of arms cannot be borne if one does not control the stomach.”

They set the table at the door to the inn, to take advantage of the cooler air, and the host brought him a portion of cod that was badly prepared and cooked even worse, and bread as black and grimy as his armor; but it was a cause for great laughter to see him eat, because, since he was wearing his helmet and holding up the visor with both hands, he could not put anything in his mouth unless someone placed it there for him, and so one of the ladies performed that task. But when it was time to give him something to drink it was impossible, and would have remained impossible, if the innkeeper had not hollowed out a reed, placing one end in the gentleman’s mouth and pouring some wine in the other; and all of this Don Quixote accepted with patience in order not to have the cords of his helmet cut. At this moment a gelder of hogs happened to arrive at the inn, and as he arrived he blew on his reed pipe four or five times, which confirmed for Don Quixote that he was in a famous castle where they were entertaining him with music, and that the cod was trout, the bread soft and white, the prostitutes ladies, the innkeeper the castellan of the castle, and that his decision to sally forth had been a good one. But what troubled him most was not being dubbed a knight, for it seemed to him that he could not legitimately engage in any adventure if he did not receive the order of knighthood.



CHAPTER III

*Which recounts the amusing manner in which Don Quixote
was dubbed a knight*

And so, troubled by this thought, he hurried through the scant meal served at the inn, and when it was finished, he called to the innkeeper and, going into the stable with him, he kneeled before him and said:

“Never will I rise up from this place, valiant knight, until thy courtesy grants me a boon I wish to ask of thee, one that will redound to thy glory and to the benefit of all humankind.”

The innkeeper, seeing his guest at his feet and hearing these words, looked at him and was perplexed, not knowing what to do or say, and he insisted that he get up, but Don Quixote refused until the innkeeper declared that he would grant the boon asked of him.

“I expected no less of thy great magnificence, my lord,” replied Don Quixote. “And so I shall tell thee the boon that I would ask of thee and that thy generosity has granted me, and it is that on the morrow thou wilt dub me a knight, and that this night in the chapel of thy castle I shall keep vigil over my armor; and that on the morrow, as I have said, what I fervently desire will be accomplished so that I can, as I needs must do, travel the four corners of the earth in search of adventures on behalf of those in need, this being the office of chivalry and knights errant, for I am one of them and my desire is disposed of such deeds.”

The innkeeper, as we have said, was rather sly and already had some inkling of his guest’s madness, which was confirmed when he heard him say these words, and in order to have something to laugh about that night, he proposed to humor him; and so he told him that his

desire and request were exemplary and his purpose right and proper in knights who were as illustrious as he appeared to be and as his gallant presence demonstrated; and that he himself, in the years of his youth, had dedicated himself to that honorable profession, traveling through many parts of the world in search of adventures, to wit the Percheles in Málaga, the Islas of Riarán, the Compás in Sevilla, the Azoguejo of Segovia, the Olivera of Valencia, the Rondilla in Granada, the coast of Sanlúcar, the Potro in Córdoba, the Ventillas in Toledo, and many other places where he had exercised the lightfootedness of his feet and the lightfingeredness of his hands, committing countless wrongs, bedding many widows, undoing a few maidens, deceiving several orphans, and, finally, becoming known in every court and tribunal in almost all of Spain; in recent years, he had retired to this castle, where he lived on his property and that of others, welcoming all knights of whatever category and condition simply because of the great fondness he felt for them, so that they might share with him their goods as recompense for his virtuous desires.

He also said that in his castle there was no chapel where Don Quixote could stand vigil over his arms, for it had been demolished in order to rebuild it; but, in urgent cases, he knew that vigils could be kept anywhere, and on this night he could stand vigil in a courtyard of the castle; in the morning, God willing, the necessary ceremonies would be performed, and he would be dubbed a knight, and so much of a knight there could be no greater in all the world.

He asked if he had any money; Don Quixote replied that he did not have a copper *blanca*, because he had never read in the histories of knights errant that any of them ever carried money. To this the innkeeper replied that he was deceived, for if this was not written in the histories, it was because it had not seemed necessary to the authors to write down something as obvious and necessary as carrying money and clean shirts, and if they had not, this was no reason to think the knights did not carry them; and so, it should be taken as true and beyond dispute that all the knights errant who fill so many books to overflowing carried well-provisioned purses for whatever might befall them; by the same token they carried shirts and a small chest stocked with unguents to cure the wounds they received, for in the fields and clearings where they engaged in combat and were wounded there was not always someone who could cure them, unless they had for a friend some wise enchanter who instantly came to their aid, bringing through the air, on a cloud, a damsel or a dwarf bearing a flask of water of such great power that, by swallowing a single drop, the knights were so completely healed of their injuries and wounds that it was as if no harm had befallen them. But in the event such was not the case, the knights of yore deemed it proper for their squires to be provisioned with money and other necessities, such as linen bandages and unguents to heal their wounds; and if it happened that these knights had no squire — which was a rare and uncommon thing — they themselves carried everything in saddlebags so finely made they could barely be seen on the haunches of their horse, as if they were something of greater significance because, except in cases like these, carrying saddlebags was not well favored by knights errant; for this reason he advised, for he could still give him orders as if he were his godson, since that is what he would soon be, that from now on he not ride forth without money and the provisions he had described, and then he would see how useful and necessary they would be when he least expected it.

Don Quixote promised to do as he advised with great alacrity, and so it was arranged that he would stand vigil over his arms in a large corral to one side of the inn; and Don Quixote, gathering all his armor together, placed it on a trough that was next to a well, and grasping his shield, he took up his lance and with noble countenance began to pace back and forth in front of the trough, and as he began his pacing, night began to fall.

The innkeeper told everyone in the inn about the lunacy of his guest, about his standing vigil over his armor and his expectation that he would be dubbed a knight. They marveled at so

strange a form of madness and went to watch him from a distance, and saw that with a serene expression he sometimes paced back and forth; at other times, leaning on his lance, he turned his eyes to his armor and did not turn them away again for a very long time. Night had fallen; but the moon was so bright it could compete with the orb whose light it reflected, and therefore everything the new knight did was seen clearly by everyone. Just then it occurred to one of the mule drivers in the inn to water his pack of mules, and for this it was necessary to move Don Quixote's armor, which was on the trough; our knight, seeing them approach, said in a booming voice:

“Oh thou, whosoever thou art, rash knight, who cometh to touch the armor of the most valiant knight who e'er girded on a sword! Lookest thou to what thou doest and touch it not, if thou wantest not to leave thy life in payment for thy audacity.”

The muleteer cared nothing for these words — it would have been better for him if he had, for it meant caring for his health —; instead, picking the armor up by the straps, he threw it a good distance away. And seeing this, Don Quixote lifted his eyes to heaven and, turning his thoughts — or so it seemed to him — to his lady Dulcinea, he said:

“Help me, my lady, in this the first affront aimed at this thy servant's bosom; in this my first challenge let not thy grace and protection fail me.”

And saying these and other similar phrases, and dropping his shield, he raised his lance in both hands and gave the mule driver so heavy a blow on the head that he knocked him to the ground, and the man was so badly battered that if the first blow had been followed by a second, he would have had no need for a physician to care for his wounds. Having done this, Don Quixote picked up his armor and began to pace again with the same tranquility as before. A short time later, unaware of what had happened — for the first mule driver was still in a daze — a second approached, also intending to water his mules, and when he began to remove the armor to allow access to the trough, without saying a word or asking for anyone's favor, Don Quixote again dropped his shield and again raised his lance, and did not shatter it but instead broke the head of the second mule driver into more than three pieces because he cracked his skull in at least four places. When they heard the noise, all the people in the inn hurried over, among them the innkeeper. When he saw this, Don Quixote took up his shield, placed his hand on his sword, and said:

“Oh beauteous lady, strength and vigor of my submissive heart! This is the moment when thou needs must turn the eyes of thy grandeur toward this thy captive knight, who awaits so great an adventure.”

And with this he acquired, it seemed to him, so much courage, that if all the mule drivers in the world had charged him he would not have taken one step backward. The wounded men's companions, seeing their friends on the ground, began to hurl stones at Don Quixote from a distance, and he did what he could to deflect them with his shield, not daring to move away from the trough and leave his armor unprotected. The innkeeper shouted at them to stop because he had already told them he was crazy, and that being crazy he would be absolved even if he killed them all. Don Quixote shouted even louder, calling them perfidious traitors, and saying that the lord of the castle was a varlet and a discourteous knight for allowing knights errant to be so badly treated, and that if he had already received the order of chivalry he would enlighten him as to the full extent of his treachery.

“But you, filthy and lowborn rabble, I care nothing for you; throw, approach, come, offend me all you can; for you will soon see how perforce you will pay for your rash insolence.”

He said this with so much boldness and so much courage that he instilled a terrible fear in his attackers; and because of this and the persuasive arguments of the innkeeper, they stopped throwing stones at him, and he allowed the wounded men to withdraw, and resumed standing vigil over his armor with the same serenity and tranquility as before.

The innkeeper did not think very highly of his guest's antics, and he decided to cut matters short and give him the accursed order of chivalry then and there, before another misfortune occurred. And so he approached and begged his pardon for the impudence these lowborn knaves had shown, saying he had known nothing about it, but that they had been rightfully punished for their audacity. He said he had already told him there was no chapel in the castle, nor was one necessary for what remained to be done, because according to his understanding of the ceremonies of the order, the entire essence of being dubbed a knight consisted in being struck on the neck and shoulders, and that could be accomplished in the middle of a field, and he had already fulfilled everything with regard to keeping a vigil over his armor, for just two hours of vigil satisfied the requirements, and he had spent more than four. Don Quixote believed everything and said he was prepared to obey him, and that he should conclude matters with as much haste as possible, because if he was attacked again and had already been dubbed a knight, he did not intend to leave a single person alive in the castle except for those the castellan ordered him to spare, which he would do out of respect for him.

Forewarned and fearful, the castellan immediately brought the book in which he kept a record of the feed and straw he supplied to the mule drivers, and with a candle end that a servant boy brought to him, and the two aforementioned damsels, he approached the spot where Don Quixote stood and ordered him to kneel; and reading from his book as if he were murmuring a devout prayer, he raised his hand and struck him on the back of the neck, and after that, with his own sword, he delivered a gallant blow to his shoulders, always murmuring between his teeth as if he were praying. Having done this, he ordered one of the ladies to gird on his sword, and she did so with a good deal of refinement and discretion, and a good deal was needed for them not to burst into laughter at each moment of the ceremony, but the great feats they had seen performed by the new knight kept their laughter in check. As she girded on his sword, the good lady said:

“May God make your grace a very fortunate knight and give you good fortune in your fights.”

Don Quixote asked her name, so that he might know from that day forth to whom he was obliged for the benison he had received, for he desired to offer her some part of the honor he would gain by the valor of his arm. She answered very humbly that her name was Tolosa, and that she was the daughter of a cobbler from Toledo who lived near the Sancho Bienaya market, and no matter where she might be she would be his servant and consider him her master. Don Quixote replied that for the sake of his love would she have the kindness to henceforth ennoble herself and call herself Doña Tolosa. She promised she would, and the other girl accoutered him with his knightly spurs, and he had almost the same conversation with her as with the one who girded on his sword. He asked her name, and she said she was called Molinera, the miller's girl, and that she was the daughter of an honorable miller from Antequera, and Don Quixote also implored her to ennoble herself and call herself Doña Molinera, offering her more services and good turns.

And so, having performed at a galloping pace those never-before-seen ceremonies, in less than an hour Don Quixote found himself a knight, ready to sally forth in search of adventures, and he saddled Rocinante and mounted him, and, embracing his host, he said such strange things to him, thanking him for the boon of having dubbed him a knight, that it is not possible to adequately recount them. The innkeeper, in order to get him out of the inn, replied with words no less rhetorical but much more brief, and without asking him to pay for the cost of his lodging, he let him leave at an early hour.



Notes (E.G.) :

a learned man, a graduate of Sigüenza : The allusion is ironic: Sigüenza was a minor university, and its graduates had the reputation of not being very well educated.

El Cid Ruy Díaz : A historical figure (eleventh century) who has passed into legend and literature.

Bernardo del Carpio : A legendary hero, the subject of ballads as well as poems and plays.

Roncesvalles : The site in the Pyrenees, called Roncesvaux in French, where Charlemagne's army fought the Saracens in 778.

Reinaldos of Montalbán : A hero of the French *chansons de geste*; in some Spanish versions, he takes part in the battle of Roncesvalles.

Guenelon : The traitor responsible for the defeat of Charlemagne's army at Roncesvalles.

Gonella's horse : Pietro Gonella, the jester at the court of Ferrara, had a horse famous for being skinny.

Rocinante : *Rocín* means "nag"; *ante* means "before," both temporally and spatially.

Don Quixote : *Quixote* means the section of armor that covers the thigh.

Don Quixote of La Mancha : La Mancha was not one of the noble medieval kingdoms associated with knighthood.

Aldonza : Aldonza, considered to be a common, rustic name, had comic connotations.

Montiel : A town in La Mancha.

my trappings are my weapons, / and combat is my rest, etc. : These lines are from a well-known ballad; the innkeeper's response quotes the next two lines.

though he was an Andalusian from the Sanlúcar coast : In Cervantes' time, this was known as a gathering place for criminals.

"Never was a knight / so well served by ladies...; / princesses cared for his horse : Don Quixote paraphrases a ballad about Lancelot.

the Percheles in Málaga, the Islas of Riarán, ... the Potro in Córdoba, the Ventillas in Toledo : These were all famous underworld haunts.



Translator's Note

In the Author's Prologue to what is now called Part I of DON QUIXOTE (Part II appeared ten years later, in 1615, following the publication of a continuation of the knight's adventures that had not been written by Cervantes), Cervantes said this about his book and the need to write a preface for it:

I wanted only to offer it [the novel] to you plain and bare, unadorned by a prologue or the endless catalogue of sonnets, epigrams, and laudatory poems that are usually placed at the beginning of books. For I can tell you that although it cost me some effort to compose, none seemed greater than creating the preface you are now reading. I picked up my pen many times to write it, and many times I put it down again because I did not know what to write; and once, when I was baffled, with the paper in front of me, my pen behind my ear, my elbow propped on the writing table and my cheek resting in my hand, pondering what I would say, a friend of mine ... came in, and seeing me so perplexed he asked the reason, and I ... said I was thinking about the prologue I had to write for the history of Don Quixote....

I am not presumptuous or arrogant enough to compare myself to Miguel de Cervantes, but his (fictional) difficulty was certainly my (factual) one as I contemplated the prospect of writing even a few lines about the wonderfully utopian task of translating the first — and probably the greatest — modern novel. Substitute keyboard and monitor for pen and paper, and my dilemma and posture are the same; the dear friend who helped to solve the problem is

really Cervantes himself, an embodied spirit who emerged out of the shadows and off the pages when I realized I could begin this essay by quoting some sentences from his prologue.

I have never kept a translating journal, although I admire those I have read. William Weaver, for example, while he was translating *THE NAME OF THE ROSE*, wrote a fascinating and valuable diary that documents everything from the backache that kept him from sitting at his desk to the hours spent deciding how to render a single word or phrase (an excruciating process that only another translator can appreciate fully). Keeping records of any kind is not something I do easily, and after six or seven hours of translating at the computer, the idea of writing about what I have written looms insurmountably, as does the kind of self-scrutiny required: The actuality of the translation is in the translation, and having to articulate how and why I have just articulated the text seems cruelly redundant. Yet I did keep daily notes, for a few days. I hesitated over spelling, for instance, and finally opted for an *x*, and a *j*, in *Quixote* (I wanted the connection to the English “Quixotic” to be immediately apparent); I worried about footnotes, and decided that I had to put some in, though I had never used them before in a translation (I did not want the reader to be put off by references that may now be obscure, or to miss the layers of intention and meaning they created); and I recorded the rush of exhilaration and terror I felt, for perfectly predictable and transparent reasons, at undertaking the project.

Every translator has to live with the kind of critic and reviewer whom Gregory Rabassa has called “Professor Horrendo” — that intrepid leader of the translation police who is ready to pounce on an infelicitous phrase or misinterpreted word in a book that can be hundreds of pages long. I had two or three soul-searing nightmares about academic hordes, with Hispanists in the vanguard, laying waste to my translation of the work that is not only the great monument of literature in Spanish, but a pillar of the entire Western literary tradition. Only the knowledge that I was not a young translator just starting out gave me the courage to go on — that, and the determination not to allow self-censoring apprehension to keep me from an enterprise that was surely the dream of every person who translates from Spanish.

Shortly before I began work, while I was wrestling with the question of what kind of voice would be most appropriate for the translation of a book written some four hundred years ago, I mentioned my fears to Julián Ríos, the Spanish writer (I have translated two of his novels, *LOVES THAT BIND* and *MONSTRUARY*). His reply was simple and profound and immensely liberating. He told me not to be afraid; Cervantes, he said, was our [the Spanish-speaking world’s] most modern writer, and what I had to do was to translate him the way I translated everyone else. It was a revelation. Julián’s characterization desacralized the project and allowed me, finally, to confront the text and find the voice in English. This is the essential problem in translation, for me at least. Compared to it, lexical difficulties shrink and wither away.

I believe that my primary obligation as a literary translator is to recreate for the reader in English the experience of the reader in Spanish. When Cervantes wrote *DON QUIXOTE*, it was not yet a seminal masterpiece of European literature; or the book that crystallized forever the making of literature out of life *and* literature; or explored in typically ironic fashion, and for the first time, the blurred and shifting frontiers between fact and fiction, imagination and history, perception and physical reality; or set the stage for all Hispanic studies and all serious discussions of the history and nature of the novel in Europe. When Cervantes wrote *DON QUIXOTE* his language was not archaic or quaint. He wrote in a crackling, up-to-date Spanish that was an intrinsic part of his time (this is instantly apparent when he has Don Quixote, in transports of knightly madness, speak in the old-fashioned idiom of the novels of chivalry), a modern language that both reflected and helped to shape the way people experienced the world. This meant that I did not need to find a special, somehow-seventeenth-century voice, but could translate his astonishingly fine writing into contemporary English.

And his writing is a marvel: It gives off sparks and flows like honey. Cervantes' style is so artful it seems absolutely natural and inevitable; his irony is sweet-natured, his sensibility sophisticated, compassionate, and humorous. If my translation works at all, the contemporary reader should keep turning the pages, smiling a good deal, periodically bursting into laughter, and anticipating with some eagerness the next synonym, the next mind-bending coincidence, the next variation on the structure of Don Quixote's adventures, the next incomparable conversation between the knight and his squire. To quote again from Cervantes' prologue: "I do not want to charge you too much for the service I have performed in introducing you to so noble and honorable a knight; but I do want you to thank me for allowing you to make the acquaintance of the famous Sancho Panza, his squire...."

I began the work in February 2001. What you have in hand is a first revision; I cannot predict how many more there will be, but "final" versions are determined more by a publisher's due date than by any sense on my part that the work is actually finished. I hope you find it deeply amusing and truly compelling. If not, you can be certain the fault is mine.

—Edith Grossman

The Waiting Room

Karel Čapek

Translated from the Czech by Norma Comrada

I suppose I'll spend the night in the restaurant, Záruba thought, since the train has already left, or I'll stretch out somewhere in the waiting room; I'll grab three or four hours' sleep and then take the first train out in the morning. God, let the time pass quickly! There's still a little hope left, and it's possible everything can still be saved. So many hours!

But the restaurant was closed, and a detachment of troops filled the waiting room. They were sleeping on the benches and the table tops, they were lying all about the floor, their heads resting on the crossbars of the tables, against the spittoons, on scrunched-up paper, their faces to the floor, piled up like a heap of corpses. Záruba escaped into the corridor; it was cold and damp out there, reeking with the smell of tar and urine from the lavatories, and there were just two gas lamps weakly quavering. There were people yawning and shivering on the benches, impatient with the long wait. But at least there was a bit of space here, a bit of space for a man; at least a bit of space for a weary, unobtrusive sleeper.

Záruba found himself a bench and planted himself down on it, settling in as warm and firm as possible; he fashioned a nook to serve as his sleeping quarters, as bed, headboard, footboard, refuge. – Oh, the discomfort – he wrenched himself out of his half-sleep – how to position my limbs? He thought about it long and hard; in the end he chose to lie like a child in a crib, and he stretched out lengthwise on the bench. But the bench was too short. In despair, Záruba struggled with his dimensions, saddened by such inconsiderate resistance; finally, he lay there as if shackled, motionless, boyishly small, and watched the great illuminated circles that wheeled in the darkness on revolving disks. – Why, I'm already asleep, flashed through his mind, and at that moment he opened his eyes, saw two sides of a triangle drift by, and was terribly confused: where am I? What's wrong? Panicky, he looked around for some sort of orientation, but was unable to figure out the directions; he gathered up all his strength and rose to his feet. Once again he saw the long, cold corridor, but he saw it with greater sadness than before; he knew from the bitter taste of misery in his mouth that he was completely awake.

Resting his head on his knees, he pondered his situation. To hold out, to try and see it through until salvation came, yes; but still so many hours to go! Absently glancing down at the corridor's dirty tiles, he found himself looking at trampled bits of paper, disgusting phlegm, debris from innumerable feet. – That one there has the shape of a face, eyes of mud and lips of spittle, a grotesque attempt at a smile...

Repelled, he looked up. There lay a soldier on a bench, sleeping with his head tilted backwards, groaning as if on his death bed. A nondescript woman sat sleeping, the head of a little girl on her lap; her face grim and pitiful, the woman slept on, but the little girl was looking about with pale eyes, whispering something to herself; she had a long, jutting chin and a wide mouth between thin cheeks, an old woman of a child, with sad, wide eyes that flitted everywhere. And look at that corpulent man, the way he's sleeping, his swollen drowsiness, sagging limply over the bench, doltish and dumbfounded, a flaccid mass rolling off its primary support. Under the brim of a small green hat the lively black eyes of a young man are winking. "Come here," he hisses at the pale-eyed girl through the gaps between corroded teeth: "Come here," he whispers, and smiles. Confused, the little girl fidgets and smiles back with an

appalling, old-womanish smile: she has no teeth. “Come here,” the young man sibilates, but then he sits down next to her. “What’s your name?” And he fondles her knee with the palm of his hand. The little girl gives him a nervous, unpleasant smile. The sleeping soldier lets out a gurgling sound as if at the hour of death. Záruba trembles with cold and disgust.

An hour after midnight. Time scraped forward with agonizing slowness, and Záruba felt it dragging, gratuitously dislocated by a growing, directionless tension. All right, he told himself, I’ll close my eyes and hold out, without thinking, without moving, for as long as possible, for a whole hour, while time ticks away. – And so he sat there frozen, forcing himself to hold out for as long as possible; the duration of each minute was endlessly suspended, counting without numbers, delay upon delay. – Finally, after an unsurvivable amount of time had passed, he opened his eyes. Five minutes after one. The corridor, the papers, the child, the same bewildered, old-womanish smile... Nothing had changed. Everything was frozen in the fixed proximity of a present that did not move forward.

All at once Záruba spied a man sitting stock-still in a corner, awake and alone, like Záruba. He’s like me, Záruba thought, he can’t sleep either. What is he thinking about? About this endless wait, just like me? The man trembled, as if he found the question disagreeable. Záruba involuntarily gazed at the man’s amorphous face, its features twitching as when someone drives away a determined fly. Suddenly the man got up, worked his way down the corridor on tiptoe, and sat down right next to him.

“That was rude, my staring at you,” Záruba said in a subdued voice.

“Yes.” Both were silent for quite some time. “Look,” the man finally whispered, pointing his finger at the ground, “that looks like a human face.”

“I already noticed it.”

“You already noticed it,” the man repeated gloomily. “Then you, too, have felt very—”

“Felt what?”

“Nothing’s harder than waiting,” the man remarked.

“How do I feel?”

“It’s hard. It’s hard to wait. No matter what happens eventually, it’s a form of deliverance. Waiting is hard.”

“Why are you talking about it?”

“Because it’s hard to wait. You too have read what’s written in the dust and spit. And it troubled you, as well. Nothing is more agonizing than the present.”

“Why?”

“Because waiting is hard.” The man stared at the ground.

“Where are you traveling to?” Záruba asked after a while.

“I travel only for pleasure,” the man replied absently. “That is to say, beautiful places can often be found. You go so far that you’re no longer thinking about anything, and then suddenly you’re in such a place, a creek or a well in a grove, or children, something unexpected and beautiful. – And then, caught unawares, you understand what luck is.”

“What about luck?”

“Nothing. You simply encounter it. In short, it’s a wonder. Do you ever think about the pagan gods?”

“No, I don’t.”

“It’s like this: no one expected to see them, people came across them unexpectedly. Somewhere in the water or in a thicket or in flames. That’s why they were so beautiful. Oh, if only I could put it into words! if only I could put it into words!”

“Why are you thinking about gods?”

“It’s like this: luck has to be encountered quickly and unexpectedly. It’s a chance encounter, an event so unexpected that you say: oh, what an adventure! Have you had such an encounter before?”

“Yes, I have.”

“It’s as if you were dreaming. Adventure is the most beautiful thing of all. Whenever love stops being an adventure, it becomes a torment.”

“Why, why is that so?”

“I don’t know. It wouldn’t endure if it weren’t a torment. Look, in the old days people had a single word for luck and chance. But it was the name of a god.”

Fortuna, Záruba thought, and he felt sad. If only I were to encounter it on this journey! But it’s hard to wait for a chance encounter!

“Waiting is hard,” the man said once again, “so hard and painfully awkward that however long you wait, you’re waiting for one thing only: for the end of waiting, for deliverance from waiting. So hard that once you’ve waited until you see it, it can no longer be beautiful or lucky, but somehow, oddly enough, sad and painful from all the waiting. – I don’t know how to say it. Every redemption is like that: it’s never true luck.”

Why is he saying this? Záruba thought; how would I not be lucky to wait until I saw it?

“They waited for God Himself,” the man continued. “What manner of man came to redeem them from their waiting? He did not look beautiful, the least of men, a man of sorrows; he bore our grief and endured our pain, as if he weren’t a god.”

“Why are you talking about this?”

“Look, waiting is hard, it even breaks and humbles a god. You wait all year for some kind of luck, some great and beautiful event; finally it comes, rather trifling and gloomy, the way pain can be; but you say: yes, God, that’s it, what I’ve waited so many years for, in order to be redeemed!”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean this: the only reward for waiting is the end of waiting; and yet it’s worth the wait. That’s why it’s necessary to wait. It makes our belief make sense.”

“What sort of belief?”

“Any sort at all,” the man said, and he fell silent.

The people in the corridor started to stir and walk back and forth. The toothless little girl had now fallen asleep in her mama’s arms, hidden under a shawl. Life began to pour through the corridor, aimless and disorderly, but it moved and kept on moving.

“What did you mean about those gods?” Záruba asked aloud.

“They were beautiful,” the man said. “Only luck or chance was needed in order to see them and become oneself a bit of a god. This is what I think: that luck is unusual, so beauty is extremely unusual, and luck, luck can happen only with chance and an astonishing event. But whoever waits is waiting for something that must happen; something must come that completes the waiting. Look, everyone is waiting ... even you; we leave our path with joy, so that we can wait for great things. Oh, waiting is a terrible strain, very much like belief. But the more we wait – *Come what may, we will be redeemed*. Look, it’s already morning.”

Into the station poured a stream of people with their laughter, coughing, and clamor. The noise whisked through the corridor like a giant broom, sweeping up the silence that had settled and blowing away the stale, dusty voices. The passengers got up off the benches, shook off the cobwebs of sleep, and looked each other over without malice, linked by their shared night, even though out the windows daylight shone.

The man who had spoken with Záruba became lost in the crowd of people. A new crowd, tickets, shouts, bells ringing. – The black and bellowing train pulled into the station,

absorbed the crowd, hissed, exhaled, and set off for its destination. God, just go quickly, Záruba thought, all's not yet lost, hope remains.

Dominion of Canada

Juan Tovar

Translated from the Spanish by Leland H. Chambers

At the sight of you pilgrims coming up to our fire, like day and night, a phrase came to mind that translates theater into actuality and attests to the present by telling what is yet to come. By different plotlines we've been brought into this same word-space, and now that we are sharing this asylum let us recall, happy memory, the one known as the Home of the Good Shepherd, there on the outskirts of my home town. It was a walled oasis of green in the midst of an urbanized wasteland. I saw it often on the way to the cemetery where I used to keep the accounts — my very first job — and in the shade of plaster angels tried to fashion sonnets with the polish of marble.

Ungraspable present, intermingled
phantom of the past and of the future...

I made no great dent in the world of the elegiac and at length decided I would be better off as the Shepherd's gardener, cultivating flower beds as well as bucolic verses — or even heroic ones, for nothing hindered me from being in reality the Masked Thunderbolt of some notoriety in the arenas of the area. My ambitions went no further than those circus jousts, fuel enough to kindle the spirit that was to write about them as epic feats. I learned wrestling as a child, and I took pleasure in it, so you can say I had what it took for free-form wrestling, where nothing else is needed. Truly free? we would ask in those days before each match, and we still do that now, mask to mask, with a gesture that ambitious wanna-be wrestlers have learned in self defense to recognize and answer.

Thus there are four classes of free-form wrestling. The highest is when one real fighter asks and the other replies: Truly free. This occurs but rarely; wrestlers of this kind are so few that it seems sheer wastefulness for them to stake their all just to amuse a crowd that will be pleased with anything at all. Most often we play an acting game where we win or lose on the strength of dramatic coherence, according to the course of the story and the wheel of time. Upstarts and frauds as a rule give in beforehand; this is the lowest class of bout and is over with in just two falls. When some yearning for nobility makes them actually run the risk, the encounter is pedagogical, and then a certain rein is allowed... He is saying all this in the garden at the Home of the Good Shepherd, with Gabriela listening and watching him prune the hedges.

No one knows for certain whether her name was Gabriela, nor his Amado; the original legend prevails here, or rather its ghostly remains in the folds of the old woman's memory, a garden of mist and lethargy, a fading out to a page almost blank: truly free for the yes of bare feet and needles of hoarfrost, aurora borealis, and a young, pregnant body with the salt of the earth in her veins — what is the sign for that? Down pathways of childhood she searches for it until time to go home. It is her parents' house and she sets foot in it with a stranger's shyness. Everything the way it used to be and all deserted until, in a hallway, in front of the door to the room full of toys and trinkets, she finds several children squeezed together on a sofa, and among them she recognizes her brother, who stares at her as at a stranger.

–Sit down here, little girl, he says, making room. My sister Gabriela is going to show us a name, but first the servants get to show off.

–Whose servants?

–The name's, of course.

–Who are they?

–She makes them out of whatever she finds in there. Straw hat, canvas apron, a spade, a pasteboard Judas face left over from last year's Easter celebration. The ogre comes out and we ask him, "Are you the Dominion of Canada?" "No," he answers, "I am merely the last of his servants." And then the next-to-last comes out, and one by one the rest, scarier and scarier each of them.

–And the name?

–That comes after the first one.

–Is it the name you said?

–Dominion of Canada is only the name of the name. But hush now, little girl. The door is opening.

The monster appears with a roar and approaches the trembling spectators. He has your eyes, Gabriela, your father's eyes — an emissary of death or a traveler used to such ways, he touches you with his cold hand. We are dreaming, sister; it's all part of the game, something that happens. The light crystallizes in the sky and the leaves of grass are glass shards, pain of childbirth.

–Are you the Dominion of Canada?

–He is the forest, the girl is told. He is all the trees in the forest, the fire and whoever gazes into it, the fruit of your womb, the stream of free action. Shall we follow it?

The pruning shears click, birds sing, insects buzz, the lawn resounds with sunlight.

–Amado, the old woman says, I must go to the city where my children live.

–Do you have children, ma'am?

–They gave me this home, I mean, they brought me here. They used to visit me each year. Last year no one came but my daughter, the one who dislikes me.

–Ungrateful wretches, ma'am, one and all. Why must you go to them?

–It's not them, Amado. It's my names.

–Do they have them?

–They are them, and their children: names that have run in the family.

–For me the name is no object. When I wrestle it's not to win renown for my own, and here amongst the hedges and the flowers, why should I pursue the glory and the nothing of a name?

As always when he came upon a good line of verse, Amado looked around nervously, calculating whether to appropriate it for his own. Gabriela brought him back to the point.

–Neither am I making this trip for myself.

–But going out on the road alone, at your age?

–My age has decided for me, but alone I'm not able to. Would you go with me, Amado?

–If it means getting away from here, I'm ready.

–Friday we'll take the train.

In the interim she puts her belongings in order, writes down some instructions, spends time in the chapel. Thursday morning, when the residents of the home take their insomnia out into the sun, they find her at the head of the garden. She has a pile of good clothes which she proceeds to give away. An unsenile shiver shoots through the women, cold hits their bones, greed remembered. They finger the possessions that anchor them to the world, and as they thank her they look into eyes already vague. At the sound of the breakfast bell they leave, and Gabriela wanders among flowers and hedges. She drowned in the morning light and was a very

pale corpse — a flush on her cheeks like dawn over ice — so that the director remembered his own parents abandoned in the hyperborean night: motionless, side by side, and between their teeth the last grains of salt. The gardener lit the candles. Three old women were already praying in the corner. The director lit his pipe.

—I don't understand why she'd want to be transferred there. Here we have a quiet cemetery, quite spacious, but in the city, no, not even room to lie down. But tell me, Amado, are you going with her?

—I told her I would, sir.

—Get some rest then. You'll leave for the station after the wake. That is, right away, if the set is ready. What do you say, good women?

—Ark of the covenant.

—Morning star.

—Health of the sick.

Another dawn saturates the air with scarlet fire, purple shadows. Alongside the train Amado argues with some men who want to stow the coffin he calls his mother in the baggage car. —She can't travel alone, he insists, and they allow him to travel at her side. He sees the world passing by through a crack in the siding. He hears about roads and places from employees who get progressively less sullen at successive railway stations. Someone warns him to expect the opposite as they near the city; there they stick more to regulations. At nightfall he eats his dinner on the sealed coffin lid and decides he will not return to the Home. He has his mask and his poetry with him, and as for the garden, didn't he take care of it just for Gabriela's sake? In the blink of a drowsy eye he saw her, and daylight on the leaves.

—This is where we agreed to travel together, Amado; the moment endures, and that's our time for play. I'll still hear about your exploits and I hope to reveal my person to you when this disguise imposed on me by my long life finally wears off. Out there time is passing and it's time for something new. Walk straight ahead, don't look back.

An impulse moves him, the inertia of his body. He awakens; the train has stopped. He slides the door back. An open plain, stars in the sky. He gets down and starts to walk, crunching the gravel with his weight, and clambers up a slope. Just discernible, he stands there, a makeshift creature in her gunsight.

He was a young animal, with a coffin on his back, and Ophelia held her fire. Flustered, she just stared at him, like a child suppressing giggles. He smelled his chance, let out a soft grunt, and went off over the plain without turning his head. They both thought they had dreamed each other. —Because, she says, that's the way I met Arthur: wandering from carnival to fair with everything he owned on his back, an unlucky gambler who won me in a wager and ended up losing me. Don't ask me how; you tell me what it was. And strumming the lute, I respond to her: a pair of hearts, but the second one he had up his sleeve, and that was the death of him. Ludovico will say where, once he leaves the enduring moment in which Gabriela wants to appear returned to her youth, dressed in filmy white. As a matter of fact she is out to wed her son, but we are not in Thebes nor is this a comedy of errors even though we are looking at the director and the queen through a gap in the scenery, and you can Wt in that line about our servants doing our living for us. Oh, how she flirts! how shamelessly she struts, while describing what she wants to wear. Ludovico takes refuge in his tobacco smoke and peers about, on the lookout for anyone coming to his aid. He does not see us, for although we are on the stage with them, our plot line is a different one and it will take a few turns before both come together. Still, a shortcut can always be found; leave it to your faithful servant, actually a prince in disguise who loves you in silence and keeps an eye on you with averted face. I cannot reveal my true rank, you know, because it is tarnished by a terrible secret that you will eventually discover

when the story makes clear, and if that never happens I will just forget. We will still exchange gentle discourse, here or at the end of time. But someone is approaching.

–The beast again.

–What brings you here, boy? Do you come from burying your mother or were your spirits dampened because you didn't find us deep in fornication? You're much too early; I was just starting to seduce her. But if you were the one with the box on his back and if it did contain the remains of the one who brought you forth, a knock on the head should suffice to remind you that what God did not give, not even he can take away, whatever you make of it. Give me your spade. Don't tell me you were digging with your hands; your nails are dirty but not torn.

The actress sought some sign in his eyes. They brightened and seemed on the verge of recognizing her when she frivolously turned hers away.

–It's not he.

Dangling from the broken thread, you held a hand out to the woman — a plea to the abyss in the fall. The minstrel seized you by the arm, unsheathing a dagger.

–Tell me, he growled, did her husband send you?

You denied this, frightened, and repeated your entreaty.

–Speak up, then, she said. Perhaps we did get confused and you were only passing this way leading your ailing father.

–Or following your itinerant teacher, this temperate Templar.

–This old man and I, you said, we've just met.

–Kill him in some dark corner, then, and inherit his maladies, if he has nothing else. The thing is, choose your fate. Behold, the child is father to the man, and in sacrificing you I revoke my origin.

A quick strike with the dagger: coldness of steel in your breast. So much to say and your final breath only a sob, night in your eyes, far-off gleaming, a death-pale crowd — you were running through it again, your arrival at the camp with the old pilgrim, the fire livid and rain like drops of blood. –Like day and night, said the jester; enter, good souls, into the violent circle where your death comes to life — though not yours, old man, for the prey you've brought frees you. Give him time, let him roam around in the underbrush until he hears the song and the purple ray of the sun rips through the storm clouds to show him the goddess dancing in the clearing, that madwoman who now, motionless and mocking, is attending his dying moans. Whistling, the man wipes his dagger; the young man searches himself for the wound, although he had only seen the blade emerging from the hilt, not from himself.

–Astonishing, said the former, these visitations of death's agony. You'd think yourself alive and whole, eager to take on your best years.

–By the way, love, she said, you lack a name.

–Amado would do, for lack of a Francisco.

–But there is a Francisco. That's my name.

–Here, and in hell? You talk only in confession, and that not too often, but in your pouch you bring pencil and paper just like that other one with his maternal coffin. He bears too much weight there, but you carry only that of your guilt; there's your edge over him. Yes, of course, you're just beginning; you've hardly seen anything but your family and the area of their wanderings, and your experience embraces nothing further than incest with your sister — later on you'll read us those Egyptian memoirs — but think of the March hare and the tortoise of Elea.

I have no idea how he knew my name nor whether my intended crime already showed through. The woman looked at me with sisterly eyes.

–Is this another of your novels, then? I never expected you would cast me as an itinerant dancer or a drowned damsel.

–One changes, I said. Beauty does not.

–Still the reflection?

–Light on the water. Dance again.

–To which music?

–Our lives are rivers.

–Here are strings for you to play it on, said the minstrel.

–I don't know the fingering; only in you may I be said to know it.

–I'm not in your novel; I mean, who is? We just happen, that's all. As easy as rolling dice. Can anyone find a story here?

–By following the thread and tying up the loose ends.

–If that's what you believe, then unyarn the enduring moment and let's go on.

She gave me the cue, and addressing the other couple I started again: –The mother is dressed in mourning. This is not the moment but the last of its reflections.

There was a silence, and then she said: –But what play is this? Who's writing it?

Ludovico looked away. It had stopped raining and was almost night. Songs of birds and insects, whispers in the brush, dripping from the branches. The question forgotten, the forgotten messenger responded: –I should like to be that author, my Lady, not this bit-player. In truth, I would drape your body only with gorgeous silks and precious stones.

–And pile them on her with a pitchfork, no doubt, said Ludovico. But what else happens in your play? We're interested in any plots and twists whatsoever.

–The play, sir, has just been conceived in the light of these emerald eyes. It needs a little time for gestation.

–And a little more light in your sleepless nights, I assume. Go on; you're not doing badly. An ass can lie in a queen's lap. Didn't you use your eyewash today, my love? What do you see there?

–No way an ass, but a sensitive, discreet young man who'd be well worth encouraging.

–But you desire an ass. Come with me to the wardrobe caravan, and I'll take your measurements. Keep on with your conceiving, my boy, and see what you beget.

Braying, he carried off the queen astride his back. I returned to the spot where I received the message and it felt like the desert of centuries. I called your name, o son of Thebes, for the sole purpose of cursing you when my foot sank into a mud puddle. In truth, you might well have gone away to Corinth with your sister, married her, and founded a dynasty. You recovered your sanity all too soon. All that because of a body hanging? Enough; turn about. Let's put an end to this procrastination once and for all, by word or blood, where they come together in due course.

The next day we took our leave of the actors the sooner to get to the pilgrimage camp. Coming out of the forest I killed a rabbit with my slingshot and hung it over my shoulder from a stick. The old man watched me with austere gravity, but once we resumed our progress he felt of the prey.

–Not bad for a start, he said.

–Gets better, I replied.

–You cook 'em, too?

–Eat 'em raw.

–Barbaric ceremony.

–Thereby hangs a tale.

–Bring it forth, then, while we roast this fellow.

I didn't want to relinquish the weight of the victim nor the bloody trail it left behind us. But our supper had been rather frugal and I remembered the last meal yesterday with my family.

–Agreed, I said. A civilized ceremony. People leave ruined cities to found new ones. You and I, old man, we have to set aright this forlorn pilgrimage that meanders along, going anywhere and nowhere; we have to return it to its fated course. You, because of your age, must recollect what that is; just you make it known to me, and mine will be the voice to spread it around.

The old man laughed.

–It's not as simple as that, he said, but eventually you'll see this for yourself. In the meantime, the tale and the rabbit. You skin it while I gather firewood.

They set up camp at the foot of an isolated tree. The sky was blue, with clouds here and there, and a quiet breeze blowing. The old man was having trouble starting the fire because there was no dry wood. Francisco smiled as he skewered the now naked flesh.

–Must barbarity triumph? You did wrong, master, to arouse my appetite.

He bit into the corpse, pulled off a chunk, and chewed for a long time. The smile left his face and seemed to pass over to the old man's. He swallowed as best he could; not ungracefully he set up the rabbit next to the firewood and went to clean his hands and blade on the wet grass. The old man toiled on. Francisco came up to him with a notebook.

–One might say I'm selling my birthright for a mess of rabbit, but the story I've set down here is the one I'm about to tell you, so it will stay written down. Make an offering of this paper to Brother Fire to see if he'll favor us before your invocations use up all the tinder.

–The other looked at him.

–I'm really beginning to know you, he said.

And he tore the first pages from the notebook.

SIX POEMS
Mary-Sherman Willis

Marijuana at 40

We come to the end of an early dinner
with friends, fueled with excellent St. Emilion
(the host's pride, more in the cellar)
and the hostess' steak Dijon.
Our children, fed, are some rooms away, playing.
Reassured, our hostess produces a joint,
surprising us all, even the host.

But we waste no time in lighting up.
Ah, that old weedy taste, the punch in the lungs,
held — and laughingly coughed out.
The ritual circles the table and its silky patina,
the heavy silver, the crystal's pleasant "ching."
Ten years it's been since we've had this kind of self-reunion
with what was, before then, routine,

mundane communion, ceremony of nothing vested:
our bodies — playgrounds in which we tested
anything, so long as it was together; our language —
OK, somewhat impoverished (oh wow! far out!) — and yet,
what innuendoes! Our sanity — lucky to have survived
the mind-bashing thrill of self-debility,
as our friends in rehab remind us.

Since when did we become so straight?
I don't remember a decision to get clean
except by process of elimination — even caffeine's
too radical (decaf Darjeeling ... please!).
We hoard what wits we've left for *fin-de-siècle*
America, the ascetic plod up a crumbling hill;
no time to squander getting wrecked.

But now, here, oh my head swims,
unmoored, notional, useless as fins
in ether. Brr — adrenaline fizzes in my veins,
a glacier under the skin that makes me shiver.
Then there's the furtive way we're whispering,
giggling, glancing towards the door as if — get this —
we were afraid of being caught.

And *we're* supposed to be the grown-ups, right?
(another thing I keep forgetting)
So I'm up and off to check on the kids, reverting,
when in doubt, to “mother” — in doubt because,
en route I wonder, will my face appear as skewed
to them as our parents' faces did to us
in those suspended moments of the cocktail hour?

The children, when I find them, are in a trance
of play, synchronous, oddly silent, and oblivious
of me. Entranced myself, I watch them
in a game of Pizza Parlor: one,
the owner on the phone, another, the baker
pats a disk of dough to twirl, a third,
the customer who instructs the waiter —

all as solemn and important as any adult enterprise.
Sobered, I leave to tell my husband:
when the children finish playing
let's go home.

Deadline

Dead-line. n (1864) 1: a line drawn within or around a prison that a prisoner passes at the risk of being shot.
—*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (1986)

And so I went A.W.O.L., escapee, adrift,
conned by cloud-pull over another hill,
or by some misapprehended need, lifted
out of myself. Flight's a swift thrill;
pursuit, then discovery, proved to be more sordid.
Returned to service, caught and brig-bound —
I dig in and sound out: did I want freedom or did
apprehension matter more? See the cell, the brown
walls, a hard chair, the small tent of blue sky
and not far beyond that, the fixed place,
the invisible perimeter of my life, past which I
cannot go: the deadline toward which I race.
It is my line of force. Without it I am lost,
my strength dispersed; but I keep in mind the cost.

The Etymology of the Poodle Clip

In Germany the word was *pudelbund*,
water splasher, duck-fetcher; in France,
chien canard,

red ribbon tied to its sickle tail to show
its progress as it swam through marshy water,
braveheart at work

in silted reedbeds for the booted master.
But *hausfrauen* and *bonnes femmes* disliked its curly
fur, grown long

to felted cords, which tracked the house with mud.
Men left their boots outside and shaved its feet
— like pantaloons —

and to improve its vision shaved its face,
and shaved their own, revealing their soft cheeks.
They pruned their fruit,

began to clip their hedges, and in their fever,
cut away the poodle's heavy hair,
streamlined the dog

for swimming, left a vest of fur around
the chest and ribs, docked the tail, topped it
with a pompon,

a topknot on its head, the ears grown long:
etymon of the Lion Clip, no regal
Coeur-Lion,

no, this ruffle-throated, pink-ringletted mincer
in silk culottes begged for *petits-fours*,
as principal pet

and circus animal of bourgeois and aristocrat,
and looked, in a Sporting Clip, like two men
in a dog suit,

or like a flouncing woman — on show, both sexes
wear a bow, placed behind the ear
or on the rump.

So vain! Why not? sleeve-dog to Louis Seize,
etched by Dürer, painted by Goya, beloved
by the noble Goethe.

No other dog was ever made so much a darling,
this panting canine topiary: a subject
and an object of art.

Cat and Mouse

There's nothing personal
in the callous regard that the cat
gives to the luckless rodent

she carries into the front hall.
A house mouse like all the others,
she finds them in the barn,

under the planks of the floor
(mice that live in the house
elude her, vanishing

mysteriously into empty walls).
Here is her controlled study
of the Elemental Mouse, mouse reduced

to a jot, a shift of motion from here
to here — all it requires to seize the eye.
Or mouse: the noise — just perceptible scritch

of teeth, the twiggy patter of its paws.
Or the whiff of mouse, which leads
to a taste for mouse.

Its flared ears, delicate
as apple blossoms, its jet bead eye, bouquet
of agitated whiskers around

its conic snout, its tail like silken cord —
mean nothing to this cat; palpitating
flank, white underbelly — nothing at all.

Holding it in the front of her mouth
like a kitten, she drops it and gazes
absently aside, as if forgetful.

It staggers away, groggy with shock,
and comprehends: this is not an escape.
This moment is life, which equals hope.

The cat, though, sees a circle,
herself at the center.
Inside the radius is the mouse's life.

Outside, she must pounce.
And she will bandy and dandle it, egged
on by its impassive squeaks,

until, silent and abandoned,
its smell, mortal as opened earth,
fills the throat like soggy cotton.

Susceptible to beauty
and pity, I could have saved it,
but for what?

I might have huddled it
in a tea towel (mice bite!) away
to the wild woods, where, crouched

under whispering leaves,
starving and cold, it would wait, dreaming
of the distant house, where it belongs.

Firework

We've come to see the shooting
 comets and crossettes, the silver magnesium
 stars winking in the sky, the filaments of light

snaking upward to the sour half-moon,
 like serpents shifting in veils of smoke, the fountains,
 gerbs, and tourbillions that mimic water,

the streamers bursting into arcing sparks,
 making bouquets: chrysanthemums, peonies,
 and fiery roses — all to the sounds of war:

gun chatter and the deep percussive coughs
 of siatenes thumping in the solar plexus,
 the sky-cracking mines and star shells bursting

like exploding suns, their banshee-wailing tail-ends
 spinning out to nothing. We repress
 a reflexive wince, but babies cry openly,

as on the ground the Pentecostal fires
 smoke and reek of brimstone: cloven
 tongues of yellow, green, and crimson.

And then it ends: The scintillant canvas, its many
 upon many prickings of light, fugal
 and overlaid, is suddenly spent,

a memory of a memory. All is well, all is well.
 We leave like ghosts in the fummy night.
 The words remain: firework, flower, dynamite.

Looking for Alex

Coming down the steps as I go up,
the man is rushing, awkward
with his umbrella and his briefcase ...
Coming down the steps, his face
is flushed, he's breathing fast,
he meets my eyes, but his attention's elsewhere ...
Coming down the steps he says, breathless,
"Have you seen a small child? Blond hair?
A coat?" He gestures at his coat ...
Coming down the steps, he says,
"Have you seen a blond child?"
I say, "Is it a boy? A girl?" ...
Coming down the steps, he says, "What?"
I say, "The gender. What is the gender?"
"He's a boy. His name is Alex" ...
Coming down the steps, he says,
"We were leaving school. He got away
from me. We live over there. He's five" ...
Coming down the steps, passing me
he says, "I'll go this way. He might
be looking for me on the way home" ...
Coming down the steps, over his shoulder
he says, "If you see him, please
tell him to wait for me right here" ...
"I will," I say. All night I hear him calling.

CALCUTTA POEMS

Prasenjit Maiti

Winter

Where are you going my youth?
my fears, my poetry, my lines blown away
by whisky and aircraft crashing like a clash of cymbals
Where are you going my sanity? my images
that walk out on me and leave me whimpering
like silly old Calcutta
Where are you going my love? drying my tears
in tampons and the nowhereness of sorrows

You are

there and you are not
like the dizzy sorrows that are mine
lining my shirt, frosting my drink
as I walk across downtown Calcutta
my beloved misery
where your smiles light up the stairs
and my cigarettes endless
like your days and ways
that are my sorrows, my ins and outs
because you are there and you are not

Sunday at Church

Your lips like skies and your eyes like anger
as I return all my rivers to myself
my rivers saline and sad and forlorn
your arms like castles and
their pits like wells of honey and dew
where I may swim and reflect awhile like myself
your smile like skies, your lips serene
your lips curled in silent rage

your smile frozen like yesterday's salmon
 that I chewed like vengeance
 the mustard dropping slow down my teeth
 like mercy, your smile like skies
 your lips like skies
 your lips like Calcutta
 your lips serene, your lips divine

Indian Lines

What really is sadness all about
 and what does sadness look like?
 I'd like to think like all Indians writing
 in English that sadness is sadness
 and has quite expressive Indian eyes
 if nothing else ... sadness goes around
 Calcutta's Strand at a pretty amble
 and does pretty nothing else ... sadness
 is almost like innocent cigarettes smoked
 as if in a frenzy, as if sadness
 would leave tomorrow and leave us all
 in an Indian ecstasy!

How I look at myself

is an odd thing to ask before the
 pen and the paper, and an hour
 that is not ideal for confessions
 It is morning, after all
 Are you not reminded of the promises
 round the corner that such mornings
 used to brag about?
 I am, and I have not yet recovered
 from the treachery of nothingness
 from the treachery of Calcutta

Calcutta

To a man and his resolution
 a woman is someone steadfast
 to be decided in the early morning
 sun surrounded by the aroma
 of a coffee drizzle
 as the skies and the gods above
 smile down bereaved and jovially
 bearded
 not benign but somewhat clumsy
 in and out the Central Avenue traffic
 lights smothering the blossoms of
 all your soul's passion flowers
 as if in life as if in frenzy

Anniversary

You're going away like a fantasy
 the Southern Avenue sky far away

and somber
 like your lush, swinging breasts
 your calf muscles like egg shells
 running into the tramways and

all those doors and windows

occupied by Calcutta's downtown sorrows ...
 I light up a desultory cigarette
 and walk all those uncertain miles

back home to nothingness ...
 and yet it is morning, and yet

it is Calcutta among the wild

wild rains once again

NINE POEMS

Özdemir Asaf

Translated from the Turkish by George Messo

It Wasn't Me

One evening you were looking from your window
Into darkness slowly filling the road.
Someone passed your house resembling me.
Your heart began to race...
But the one passing wasn't me.

One night you were sleeping in your bed...
You awoke suddenly to a silent world.
Something in a dream opened your eyes,
And darkness was there in your room...
The one who saw you wasn't me.

At that time I was nowhere near,
And for no reason you began to cry.
Now at last you're thinking of me
Living with love in your life...
The one who knew this wasn't me.

You were reading a book, entranced...
The people inside fell in love or else died.
A young man in the novel was killed.
You were afraid, with all your strength cried...
The one who died wasn't me.

Sisyphus

I thought so intensely of you,
 Before this life, just so.
 As if there were nothing more.
 But I say you were there
 In my thoughts.

Just so I found you,
 Just so, beyond my self.
 You alone without shadow,
 Unmoving, beside me.
 Your whites between black,
 The light in your dark centers.

I wanted you so intensely,
 You before anything...
 Just so within everything,
 Just so without,
 Day, night.

I lived you so intensely,
 Believe me...
 Who knows where I gaze
 or what I'm doing now
 from the eternity I've gained.

As If

This glance is for you to see.
 Is there anything more than you?
 To the sea, I'll look to the sea...
 Is this all there is of the sea?

Staring only to see something else...
 Nature cringes in front of me.
 Landscapes pass by the second.
 Clouds beneath my feet, you in my head.

At stars, I'm looking at the stars...
 You're here looking with me.
 I wonder what happened to the others...
 They had words, and enlightened life.

The Story of the Cat Playing with the Candle Flame

I

A candle was burning in the room of a house.
 There was a cat in the house too.
 As nights went by of their own accord
 The candle burned and the cat played.

On one such night when the candle burned
 The cat became lost in its game.
 In eyes hungry for play
 The candle flame burned,
 The cat stared,
 And in the flickering flame of the candle
 A toying pleasure called out.

The cat, growing in its games, grew too
 In its own child-like way,
 Went round and round, walked slowly
 Towards the toy-like flame.
 A glance, once more, and again it looked
 And stretched a paw
 To the flickering candle flame.
 He appeared confused
 Until his whiskers burned...
 Didn't seem to believe
 That the flame he'd seen for the very first time
 Could burn him.

The cat grew as it played,
 The candle grew cold as it burned.
 Time stepped between them,
 Quickened its pace.
 And something seemed strange
 Between the burning of one
 And the games of the other.

But the cat grew as it played,
 Slowly losing the game.
 And the candle grew small as it burned,
 Slowly losing its flame.

The cat, as it plays, will burn,
 The candle, lighting, growing small, will burn.
 The one getting small will brighten as it burns,
 The one growing big will learn as it's burnt.

After the candle's burning
 And the cat's playing
 There remained
 In a room of a house
 In the middle of the night
 Two people
 Silently staring.

II

The candle burned to its end,
 The cat grew and went.
 Games dissolved into nights
 Into a silent insomnia.

In the memories and thoughts
 Of two people
 A cat and a candle
 Came and went.

Wherever a candle burns now,
 Wherever a cat plays,
 The shadows of each are entwined and reflect...
 Today is like yesterday,
 Yesterday like today.
 The candle scratches my hands
 And the cat's paws light up my past.

Myth

A day doesn't pass everyday.

Her Hair

Don't know what was in her hair.
 Was it the wind blowing madly,
 Or just the way I saw it...
 Whatever it was, I loved it.

I Used To Watch You

Your hair would waver in the wind.
Nearby, I used to watch you.
The sun would burn, the sea be burnt.
You'd talk, I'd listen.

You used to smile.
You'd be quiet, pensive,
Walking with me hand in hand.
The road would come to an end.

Then I wouldn't see you...
Years would pass.
From far, far away
I used to watch you.

Dum

When I spoke to you I suppose I spoke.
To you when I spoke I spoke I suppose.
I spoke I suppose when I spoke to you.
I suppose I spoke to you when I spoke.

Title

White is the color
Of time, fire, and death.

Write red
The color of passion, lies, hatred.

Paint blue
The clothes of dreams, love, and honor.

Draw black
The shirt of poverty, hopelessness, and loss.

What War Is
Tracy Robinson

Jesus, can you darn?
Can you make soup from a bone?
Two nights ago, I stole Maeve Spellacy's rat and her old man's wool. The drafts had come and I was hungry. That was not a sin, Jesus.

It is a sin to drink the dole,
to knock a buddy when he's down,
to curse You,
in Londonderry
and America
and everywhere else.

There are other sins. I just gave to you the worst.
Jesus, can you whisper even though your body died and went to Heaven? I can, and I am alive! I whisper to you and I don't spit in Church and I don't sigh and I don't dawdle and I don't let Dylan from across the way think he's the cat's whiskers. Though I don't hold a knife like a pen! O! I don't hold a knife like a pen!
Jesus, for your information, here, this is how it goes:

An eye for an eye
A tooth for a tooth

Before January 30, I wrote a letter to the Queen but had no money to send it. It said:

You stab the backs
of my people,
I'll see you all
crippled!

O! You don't like the message dear Lord! Neither do I, but that was then. Today is a wee bit different.

Bloody Sunday, did you see it? A peaceful march in the streets and then

Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!

British paratroopers opened fire on the crowd. It happened Sunday last. There was a story that did not get in the papers. At the hour no one knew but my father, the neighbor's cat, Baby Tom, Tara and I. Liam walked into it after a wee while with Mary. Jesus, I'll tell you in case you were busy...

Bloody Sunday
They came for us
Tied me Da to a chair, knocked out his teeth
Made Tara so she could not sleep
Shot Liam in the yard, splattered the leaves
I avenged the balls of the whistling thieves!

I imagine Baby Tom saw blood. The only time I peered through the crack, my little brother was trying to stand by holding the bars of the crib and he made it look easy, and each time Nightmare Dentist yanked out one of Da's teeth, he shrieked something awful as if he saw a giant monster bite off his toes and eat them with Worcester sauce. Then, Baby Tom stopped crying. Why? Aye is not so daft but cannot say. Babes are famous for keeping their traps shut. Maybe he saw me. I did not look.

I opened the cupboard, gently, made no sound at all. I held the grip of Da's meat cutter. Tara saw me; her eyes looked like a holocaust and this kept Sicko happy. I got down on me hands and knees, put the dull edge of the knife in my mouth and got to work. Just had to crawl to the other side of the chesterfield. No one behind me was lucky for that! The stench was awful. Soldiers had urinated on the back of the chesterfield. When my target kicked back his heels to put his feet on the coffee table, the chesterfield moved about two inches and I nearly dropped the knife. I was shoved against their piss, then I rolled; luckily still no one heard. It was better to stay back a bit, and then, finally, make it to the end. Nothing pleased me more dear God nothing in the world more than removing the meat cutter from my mouth and holding it not like a pen and – the best part – leaping fast and driving the blade deep into the thigh of a resting one.

“Ah!” he cried.

I left the cutter stuck. It was funny in him. They broke out in laughter, the soldiers not the wounded mind you. The wounded soldier carefully took out the knife. He had a scar. On his hand. It was on the back of his right hand, a lifetime wound. I saw Da. He was able to smile. Then he looked at me and I knew. I knew there would be a punishment later, if he survived. Tara was a zombie. Baby Tom, aye, he saw me then, reached out then fell in his crib and brought himself up again. He was not cryin'. All this action probably made him forget about his hunger but then Sicko shouted to Tara, “Open! Keep them open!” and Baby Tom went about his cryin'. Me eldest brother did not see my great act of courage. He was a dead man. How I knew was the fact soldiers had shot him more times than a man can wink on a dare. Liam could out dare anyone. His hair was the color of a raven's; girls saw his eyes and melted on the spot. He was very strong; spoke from his heart so well that hearin' him made us smile, and cry. That was over, and in the days people were sad. Mary especially. (Mary was his love, you know Lord.) The stab was for Liam! If I had a gun, I would have used it! Do you hear me, God? More there was in my mind. I wanted the I.R.A. to know right away, so those soldiers turn toothless and gum less. So each one deflower. Toothless and gum less and poisoned so they could not pee, so never again would they pee in the home of strangers without permission. As for those who shot Liam – the I.R.A. made them pay, with their own lives! It's

in the homes! Everyone knows but rarely speak of it. It would be the very least and fair thing, an eye for an eye, read on and You will discover why not.

Soldiers laughed like this: “HA! HA! HA!” The one in Tara shouted, “Grab the girl! I get her cherry.” Then Da muttered something. He choked on his blood. Torture cannot be explained, defense neither.

There was mild discussion about who would get my cherry. The soldiers used big words, said “however” as like for debate of the Queen’s address. They must have been high up military pigs because hogs do not speak the Cockney. At the least they could have TRIED to be funny. What can you expect? The English lack humor. They think everyone but they do not understand them and to those whom they assume are daft they stick their noses up high and say, “Pity.” The truth is, God, I swear on me mother’s grave if You don’t mind, English humor is not awful; it is as stale as the bread we get. Bone dry. It’s like their going on and on in the morning and about eggs and dew or their three o’clock tea. Near the end, they throw in a pitch and say, “Rather, rather.” Only the blue collars laugh, and really laugh! ‘till their bellies bust. Vinegar hard eggs, lavender dew.

Do you know something, God? If any one of them bastards got my cherry, or harmed it, I would still be a virgin. Do you know why? Because Adam blamed Eve for their eating fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, and YOU never gave Eve the time to explain her version of the story. Rest now, you’re probably mad that I brought it up: Original Sin. Rest now, we’ll talk about it after Mass next Sunday. Read on.

The pig inside Tara’s legs would have to crawl on salted broken glass before getting anywhere near me, and die at my knife first.

I was not a hen with her head cut off, if you know what I mean. Da was near hell, and I could leave my family never, so it was fig to fodder that escape be the choice. Two soldiers lunged for me, and I said, “Give all you can you dirty rotten robbers! Your messing is as harsh as a farmer’s blow! That’s blown snot if you don’t know what I’m talking about. Like this ...” I demonstrated. The soldiers were not laughing. A silence got a bit spooky. Baby Tom lay in his crib, still. Then the crazy sons of bitches left everything to pounce on me. That was really something! Given the fact humor swept over their heads! I bit Nightmare Dentist.

“You fight like your big sister, you little cunt!” he said, and bound my hands with rope. Then Tall squeezed my wrist. I spit but missed his face. He was too high. Nightmare Dentist put a gun to my head. So it was probably not a good time to move. Tall knelt and spoke in my ear so loud that his voice rang in me: “The Irish are all the same: big mouths and no aim. Only the martyrs love them. Aren’t I right, felion?”

“So carrot is your hair,” said Sicko. He fondled it with his hands. I wished my kicking could reach him. “Long red pulleys,” he said. Then he took out a razor from his pocket and ran it along the length of my hair, from the end to the top of me head. It caused my hair to split and my scalp feeling tingly and raw.

“Sicko!” I said, “I don’t care who your mother is. For me you are Sicko. Sicko! Sicko! Sicko!”

“Fiery girl but nonetheless ...” said Tall, challenged to hold my legs still while Nightmare Dentist bound them. I expected Sicko to turn worse but he did not. Tall continued in the voice of Philip the Duke: “Who ... Who but God would care for jobless drunks and girl mothers? For whom other would the Lord be so generous and kind?”

“You, I’m afraid. Though in your case, charity is out of the question! God pities you! And you! You as well!”

“I see.”

“Who? ... Who is there? Where are you?”

“Nearby. I am the one that you critically injured.” There was much laughter. The voice belonged to the soldier that I had brutally stabbed. He must have left; I did not see him go. He returned but was out of view.

“Come out! Come out, come out wherever you are and show me your face!”

Heavy boots came from behind my head and then suddenly he appeared, upside down and very close. I could not see it but could feel the ridges of steel gently trace the contour from behind one ear to the other. I lay still. His eyes were inches above mine and looking away. He said to me, “What is your name? What is your first name?”

I did not answer.

“What is your father’s name?”

“Unknown,” said Sicko, patting my private place. “That man in the chair is her dead mother’s brother, probably her dad.”

“He’s not my uncle. Not to add oil to wet dillies over that. You are not more daft than a lazy boy, God made you imbecile.”

Laughter again. I was quite amusing to them. Secretly they must have found the comments true. My victim did not laugh. He arched and then knelt very, very close. With the tip of the blade he drew tiny points on my skin that I imagined was stained with his blood. His face shifted, sideways. He was looking at something or someone. So he did not deserve to know my name! but I was not afraid to say it! shine it on the world ...

“You speak like a song,” he said, “Sing it again.”

“No.”

“Yes.”

“No.”

“The meat cutter is further from you now. Tell me your first name.”

“No! Not for you and lowly thieves! Go to hell!”

“May I?”

“Aye.”

The devil got him! He did the same to me as I did to him but to me he did it on the arm. I let out a cry but no tears. It hurt. The knife had pierced. No tears for him. He broke the Law of Retribution. No one did him or his family wrong. Liam might have done but not strictly for the cause. For justice. Though children were never harmed. This soldier was not avenging, “keeping the peace.” He committed one of the worst sins: To knock a person when he’s down, not as bad as doin’ it to a buddy, but very, very bad. I told him, God has mercy and God is watching and God knows the difference between a soldier and a cruel man. He was going to pay for what he did. The families would learn of it. He would lose an arm for that.

Then I realized how comical my situation was. It took him and the best of his army to hold still a child – a nine-year-old Irish Catholic girl! I laughed, and this made him really open his eyes and look at Tall. Tall was not laughing. Just then he seemed a stinking big sausage with puny ears, the eyes of a weasel, and the nose, well, not flattering unless he sniffed. I was the one laughing. The same laugh my mother had when she was in the mood of a mouse around the fear of elephants. Completely satisfied. If mice ever were so fine, so was I, though smarter than them, happier than men. Are you with me now, Jesus? My story appears to you how? It seems like old news but wait! Here comes the most peculiar instance of my life. Leaves you to wonder!

So there I was, and my soldier with a bloody leg, sewer rat faces of men to boot, and Nightmare Dentist covering my mouth with black tape. I imagined Nightmare Dentist with a bag over his head. Guess he had enough of my intelligent observations.

I was getting to be as feisty as a mouse in a trap. Tired I was. I was also very, very hot from all that kicking at the start. Holding the bloody meat cutter to my throat, my soldier did

something strange. He looked at me. He was on his knees and now we saw each other eye-to-eye. Unbelievable. Do you know God, I've eyes of emeralds? It was odd that he should stare at them as if he really did see ... jewels. His eyes were gray, like the coast of Ulster, the water especially. His eyes were rough, wanting to polish stones and claim them. Further out, in his eyes, ancient tides came rolling in, starting to swell, planning destruction to our land, to us but not stopping there. No, never stopping: Scotland as well. France, too, but that was a time before he showed his eyes – before they blinked in the mother, before they were dreamed.

Possible it was, Jesus, possible it was to go further and further beyond the gray to blue, so blue and cold like ice. Those were his eyes, ice that was cut apart from the ships sailing through the night. Beyond the ships or what awaited them was a raging sea. My God! I ... I ... I discovered that MY people had – they have – those eyes, too, raging seas only theirs seem forgotten and ours express: a stormy blue and sad song. Then no blue, just mist and drizzle lasting for days and days. Then a sun rising very fast, and light at last. Light, God! “Let there be light,” it says in the bible! and You are so generous and kind that people have it! Fairies came dancing and poking fun in his eyes. My soldier kept his face but wore the body of a tiny tin soldier attached to strings that I imagined my hand could manipulate. Light shone on the tiny tin soldier's face; in my mind I let go the strings and then he was dancing on his own and teasing the fairies. He asked them their names and they grinned as they flew away like Jeremy the peddler after selling dye last week, which turned hair to the color of lint. Then angels appeared wearing jumpers that Welsh actresses wear. They were very beautiful. Their loosely gathered hair fell in long waves down their backs. They got naked and put on panties and pranced barefoot in the sun. I wanted to join them. They were smiling nature; You know what I mean. They had all their teeth and theirs were straight and white and probably hard. Smiles changed to a look of concern for the distant cries and artillery shots. They looked at me and in my head I said to them, do not be afraid. God is with you. They looked relieved as if mother was singing down to them from heaven. Finally, the angels waved good-bye. I winked them a handshake.

A hand appeared in the pupil of one eye. It belonged to my wounded soldier. I recognized it by his peculiar scar. He offered his hand. What? I could not believe my eyes, dear Lord! He appeared changed. Swollen blue was one of his eyes and there was a bloody cut on one cheek. He was shorter, younger, dressed up maybe in his father's military clothes. He looked at me and started to advance. No one spoke. He dragged his feet in army boots too big and used. He walked with a limp, and he was so dramatic that he fell to his knees. I noticed then that he had a frog in his coat for it once tried to hop out and my soldier's smile could not run away from him. When he smiled there were spaces where his two baby teeth had been. We were like that smiling at each other and this would never happen in real life. In this way he spread his arms wide open, would he sing a song? It was like we were in a silent film or that American show, “The Little Rascals.” He, like Alfalfa singing for Darla, a flower in one hand, frog in the other. No sound, just the act. At one point his eyes crossed together as he reached for the high note and I broke out laughing. He smiled at me. I wanted to give him a hug but then –

He moved the knife that was close to my throat, stood, walked to the sink, and started to rinse the knife with our water.

“What the—” said Tall. Then Sicko said, “What in hell are you doing?”

“Justice.” Said my soldier and he shot Sicko. Eleven times. At the start Sicko had bragged about raping Tara eleven times. That was probably why he got five bullets, and six for showing off.

“You are mad,” said Nightmare Dentist, the one responsible for using a sledge hammer and pins on Da's mouth.

“No,” he replied. “I am sane and I am your officer. I order you men to leave.”

I wanted someone to turn off the running water. I would have asked my soldier who became a sort of unpopular angel. He picked me up and sat me in a chair and unbound everything but the tape on my mouth.

The soldiers looked at each other.

The officer faced them and said cold-handedly, “If you kill me, you will do hard time and that is worse than execution. My superior knows we are here, and he knows none of you is a planner of good military strategy but capable of dishonoring. He is also my friend. If you kill me, you must kill him, too, and men well paid and well trained, in the military and secret service protect him. He is well liked and never alone. Never goes to pubs, whores. If you succeed at murdering him, the Crown will investigate and quite easily find your tarnished records ... that I had arranged for more spoilage if necessary. No way out for you men but THIS door. Now go.”

All but one soldier left the flat. He cocked his pistol at the officer. Then he got a bullet to the head. Tara shot him! While they were busy with me, she must have found Liam’s gun but who untied her? Was it my soldier after I stabbed him? Jesus. Never on Sunday has Tara killed one. One. All it takes is one. The one that war claims for another, another, another

Liam’s friend’s – for the love of my brother and for the price of blood – they are paying my sister’s ticket. To America. It is the best option for Tara. In better times she will return. Where, You ask? Home, where else? Before she went she said to me, “I’ll send for food and clothing. They are sending you and the baby to the McCarthy’s in Belfast. Michael’s mother will hide Da and take care of him until he is well enough to join you. I’m sorry we cannot be together but aye must go to spare all of you the price of me head. You know how it goes. Ah Maureen, your tears have you whole. Look at me love. No matter whose blood, the war is won! Do you know why? Maureen McDonough, do you know why? If you cut a root and twist it and plant it even in the good soil it may grow or it may rot. There will always be sun and always dark clouds and always unexpected weather. The mother vine strives above everything; who shaves it? Is it they? Us? Them? They think they own it, and we? What did mother say about the seedlings under mortar shells? Do you remember? Do you recall the risk she took to take it to the streets her talk about hate? Oh here Maureen, cry. Cry, cry, then tell me you are the little seed that will grow into a big tree, no matter what happens. No matter what, I’m coming back. My roots are here. Your soldier may go down today, and for the first time it is I saying, May he be spared the knife.”



Oh, Jesus. I forgot to mention: my soldier with the bleeding leg and special hand whispered something before he left. He looked at me but it was meant for everyone, I think. Then he took the back door to leave from.

In the days and years to come, who knows, maybe Catholic families, and maybe, maybe Protestant families will hear that he said “Sorry.” Whatever he said was like forgiving.

I tell the Story of the Man with a Healing Scar. If I grow to be old, maybe I will hear it told. Maybe then we will not know what war is.

ENDNOTES (1)

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When power leads man toward arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the areas of man's concern, poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of his existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses, for art establishes the basic human truths which must serve as the touchstone of our judgment.

—*John F. Kennedy, 1963*

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible.

—*George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language," 1946*

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Lies Damned Lies

June was graduation season. A young friend of mine was finishing at a well-thought-of alternative high school in our town. Parents, brothers and sisters, well-wishers, we sat on folding chairs on a hillside under stately trees while the sun climbed and the shady spots diminished. The younger girls were all sweet flesh, uncertain smiles, tattoos peeping out from under spaghetti straps or edging bared midriffs. The boys' tattoos were, mostly, covered by their loose white shirts and baggy chinos. They felt the girls' eyes on them and worked at looking nonchalant. Men in poplin and seersucker suits, bow ties; men in trim dark suits; men in jackets and curly or thin ponytails. A few of the women looked comfortable in their skin, more hid in dresses loose as burquas, good in this Southern heat, and some simply dressed badly, the safest option. Greeting each other, they wore wry expressions, as though startled at how old they were, so soon. The men covered their nervousness by doing a little informal business among themselves. I looked around for a candidate for office. It would have been a perfect day for campaigning.

The sound system ramped up suddenly: "Sinnerman," Nina Simone's cover. (These graduating seniors were cool.) The faculty marched in and sat down in the front rows.

Long pause.

From a distance, the wail of an approaching siren. An unmarked police car raced up the hillside road and slid to a halt in front of the main building, behind us. We murmured, concerned for a moment, then smiled – "What are these kids up to now?" – stood up, turned, craned our necks. The students had devised a little play around a hostage situation. The kid-gangsters, a tall young man and a willowy young woman, emerged on the balcony (like R. and J.) and called down their "demands" to the "cop." Their demands were silly, in-group senior class gifts, the lightening-up such an occasion needs. The "cop" read the list back through his bullhorn.

"Will you give us our demands," the kid-gangsters then shouted down.

"NO! RELEASE THE HOSTAGES!" bellowed the "cop."

"Can we get our diplomas?" they cried.

"YES!" the cop boomed.

"We'll release the hostages!" They disappeared inside.

And, hand in hand, twenty-five endearing, smart kids steeped in love, peace, and service to the community came pouring out of the building, grinning, costumed and shined, proud, refusing clichés (trying to refuse clichés), balloon-bouquets bobbing along behind them. They ran down to the stage and took their places and, as the sun rose higher, were sent lovingly into the world with a few wise words from their chosen speakers and all the clichés the well-meaning but clearly emotional head of school could possibly have summoned up for the occasion.

That week an absurd story had been reported by the *Times*, the *New Yorker*, and NPR. The New York State Regents exam, required of graduating seniors, had contained censored extracts of literary works, on which the test-takers were directed to write essays. A well-read parent with a fine memory had sussed out the deception. Jeanne Heifetz, whose daughter attended a small, laboratory school which (according to the *Times*) was part of a consortium opposing the Regents exams, noticed on her daughter's brought-home test passages credited to authors whose works she herself knew, and recognized them as inaccurate. Next, she went back through several years' worth of tests, checked quoted texts against the originals, and brought her disgraceful findings to the public's attention. It is worth mentioning, too, that Jeanne Heifetz' husband, Juris Jurjevics, is the publisher of the interesting SoHo Press.

It seems the New York State Department of Education had "for decades" heard citizens' complaints about passages of literature chosen for the exams and so, had invited anyone who found any author's words or phrases "offensive" to sit on test review committees. It seems, also, the Department believed that according to fair-use provisions of the copyright law, it was allowed to change texts as it thought fit (without saying so), since the department did not itself publish the works. Roseanne DeFabio, an Assistant Commissioner of Education, explained why these authors and works were quoted, so to speak, in the exams. "It was our hope in our choice of literary selections that the effect of seeing writers in the exam will result in teachers using those writers [in their classrooms]," she said. But: "Even the most wonderful writers don't write literature for children to take on a test."

No. They don't. They make works of the human mind.

As reported by the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC), in the last three years twenty-five of the twenty-six published works quoted in the examinations were distorted on the New York State Regents English Language Arts Examinations. In a dismayed letter to the State's Commissioner of Education, a number of organizations – among them NCAC, PEN American Center, the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression, the American Library Association Office of Intellectual Freedom, the New York Civil Liberties Union – wrote that the examiners had expunged references to "race, religion, and ethnicity," "along with physical descriptions of characters, references to sex, nudity, alcoholic beverages, and mild profanity. Speeches by public officials have been altered to remove anything arguably critical of the government. There is no indication in the selections that they have been altered in this way."

Seeing what the censors did is instructive, at the least. I quote the NCAC list of examples of authors and passages below. I have struck through deleted texts and put altered texts in bold.

Ernesto Galarza, *BARRIO BOY* (memoir)

(*Galarza was erroneously identified on the exam as Ernesto Gallarzo.*)

Original: "My pals in the second grade were Kazushi, whose parents spoke only Japanese; a ~~skinny~~ Italian boy; and Manuel, a ~~fat~~ Portuguese who would never get into a fight but wrestled you to the ground and just sat on you."

Regents: “My pals in the second grade were Kazushi, whose parents spoke only Japanese; a **thin** Italian boy; and Manuel, a **heavy** Portuguese who would never get into a fight but wrestled you to the ground and just sat on you.”

Original: “Almost tiptoeing across the office, I maneuvered myself to keep my mother between me and the ~~gringo~~-lady.”

Regents: “Almost tiptoeing across the office, I maneuvered to keep my mother between me and the **American** lady.”

Original: “Off the school grounds we traded the same insults we heard from our elders. On the playground, we were sure to be marched up to the principal’s office for calling someone ~~a wop, a chink, a dago, or a greaser.~~” (After describing the school as “not so much a melting pot as a griddle where Miss Hopley and her helpers warmed knowledge into us and roasted social hatreds out of us.”) *Regents:* “Off the school grounds we traded the same insults we heard from our elders. On the playground, we were sure to be marched up to the principal’s office for calling someone **a bad name.**”

Annie Dillard, *AN AMERICAN CHILDHOOD* (memoir)

“From the nearest library, I learned every sort of surprising thing – some of it, though not much of it – from the books themselves.

~~“The Homewood branch of Pittsburgh’s Carnegie Library system was in a Negro section of town. Homewood. This branch was our nearest library; Mother drove me to it every two weeks for many years, until I could drive there myself. I only very rarely saw other white people there.”~~

“Beside the farthest wall, and under leaded windows set ten feet from the floor, so that no human being could ever see anything from them – next to the wall, and at the farthest remove from the idle librarians at their curved wooden counter, and from the oak bench where my mother waited in her camel’s-hair coat chatting with the librarians or reading – stood the last and darkest and most obscure of the tall nonfiction stacks: ~~NEGRO HISTORY~~ and NATURAL HISTORY.”

“THE FIELD BOOK OF PONDS AND STREAMS was a shocker from beginning to end. When you checked out a book from the Homewood Library, the librarian wrote your number on the book’s card and stamped the due date on the book’s last page. When I checked out THE FIELD BOOK OF PONDS AND STREAMS for the second time, I noticed the book’s card. It was almost full. There were numbers on both sides. My hearty author and I were not alone in the world, after all. With us, and sharing our enthusiasm for dragonfly larvae and single-celled plants were, apparently, many ~~Negro~~ adults.”

NCAC note: The relevance of race to the passage becomes obvious in the last paragraph quoted in the exam:

“The people of Homewood, some of whom lived in visible poverty, on crowded streets among burned-out houses—they dreamed of ponds and streams. They were saving to buy microscopes. In their bedrooms they fashioned plankton nets. But their hopes were even more vain than mine, for I was a child, and anything might happen; they were adults, living in Homewood. There was neither pond nor stream on the streetcar

routes. The Homewood residents whom I knew had little money and little free time. The marble floor was beginning to chill me. It was not fair.”

Isaac Bashevis Singer, IN MY FATHER'S COURT (memoir)

~~“Our home had little contact with Gentiles. The only Gentile in the house was the janitor. Fridays he would come for a tip, his ‘Friday money.’ He remained standing at the door, took off his hat, and my mother gave him six groschen.~~

~~“Besides the janitor there were also the Gentile washwomen who came to the house to fetch our laundry. My story is about one of these.~~

~~“She was a small woman, old and wrinkled. When she started washing for us she was already past seventy. Most Jewish women of her age were sickly, weak, broken in body. All the old women in our street had bent backs and leaned on sticks when they walked. But this washwoman, small and thin as she was, possessed a strength that came from generations of peasant forebears.”~~

~~The washwoman cleaned “featherbed covers, pillowcases, sheets, and the men’s fringed garments. Yes, the Gentile woman washed these holy garments as well.”~~

The following material was deleted completely from the exam.

~~“And now at last the body, which had long been no more than a broken shard supported only by the force of honesty and duty, had fallen. The soul passed into those spheres where all holy souls meet, regardless of the roles they played on this earth, in whatever tongue, of whatever creed. I cannot imagine Eden without this washwoman. I cannot even conceive of a world where there is no recompense for such effort.”~~

NCAC note: The assigned essay topic is “the nature of human dignity.”

Samuel Hazo, “Strike Down the Band” (essay)

~~“The hunger for beauty, like the hunger for music and knowledge and God, is part of our very natures.”~~

~~“Like poetry, music puts us in touch with our feelings and through our feelings, with our very souls.”~~

~~“I contend that nothing promotes the general welfare and seeks the blessings of peace better than the arts — even more than religions, which, for some reason in our time, tend more toward divisiveness than unity.”~~

Elie Wiesel, “What Really Makes Us Free” (essay)

~~“Man, who was created in God’s image, wants to be free as God is free: free to choose between good and evil, love and vengeance, life and death.”~~

Frank Conroy, STOP-TIME (memoir)

Original: “Let’s go swimming. I know a rock pit back in the woods. It’s got an island in the middle.’ ‘Okay. I’ll have to get my bathing suit.’ ‘Hell, you don’t need a suit. There’s nobody around.’”

Regents: “**Heck**, you don’t need a suit. There’s nobody around.”

The following material was deleted completely from the exam.

~~“It was easy to undress. We wore only blue jeans. I remember a mild shock at the absence of anything but air against my skin.”~~

~~“If we saw a king snake, all six feet wrapped black and shiny in the shade of a palmetto, we’d break off a pine branch and kill it, smashing the small head till the blood ran.”~~

~~“Neither of us knew exactly what it was, accepting it nevertheless as proof that the unbelievable act had taken place. We hid our ignorance from each other, making oblique wisecracks to cover it up.” (On finding a used condom in the woods where couples park.)~~

B.B. King, *BLUES ALL AROUND ME* (autobiography)

(Note: The exam includes passages from six chapters presented to students as a single “speech.”)

~~“My great-grandmother, who’d also been a slave, talked about the old days. She’d [She would] talk about the beginnings of the blues. She said that, sure, singing helped the day go by. Singing about sadness unburdens your soul. But the blues hollerers shouted about more than being sad. They were also delivering messages in musical code. If the master was coming, you might sing a hidden warning to the other field hands. Maybe you’d want to get out of his way or hide. That was important for the women because the master could have anything he wanted. If he liked a woman, he could take her sexually. And the woman had only two choices: Do what the master demands or kill herself. There was no in-between. The blues could warn you what was coming. I could see the blues was about survival.”~~

~~“As a child, I stuttered. What was inside couldn’t get out. I’m still not real fluent. I don’t know a lot of good words. If I were wrongfully accused of a crime, I’d have a tough time explaining my innocence. I’d stammer and stumble and choke up until the judge would throw me in jail. Words aren’t my friends. Music is. Sounds, notes, rhythms. I talk through music.”~~

Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, speech to the Commonwealth Club of California

~~Polls “show strong American support for the organization at the grass-roots level regardless of what is said and done on Capitol Hill.”~~

~~“The United States is the biggest debtor, as is well known.”~~

Anne Lamott, *BIRD BY BIRD* (work of non-fiction)

~~“If you can get their speech mannerisms right, you will know what they’re wearing and driving and maybe thinking, and how they were raised, and what they feel. You need to trust yourself to hear what they are saying over what you are saying. At least give each of them a shot at expression: sometimes what they are saying and how they are saying it will finally show you who they are and what is really happening. Whoa – they’re not getting married after all! She’s gay! And you had no idea!”~~

Anton Chekhov, “An Upheaval” (story)

“A maid-servant came into the room.
 ‘Liza, you don’t know why they have been rummaging in my room?’ the governess asked her.
 ‘Mistress has lost a brooch worth two thousand,’ said Liza.
 ‘Yes, but why have they been rummaging in my room?’
 ‘They’ve been searching every one, miss. They’ve searched all my things, too. They stripped us all naked and searched us God knows, miss, I never went near her toilet-table, let alone touching the brooch. I shall say the same at the police-station.’
 ‘But . . . why have they been rummaging here?’ the governess still wondered.
 ‘A brooch has been stolen, I tell you. The mistress-**[She]** has been rummaging in everything with her own hands. She even searched Mihailo, the porter, herself. It’s a perfect disgrace!’
 (Note: The ellipses are Chekhov’s; the essay topic is “the nature of human dignity.”)

On the stage, the teachers of the graduates spoke of their bright future. The kids talked about their past, succumbing one by one (as if helplessly) to cliché in a ritual expression of gratitude to all who had helped them: a certain teacher, my family, Mom. My young friend, I knew, was furious at the sanctimony of it; but, having held out as long as possible, she too gave way and spoke. She was gracious, brief. She is a traveler of the world and reads compulsively; she has style; she will learn how to resist.

According to the *Times*, the New York State Department of Education follows guidelines seeking “to guarantee that all people are depicted in accord with their dignity.” Assistant Commissioner DeFabio was quoted as saying these guidelines try to avoid naming anything objectionable about a student’s “race, religion or neighborhood, or anything that would interfere with the student’s ability to fairly demonstrate the skills that the test is measuring.” The *New York Post* snarled, “Imagine that. In the age of Eminem and Ozzy Osbourne – shockable teenagers.”

That unconscionable alteration of texts is one of the stupidest, gravest ways adults have lied, *for decades*, to the youngsters for whose instruction they are responsible. About this, we should be shockable. We should be sickened. Almost laughing at the appalling idiocy of it all, I thought of Orwell, who wrote in “Politics and the English Language”:

Now, it is clear that the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes: it is not due simply to the bad influence of this or that individual writer. But an effect can become a cause, reinforcing the original cause and producing the same effect in an intensified form, and so on indefinitely. A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks. It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language. It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts.

.....

Orthodoxy, of whatever color, seems to demand a lifeless, imitative style.

I felt almost confident that my young friend and (I hoped) her classmates have been inoculated by literature and open discussion against the poor thinking, cowardice, and mendacity common in public and corporate institutions. It seemed to be true that guiding them were adults whom they could respect and trust, who encouraged them to think carefully and

know their sources. But how (I wondered) would those good people help their students advance from private to public life?

I missed the voice of Dr. King. I missed the deep, rolling voice of Barbara Jordan. I miss the voices of John F. Kennedy and Robert Kennedy. I miss being called to remember that there exists something larger than private interest. I miss, terribly, our former belief in public life, in the public sector, in public service, to which we all owe some part of our talent, our wealth, and our honest allegiance.

My young friend is going to become a writer; of this I am certain. I regret deeply (although am relieved for her) that the good school from which she graduated could not have been a public school.

—*Katherine McNamara*

Note: I took the following list of twenty-six authors and their works used in the Regents exams from the NCAC web site <<http://www.ncac.org/issues/regentsexamples.html>>. The numbers show the date of the exam.

Works altered:

Edward Abbey, DESERT SOLITUDE (1/01) Mortimer J. Adler, “How to Mark a Book” (from HOW TO READ A BOOK) (6/01) Kofi Annan, Speech to the Commonwealth Club of California, April 20, 1998 (8/01) Roger Ascham, “Toxophilus” (1/00) Anton Chekhov, “An Upheaval” (6/01) Frank Conroy, STOP-TIME (6/00) Annie Dillard, AN AMERICAN CHILDHOOD (8/01) Ernesto Galarza, BARRIO BOY (6/99) Samuel Hazo, “Strike Down the Band” (8/00) John Holt, LEARNING ALL THE TIME (6/99) June Jordan, “Ah, Momma” (8/99) B.B. King, BLUES ALL AROUND ME (6/00) Anne Lamott, “Dialogue” (from BIRD BY BIRD) (1/01) William Maxwell, SO LONG, SEE YOU TOMORROW (6/00) Chuck Noll, “Staying the Best” [not a literary work-*Ed.*] (1/00) Lise Pelletier, “Life As It Is In Pinegrove Correctional Centre on a Monday Morning” (4/00) Carol Saline, MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS (8/99) Isaac Bashevis Singer, IN MY FATHER’S COURT (6/01) Margaret A. Whitney “Playing to Win” (8/00) Elie Wiesel, “What Really Makes Us Free” (4/00)

Note: In addition to relatively lengthy passages from these works, each exam contains a brief quotation in a section called a “Critical Lens.” Of these, six are labeled “adapted,” without an indication of what changes have been made, one is adapted without notation, and one is misattributed.

Works used with minor alterations (but without indication of changes):

Annie Dillard, THE WRITING LIFE (1/01) Dale Fetherling “The Sounds of Silence” (8/99) Jack London, “The Story of an Eyewitness” (1/00) Lynn Sherr, FAILURE IS IMPOSSIBLE (4/01)

Works used without alteration:

Roger Jack, “The Pebble People” (1/02)

See also:

George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language,” INSIDE THE WHALE and Other Essays (Penguin Books) On the web <<http://www.resort.com/~prime8/Orwell/patee.html>>

Thomas Jefferson Center for the Preservation of Free Expression <http://www.tjcenter.org/>

On the Regents Exam censorship:

N. R. Kleinfield, “The Elderly Man and the Sea? Test Sanitizes Literary Texts,” *New York Times*, Sunday, June 2, 2002

John Leland, “The Myth of the Offenseless Society,” *New York Times*, Sunday, June 9, 2002

Association of American Publishers <<http://www.publishers.org/press/pr0603022.htm>>

The American Booksellers Association, “Bookselling This Week”

<<http://news.bookweb.org/freeexpression/541.html>> (Quoted from in this essay) In addition:

from “Bookselling This Week” <http://news.bookweb.org/559.html>:

According to *Newsweek*, at the very least, it almost happened elsewhere. In the weekly news magazine's June 17 issue, columnist Anna Quindlen wrote that the Educational Testing Service (ETS), a national test-preparation company that was preparing Georgia's End-of-Course Test, wanted to use excerpts from her book HOW READING CHANGED MY LIFE. However, when Quindlen was shown the passages, she found that the selections had been edited in an effort to avoid "controversial issues." For example, "in the sentence that read 'The Sumerians first used the written word to make laundry lists, to keep track of cows and slaves and household good,' the words 'and slaves' had been deleted," Quindlen explained in the article. She stressed that, unlike NYSED, the "people preparing tests for the state of Georgia at least had the common courtesy to ask permission to mess with my stuff. I declined."

National Coalition Against Censorship <<http://www.ncac.org/issues/regentspressrelease.html>> The examples used in this essay are taken from "Examples of Literary Works Altered on New York State Regents English Language Arts Examinations" <<http://www.ncac.org/issues/regentsexamples.html>> with permission.

ENDNOTES (2)

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In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible.
—George Orwell, *“Politics and the English Language”*

Every great and deep difficulty bears in itself its
own solution —Niels Bohr

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The Colossus, Part 2



103 виктор говорков. 1947

Viktor Govorkov. 1947

“Don’t get up to any monkey business!”

In the previous issue, I wrote about the problem we have lived with since atomic energy was used for making weapons of mass destruction (as we say now). The discussion has lately circled around “Copenhagen,” the marvelous play by Michael Frayn in which he imagines the

meeting in September 1942, in Copenhagen, between Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg. In particular, I wrote about the fascinating symposium on “Copenhagen” held in early March at the Smithsonian, in Washington. Now the papers and a video of that program have been released, and I would like to bring one of them, in particular, to your attention.

The journalist-historian Richard Rhodes, whose *THE MAKING OF THE ATOMIC BOMB* is considered among the best books on the subject, presented a paper about Niels Bohr at the Smithsonian symposium. I looked forward to reading it at leisure and have been gratified, and provoked, too, into attempting another way than I had of thinking about nuclear power in the world.

Rhodes points out that fifty-five million lives were lost during World War II, and argues that the carnage was brought to an end because of our use, twice, of the atomic bomb. In the nearly fifty-seven years since, wars have claimed about a million lives every year: but, terrible as this is, the wars have remained at the level of conventional weaponry. Rhodes argues that war remains conventional – historical, not universal– because of the fact of nuclear energy. He believes, too, that Bohr *understood completely* the nature of this new kind of energy, because he understood, very deeply, its scientific meaning: that it changed our understanding of the order of the world.

Bohr managed to escape from Nazi-occupied Denmark in 1943, and journeyed to London, where he attempted to persuade Churchill to support an atomic program. Churchill dismissed him. He went on Washington, and there his espousal of an Allied program to develop an atomic bomb convinced Roosevelt of its necessity.

“[Bohr] knew about not only atomic bombs,” Rhodes tells us:

at Los Alamos that spring he had learned from Edward Teller about the possibility of hydrogen bombs as well, weapons with essentially unlimited destructive potential. These possibilities were worrying his younger Los Alamos colleagues. Bohr’s insight had brought them a measure of comfort, as the Austrian emigré theoretician Victor Weisskopf would remember. “In Los Alamos,” Weisskopf said later, “we were working on something which is perhaps the most questionable, the most problematic thing a scientist can be faced with.” Weisskopf meant they were working on what we today call weapons of mass destruction—a new experience for physicists, who up to then had thought of their discipline as almost theologically otherworldly. “At that time,” Weisskopf continued, “physics, our beloved science, was pushed into the most cruel part of reality and we had to live it through. We were, most of us at least, young and somewhat inexperienced in human affairs, I would say. But suddenly in the midst of it, Bohr appeared in Los Alamos.

“It was the first time we became aware of the sense in all these terrible things,” Weisskopf concluded, “because Bohr right away participated not only in the work, but in our discussions. *Every great and deep difficulty bears in itself its own solution . . .* This we learned from him.” Bohr was characterizing the *complementarity* of the bomb, its potential not only for devastation but also, as he saw, its potential for limiting war. The principle of complementarity had been central to his formulation of quantum physics; he had scolded Heisenberg for introducing it only in limited form in quantum mechanics as the Uncertainty Principle, because Bohr understood complementarity to be one of the deep organizing principles of the natural and human world.

It is moving to listen to one who speaks so clearly as Weisskopf of “physics, our beloved science” “pushed into the most cruel part of reality. . . .” It is good and necessary to know again that the science was done by men and women like ourselves, although of course not at all like

ourselves: not only for what they made, but what they knew. “‘The whole enterprise,’ Bohr told Roosevelt, ‘constitutes...a far deeper interference with the natural course of events than anything ever before attempted, and its impending accomplishment will bring about a whole new situation as regards human resources. Surely, [Bohr went on] we are being presented with one of the greatest triumphs of science and engineering, destined deeply to influence the future of mankind.’”

Was Bohr correct, as Rhodes thinks him to have been: that the weapon is so dreadful that *no* nation would dare use it again, *because the situation it has made cannot be resolved by war*? Rhodes explains that Bohr believed that the discovery of fission would change the moral and social condition of the world, also. He believed, therefore, that all nations should have open access to this fundamentally new kind of energy. He believed that the best hope was for nations – the Americans and the Soviets, in particular – to become transparent to each other in nuclear development, for the alternative was secrecy and a dread competition, an arms race.

But the nations did not achieve openness. Instead, the “secrets” were passed by spies. Instead of the mutual security Bohr had hoped for, mutual deterrence became the object, the arms race its method, and technological spying the means of gauging its reach. Rhodes takes up Bohr’s call, nonetheless: “Now in the aftermath of that arms race, Bohr’s argument for openness remains no less valid than it was in 1944. Common security against nuclear danger requires transparency; a world free of nuclear weapons will have to be completely transparent where nuclear technology is concerned, each side able to inspect factories and military installations on the other side’s territory whenever it has reason to do so.”

Rhodes writes that Bohr argued with all his intelligence and moral being that nuclear energy cannot be used for war *because it resolves nothing*.

Rhodes’s position has bothered me since I heard him give his paper: that total war – world war – has become *historical*, not universal, a manifestation of destructive technologies of limited scale. Does he mean that, because no other nation would dare to use nuclear weapons – the U.S. exempts itself from refusing this possibility – war will only be fought with limited rather than nuclear weapons? But this is not so; that is, possibly it is not so. Recently, the administration sent cabinet members hurrying to Delhi and Lahore, as those capitals shouted the words “nuclear arsenal” over disputed Kashmir. The two nations were, it seems, persuaded to back off, and the atomic clock advanced no closer to midnight.

But wars are fought not only by nations.

Only a few weeks before that latest in a recurrent cycle of face-off over Kashmir, an American ex-military officer appeared on several serious media programs. He was campaigning for the “limited” use of “tactical” nuclear weapons. Indignant at how “our enemies” in various parts of the world were (he said) digging themselves into bunkers built deep in rock and cave, he proposed using needled-nosed “bunker-buster bombs,” pointed by our military’s vaunted precision-guidance systems, to penetrate those rock-bound fastnesses. These missiles come in “conventional” and “nuclear” models; he preferred the latter as being wonderfully effective. He assured his listeners that no fallout would reach ground level. (He is not correct about this, I’ve read.) In his enthusiasm, he glowed like Slim Pickins’ Major “King” Kong, ready to ride the bomb down.

A few months ago, the administration leaked a Pentagon report, the Nuclear Posture Review, proposing that our military consider seven nations be targeted by our nuclear arsenal in case they acted up against our “interests” (as they say now). The President’s security advisor insisted, during the alarmed outcry, that the Review also proposed reducing our nuclear stockpile. Nonetheless, the loony idea was out and circulating again: “tactical” nuclear weapons are a possibility. And so the loony ex-officer popped up in the media. Meanwhile, the President has just formally abrogated the ABM Treaty. The development of a missile defense test bed site

proceeds at Ft. Greely, Alaska, as I wrote in “The Bear.” This missile defense system, a program wrapped in secrecy, intends the “weaponization” of space with American, and only American, arms.

And so, we go directly to Kashmir. It was beyond whatever one thinks irony is, that a high emissary from the State Department, then the Secretary of Defense himself, flew with urgency to Delhi and Lahore carrying documentary warnings of the horrible aftermath loosened by nuclear bombs. It was as if, from this distance, certain members of our government had suddenly realized what mischief might come of their President’s loose way with language.

Common security against nuclear danger requires transparency. Rather than a mere hope, I would accept Bohr’s call as a clear-eyed principle, to be held and acted upon with determination when so much in the world works against it, at home and abroad. It should be engraved in our memories as historical fact that the only nation to have used this dreadful weapon is our own. We have seen photos and read studies of and novels about the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Terrible, terrible things happened to the bodies and minds of human beings and the world in which they lived. Rhodes gave me another way of imagining it with words.

When uranium fissions, a small amount of mass is converted into energy in the form of heat, a process that is several million times more energetic than chemical burning. Albert Einstein had first quantified this mass-energy conversion in his famous formula $E = mc^2$. Since the c in Einstein’s formula designates the speed of light, a very large number, and that very large number is squared, the formula emphasizes that even a small amount of mass, when it fissions, will release a stupendous amount of energy. The bomb that destroyed Hiroshima, for example, was a crude first-generation weapon, handmade at Los Alamos, with an efficiency of less than one percent. It contained about 150 pounds of U235; it exploded with energy equivalent to about 13,500 tons of TNT; but 13.5 kilotons means that less than one gram of U235 was completely converted into energy.

We have built for ourselves a governing structure that guarantees free speech, even open discussion; we believe we have the constitutional right to say anything (short of shouting “Fire” in a theater, let’s say), without legal consequence. But moral consequence is another matter. One moral consequence is the separation of words from the things they represent. “Nuclear weapons.” “Weapons of mass destruction.” These words are attached to enormous potentials of energy unloosed, causing great harm in the world. They were born in the realm of pure science, whose dimensions we who are not of that realm can barely grasp in words. Let our politicians learn to use this our language carefully, precisely, with historical accuracy and a sense of nuance. Let the rest of us read about Copenhagen, the bomb, Bohr and Heisenberg, and reflect on the changed condition of the world. Then let us read Orwell again, carefully, and often.

—Katherine McNamara

See also:

“The Bohr letters: No more uncertainty,” William Sweet, *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, May-June 2000
 <<http://www.thebulletin.org/>>. “With the release of Niels Bohr’s draft letters, any doubt about the purpose of Heisenberg’s visit to Copenhagen should be erased.”

“The Colossus,” *Archipelago*, Vol. 6, No. 1

“Copenhagen” <<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/ashp/nml/artsci/copenhagen.shtml>>

The Copenhagen Symposium in Washington, D.C., March 2, 2002, papers and program

<<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/ashp/nml/artsci/symposium.html>>

- Documents Related to the Cold War <<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/coldwar.htm>>
 “New push for bunker-buster nuke,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 9, 2002
 <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0509/p01s02-usmi.html>>
 George Orwell, 1984 (Signet Classic / New American Library)
 _____, “Politics and the English Language,” *INSIDE THE WHALE and Other Essays* (Penguin Books). On the web <<http://www.resort.com/~prime8/Orwell/patee.html>>
 Richard Rhodes, *THE MAKING OF THE ATOMIC BOMB* (Simon & Schuster; Touchstone. 1988 Pulitzer Prize in Nonfiction and the National Book Award)
 _____, *DARK SUN: THE MAKING OF THE HYDROGEN BOMB* (Simon & Schuster. A finalist for the 1996 Pulitzer Prize in History)
 _____, “A Great and Deep Difficulty”: Niels Bohr and the Atomic Bomb. Symposium on “The Copenhagen Interpretation: Science and History on Stage,” National Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institution, March 2, 2002 <<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/ashp/nml/artsci/rhodes.htm>>

Previous Endnotes:

- The Colossus, *Archipelago*, Vol. 6, No. 1
 The Bear, Vol. 5, No. 4
 Sasha Choi Goes Home, Vol. 5, No. 3
 Sasha Choi in America, Vol. 5, No. 2
 A Local Habitation and A Name, Vol. 5, No. 1
 The Blank Page, Vol. 4, No. 4
 The Poem of the Grand Inquisitor, Vol. 4, No. 3
 On the Marionette Theater, Vol. 4, Nos. 1/2
 The Double, Vol. 3, No. 4
 Folly, Love, St. Augustine, Vol. 3, No. 3
 On Memory, Vol. 3, No. 2
 Passion, Vol. 3, No. 1
 A Flea, Vol. 2, No. 4
 On Love, Vol. 2, No. 3
 Fantastic Design, with Nooses, Vol. 2, No. 1
 Kundera’s Music Teacher, Vol. 1, No. 4
 The Devil’s Dictionary; Economics for Poets, Vol. 1, No. 3
 Hecuba in New York; Déformation Professionnelle, Vol. 1, No. 2
 Art, Capitalist Relations, and Publishing on the Web, Vol. 1, No. 1

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Follow-up

- “The Bear,” *Archipelago*, Vol. 5, No. 4, and the ABM Treaty:
- June 11, 2002: Thirty-one Members of the U.S. House of Representatives filed suit against the Bush Administration for violation of the ABM treaty. A list of the Members (no Senators joined the suit) and the text of the Complaint (Civil Action No. 02-1137(JDB)) are posted on this site <<http://www.commondreams.org/views02/0620-08.htm>>. See also, “Lawmakers Sue Over ABM Pact Withdrawal,” *Washington Post*, June 12, 2002.
 - August 28, 2002: “On behalf of itself and seven co-plaintiff organizations, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), a major national environmental organization, today filed suit in the Federal Court for the District of Columbia to compel the Defense Department to prepare environmental impact statements on its missile defense activities in Alaska and

elsewhere before proceeding with the construction of new test and ‘emergency deployment’ facilities.

“Joining NRDC as plaintiffs in the suit are Physicians for Social Responsibility, Greenpeace USA, Alaska Public Interest Research Group, Alaska Action Center, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, Kodiak Rocket Launch Information Group, and No Nukes North: Alaskan and Circumpolar Coalition Against Missile Defense.”

—Press release, Alaskan and Circumpolar Coalition Against Missile Defense
<<http://www.nonukesnorth.net/August28PressRelease.htm>>

“Letters to the Editor,” *Archipelago*, Vol. 6, No. 1. Congressman Bob Filner on limiting military exemption from environmental regulation:

- May 2002: The House passed the FY ‘03 Defense Authorization bill, which “included exemptions to the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act and changed protections for wilderness areas. A strong attempt to strip these provision from the bill was led by House Democrats and a handful of Republicans. Although the votes were close, both attempts were defeated. Because of the strong show of opposition to the anti-environmental language in the House, these provisions have a better chance to be stripped in the conference committee.” See this text in whole <<http://www.stopextinction.org/news/OTH.html>>.
- As of June 24, the bill has not yet gone through the Senate.
- H.R. 4546, FY ‘03 National Defense Authorization Act Bill and Report Language appears on the web site of the House Armed Services Committee <<http://www.house.gov/hasc/>>.

Recommended Reading (1)

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.... it was as if the phrases he had in front of him had become suddenly familiar, were starting irresistibly to remind him of *something*, as if onto each one that he read there had been imposed, or rather superimposed, the at once precise yet blurred memory of a phrase almost identical to it that he had perhaps already read somewhere else; as if these words, more tender than a caress or more treacherous than a poison, words that were alternately limpid and hermetic, obscene and cordial, dazzling, labyrinthine, endlessly swinging like the frantic needle of a compass between a hallucinated violence and a fabulous serenity, formed the outline of a vague configuration in which could be found, jumbled together, Germain Nouveau and Tristan Corbière, Rimbaud and Verhaeren, Charles Cros and Léon Bloy.

Georges Perec, "The Winter Journey"
tr. John Sturrock

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Joan Schenkar calls *Patricia Highsmith (1921-1995) the "Dostoevski of American Noir"*:

Patricia Highsmith, who always had murder on her mind, is my enduring candidate for Great American Expatriate Writer. She belongs somewhere between Willa Cather (the only woman writer she openly admired) and Hell (a condition she prepared for her characters as energetically as did her *maître*, Henry James). Highsmith provides the most sustained literary examination of guilt and the instability of gender identity in American literature – and she does it by the kind of formal forgery that continues to trick publishers into advertising her books as "crime novels." Reader, do not be deceived.

An equal opportunity discriminator, Highsmith preferred men in her books as the active agents of her violent imagination and women in her bed as the inspiring objects of her inability to form permanent partnerships. Neither gender fares particularly well on the point of her pitiless pen and Patricia Highsmith is that rare creature - a writer as indifferent as Wilde or Sartre or Camus or Thomas Hobbes, for that matter, to moral postures in art; a writer whose characters are capable of anything.

In Highsmith's toils, good intentions corrupt naturally and automatically, guilt often afflicts the innocent not the culpable, and life is a suffocating trap from which even an escape artist like the talented Mr. Ripley cannot find a graceful exit. She treats people and the things they handle in the same deadeningly objective way; the cumulative effect is a horrifying aura of unease. Although she never tried to achieve its style, High Art was always Highsmith's inspiration; what makes her own work so indefinitely odd is that most of her murdering, mutilating, muggish characters are inspired by it as well.

There is always a bit of blood in the corner of a smile – and a recommendation to read Henry James; a knife turning restlessly in someone's hand at the mildest moment – and a preference for the poems of Auden; a lunch punctured by a horrible suspicion – and a man weeping at the grave of Keats. Her male characters are often psychologically twinned and obsessed by clothes; her most enticing love scenes are usually between gastropoda.

Read: **STRANGERS ON A TRAIN, CAROL (AKA THE PRICE OF SALT), THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY, THE BLUNDERER, THIS SWEET SICKNESS, THE GLASS CELL, THE CRY OF THE OWL, THE ANIMAL-LOVERS BOOK OF BEASTLY MURDER** – and be amazed.

Joan Schenkar <JMSchenkar@aol.com> is writing a biography of Patricia Highsmith, *THE TALENTED MISS HIGHSMITH: the secret life and serious art of Patricia Highsmith*, for St. Martin's Press, to be published in 2005. Her last Recommended Reading appeared in Vol. 2, No. 1.

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Marilyn A. Johnson tells why we should read *Contemporary American Fiction Writers*:

I'm trying to find some beauty out of an ugly middle-class upbringing: strip malls, etc., emotion recollected in turmoil; and so I write mongrel poetry using chain link fences, cars, driveways, teen pregnancy, and I gravitate to plainspoken poets. But I find contemporary American fiction writers (CAFW) are the ones who have really staked out that turf. I've been leaping from one fresh talent to another. Then a literary friend confessed she hated reading CAFW because of their engagement with middle class life.

All right, she's a professor's daughter, I'm a car salesman's daughter, maybe that explains it.

Or maybe she's just prejudiced. What she's missing, though! **THE CORRECTIONS**, by **Jonathan Franzen**, is a peak experience for someone who loves bleak humor and beautiful sentences, and all the better if you know St. Louis. The New Jersey take: **James Kaplan's TWO GUYS FROM VERONA**. The California take; anything by the underappreciated **Carolyn See**. My friend is missing – well, I have to go to the shelves outside my office, where I try to keep copies of my favorite books, including everything by **Pete Dexter** and **Robert Stone**, violent guys, best read next to **Toni Morrison**. In fact, read the three of them, and there's America, nailed. **Lorrie Moore**. **THAT NIGHT** or **CHARMING BILLY** by **Alice McDermott**. **AMERICA'S DREAM**, by my friend **Esmeralda Santiago**, or anything by our pal **Ben Cheever**, who has such a wild, funny, edgy take on the suburbs his father once owned. **Allegra Goodman**. How about **Joyce Carol Oates's** novel about the high school reunion, **BROKE HEART BLUES**? I can't help pressing my favorites into people's hands, so lots of titles are missing, **THE VIRGIN SUICIDES** by **Jeffrey Eugenides**, for instance: I can't keep that in stock.

I think maybe my CAFW-phobic friend simply hates those bad, faux, easy books where boys and girls come of age in the suburbs, and Mom, who has fidelity issues, screams through the screen door, and everybody drinks and drives onto the golf greens – no, no. We've advanced way past that, though Rabbit Angstrom and **Richard Yates's** doomed characters still wave in the background. I just finished **THE LOVELY BONES**, a first novel by **Alice Sebold**, and though I don't totally buy the end, it is an incredible premise, narrated by a dead fourteen-year old girl who keeps track of her family, friends, and the man who murdered her. A brave book, and it left me almost as breathless as **Laura Kasischke's THE LIFE BEFORE HER EYES**, about a high school shooting, where the psycho classmate asks two girls holed up in the bathroom, *I have to kill one of you, which will it be?* The novel is the story of the girl who says, *Please, not me*. Beautifully written. A poet wrote it. And I don't mean that fuzzy-static nature-and-beauty poetry, I mean the poetry that takes something real and passes it through somebody's soul, maybe grabbing some Velveeta and crackers on the way.

Marilyn A. Johnson <Marilynjohnson@aol.com> is a poet whose work has appeared most recently in *Field*. She helps run the reading series for the Hudson Valley Writers Center in Sleepy Hollow, N.Y.

Recommended Reading (2)

Tea with **Kevin McFadden**. An Interview by F. David Mencken.
The Interviewer had the chance to catch up with poet Kevin McFadden at a coffeehouse in Charlottesville, Virginia. They met for a discussion of anagrams, the OuLiPo movement, contemporary poetics, including the effect of these on his own poetry:

INTERVIEWER: It seems to me, Kevin, that the puns and word games in your poems have a lot to do with the duplicity of language. Is that accurate?

KEVIN McFADDEN: Well, sure. Duplicity is a good word for it. Early on we think of language as communicative solely, but as we advance in language we sometimes find as much is said to conceal as represent. Sometimes it's innocent. We said we'd meet for coffee and yet we've both ordered tea. Why didn't we say we'd meet for tea? So much humor is meant to show us when we're behaving robotically or conventionally, catching us in our routine linguistic logic and exposing something absurd. We go to the bathroom and it's not for a little shampoo, is it?

I: Does that set up a difficulty for a poet who's trying to say something? I mean, if words and poems are consistently undermined by their own contradictory meanings?

KM: For the kind of writing I'm interested in, two meanings is a minimum. I like to think that a poem has the ability to expose an entire argument in its tension. To say something, you're necessarily excluding something else. To speak in a way that says something and something else at the same time seems truer to our lives, at least to me.

I: Describe to me the process of your anagram poems. How did you begin writing them and why?

KM: I invented the anagram form I use. So I thought. I was an American college student at the University of Glasgow, truly awash in a variety of englishes, pronunciations and spellings; words started losing their monolithic dimension to me. I'm convinced when we are taught to read that we diminish our sense of possibility with language. All these trees of possible ends but we learn to go out on the same branches every time. The point of reading a sentence, we are taught, is to get through it quickly, without mispronouncing, without stumbling. We train our minds to use context to filter out homophones and homonyms, any number of variants that would wreak havoc on a sentence's avowed universal meaning. Dyslexia, the supposed inability to stick to these rules, is in that scheme a disability. You could as easily describe it as hyperlexia—the dyslexic is not fooled by this conspiracy of sense we call grammar and usage. The dyslexic sees it is the sane who are crazy, or at least okay with an eerily agreeable conformity, and it is the sane who suffer, who need to be confined. My purpose for many years, because I do not clinically have this condition, has been to induce dyslexia.

I: How do you decide what to anagram?

KM: Usually I take a line of this monolithic dimension, something we've heard so often it's recognizable. Something we know so well or, if it is contemporary, something I think we will one day know so well it is taken as a kind of proverb. Then, I begin taking it apart at its

letters, seeing what arises, and let it rebuild itself into a new form. Each line has to have the same combination of letters, exactly, as any other line. It is my hope that when a poem begins “There’s nothing new under the sun” and ends “There in the unsung, wonder’s then” that we’ve tried to move a monument. Or at least graffiti on the monument’s other side. There are other times I choose a line I love and continue to riff on it. Usually by the end of an anagram poem you can tell whether, like some classical sonnets, the introductory arguments have been challenged or incorporated. Other times I withhold the seminal line until the end, or introduce it in the middle. Each has different effects.

I: You implied you didn’t invent the form.

KM: Well, no. When I began with it, I hadn’t seen anyone using it. It seemed to arise from the nature of anagram. I liked seeing one line turning into another, but then I wanted it to be more than one other version, three, four; then for those versions to be conversant with each other in a way that read like a poem. Look at them go. I was this genius inventor, a legend in my own lunchtime. Then I found (in a search for an Internet anagram generator) at least one other English poet who’d done one, Heather McHugh; she anagrammed William Butler Yeats’s name. As I looked more into the anagram, I found that the OuLiPo had been using it for half a century.

I: I was going to get into the OuLiPo...

KM: Well, they are a fascinating group. A European movement, which is perhaps why American tastes are always unfairly suspicious of their ingenuity. They were and are convinced, like almost any literary clique, that their purpose was to revive the literature, to denounce the flaccid poetry and prose around them, and to adopt strictures that would accomplish a lexical revolution. The constraints the OuLiPo place on their work are nearly always calculated on abstractions—novels with no letter *e* as in Georges Perec’s classic; Queneau’s sonnet that can be read 100,000,000,000 ways; abecedarian progressions—and the results are like nothing you’ve generally read before. Sometimes they’re also like nothing you’d want to read anyway. I’m bad with French acronyms, but I know the *po* in OuLiPo means “potential”—and that’s the significant part. That’s what their group is doing, combing the infinite potential of language in search of new forms for writing.

I: Here the phrase “po biz” evokes the careerist side of poetry. Not so in France, I take it.

KM: Yes, you’ve hit on it. What a difference in a syllable. When *po* is potential, I’d be honored to say I’m in po-biz. What could be more worthwhile. I once heard an OuLipist described as a rat who invents a maze in order to escape it. Of course you can’t join OuLiPo proper, you have to be “made.” I was borrowing, whether I knew it at the time or not, from their tradition.

I: With these intricate schemes and reactive methods, how does one avoid the charge of just plain satire?

KM: Well, you use that word with contempt. Satire, to me, is not a secondary genre. The act of satire is a primary function of existence. Most of us are subtle satires of our parents, as they were of theirs. Accordingly, we will all deserve to be satirized by the coming generation.

We're all subtle satires of our cultures in order to survive them—sometimes funny, sometimes dead-serious. Satire originally meant a mixture—a mixture of styles, a low-discourse in a high-discourse setting, vice versa. Can you name a movement or breakthrough, artistic, scientific, whatever, that has no relation to elements of thought already ancient? We're constantly mixing and remixing the past to expose something. Often with a critical distance. This, to me, is satire.

I: And yet, it still is dependent on those pre-existing forms before it can work.

KM: Everything lives on the decay of something else, a fact we seem perfectly at home with except when it comes to literature. In literature, great works just spring up wholly formed, like Athena. If satire were in the oxygen cycle, it would be a tree sucking in our endless profound exhalations and giving them back to us so we can simply breathe again. The great satire goes on.

I: Is there an anagrammer's—

KM: Anagrammarians.

I: If you like. Is there an anagrammarians philosophy?

KM: There isn't just one. Some of the ideas have roots in Jewish mysticism. Some philosophies I've heard are more dramatic than others. At times it is as simple as subversion—that's a little basic though. Certainly some believe anagrams expose truths—I think they merely expose alternatives. When a word is born, so are its anagrams, some of which have meaning, and others of which are still behind a veil. When *veil* is born so is *vile*, and *live* and *evil*. Perhaps meanings are hidden in a different language. In the case of my poems, each anagrammed line approaches its seminal line like the Jewish mystics approached a piece of scripture—the point of the commentary is to revitalize it, to deepen our understanding of it. It may remind us these lines which we've privileged have some relation to the whole system, comical perhaps, perhaps serious. Each anagram is first among equals.

I: Can you name any Oulipists who've used this method of anagram?

KM: I should say the art of anagram is centuries old. Someone may be first to spot an interesting anagram but claiming to have created it seems against anagram's own convictions. It created itself, or, if you like, when anyone decides on a word they are necessarily outlining its anagrams. There are word puzzles from Greek and early Christian times, throughout the medieval period and beyond. Queneau had a poem in 1923 that rearranged its letters. The first to consist of ordinary words was taken from a line by Gérard Nerval and was a collaboration by three Oulipists in 1948 or so—their names always escape me. A good resource here is OULIPO COMPENDIUM, edited by Mathews and Brotchie. I know Oskar Pastior did a collection in German, Michelle Grangaud in French. But the first person to make a collection of these poems was Swiss, Unica Zürn. Zürn suffered from schizophrenia and was confined several times for it. Eventually she jumped out a window.

I: A cautionary tale for anagrammarians?

KM: Madness is a danger the more and more you stare into the letters. Kabbalists used to, maybe still do, have a stricture that the only practitioners of their art must be forty year-old

married men of great girth. This was so they'd be strong enough to resist the pull the letters had—the black magic. I'm relying on my thick mid-section to carry me through here. Sanity is truly at risk, depending on how far you humor the letters. Easy to slip into a state where the world comes apart at these little verbal hinges we really rely on. The Kabbalist phrase is "Who touches is touched." Meaning the sacred letters. Mess with the letters, they might mess with you.

I: What do you feel is wrong with contemporary literature that forces poets to these non-traditional methods?

KM: Wrong isn't the word I'd use. It's a question of freshness. Generations have trod, have trod. The critic Harold Bloom, and I should say I find myself in the rare position of agreement with him here, says that most contemporary American writing is derivative of Wordsworth, consciously or unconsciously imitated. I've written plenty of poems from that place, some I'll still stand by, but it's harder to keep my interest because the equation seems done and overdone. There are few untrodden ways at this point. Still I'm not going to join those who have made the use of the biographical I a literary crime—it's a necessary and valuable direction.

I: But you're saying it's not fresh.

KM: The injunction is "make in new," not "make it you." That's the easiest way to give identity the veneer of originality, to say this is new because you've never heard it my way. I usually want to hear something else from a poet, not just I'm X from Y and I've been through Z. That can be one leg of a poet's stool, but it can't be the only one. The variables may change, but if the story is all that's new it's still probably a story we've heard somewhere: let N = your childhood and pretty soon you're rowing circles in the Lake District or someone's reasonable facsimile thereof. I like the I, but I like that it's not the only way I must write. Now I believe attention to language and its forms can be its own trace of identity, and those considerations preoccupy me. I like that anagram steers me away from the I, especially in lines in which I is not an option.

I: One of the technical considerations formal poets have registered is a worry that they're filling out a form. Do these anagrams run that risk?

KM: Sure they do. There's a sort of dull cadence that a sonnet or a villanelle can fall into, and I've learned this through writing my own and listening to others. Avoidance of that dullness really distinguishes great uses of these forms from mediocre ones. I usually suspect it's time to end an anagram because the interesting variations have run out. I'll keep seeing the same words pop up. "Sin" seems to be a favorite of mine. Some lines, by their algebraic arrangement, limit themselves to becoming smaller poems. Two instances of the letter V in a line, for example, can be near deadly to an English arrangement. On the other hand, presence of *threnodials*, a word composed of the eleven most common letters of English language, can sustain a poem for quite some time. It's interesting, in French, they're *ulcerations*.

I: Did you mention an anagram generator earlier? Do you have one of these at home?

KM: Yes and no. It's not its own kind of machine like a blender or some useful appliance.

I: Where do you find one?

KM: I searched the web and found quite a few, and those are the ones I use. Initially, I did my work with pencil and paper, but the computer can get me out of a fix so much faster and sometimes with better combinations than are available to my mind. There's one I've used because it allows me quite a few strictures: how many words I'd like in any anagram, any repetitions of words allowed, that kind of thing.

I: Do you find the computer generated lines limit self-expression and keep back egotistical intentions we may have for poems?

KM: They don't keep them back enough! I wish the computer kept me from seeing what I'm inclined to see in the letters. And yet there are times it won't let you have something you're dying to get the poem to say. But in practice, I've found if you're steering toward a phrase you can usually find it. Usually. Plenty of times I've thought, I need a *K*, or what I wouldn't give for a *P*—but that's like playing Monopoly and hoping that when you get to Go you will have your pawn turned into a queen. You simply can't have it, it's a different game. So you let the poem go where it's asking to go. I have a friend who thinks I write these because they absolve me of responsibility for having written them—the letters made me do it. No, not quite, but there's definitely enough you can do to toy with certain potential outcomes.

I: An image is a sensory imitation. A rhyme at least has a tonal imitation. What about these poems, being based on an abstraction? Doesn't that upend the idea of mimesis, when there's nothing present in the world by which to appreciate their form?

KM: I think these anagram poems are elaborate rhymes—each line with the next. The most perfect of rhymes, it may even be argued, although a word is not supposed to rhyme with itself, it merely is itself. If you can't rhyme with yourself, now, who can you rhyme with? Now there's a mystery. In anagram you hear a music begin to pick up. It's a music to get used to, but there is something like it in the world. It's usually too big or small for the naked eye to take in in a moment, but it's there. It's a cycle, endless recombination, a terrarium. How often do you move around furniture in a room to give it the appearance of newness? Or what about DNA? Isn't it just one amazingly intricate anagram? Nothing is gained or lost, only infinitely rearranged.

I: Ever miss a letter?

KM: No, God-willing. I try to keep to it. I check relentlessly. There are severe penalties in some scripturally transmitted religions for missing even one letter. Freud mentions a German newspaper in wartime that misspelled the headline *Heil Hitler* as *Heilt Hitler*. That's "heal Hitler," of course, and what a difference one *t* makes. The difference between an interview and an innerview.

I: Do you feel like the letters are getting the upper hand?

KM: Who touches is touched. The letters have got a lot to say, more than I can imagine, more than any of us can imagine. That's why we've been packing them around all this time, finding the forms that unlock their potential. They're simple machines really: levers, pulleys,

inclined planes. Everything else we do seems to sink into the earth, save the letters. I'm pushing the conceit to absurdity, but even the alphabet song is sung to "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." They used to stand for things in the world, but now they're above it, little resurrections, little ascensions. They won't stay down. We write them down, but their nature is up.

Books noted:

OULIPO COMPENDIUM, eds., Harry Matthews, Alastair Brotchie. Atlas Press, 1998. (Queneau's 100,000,000,000 sonnets appears here. The book leaves perforation marks so you can divide the lines by strips and change the verses of the poem, like fourteen Dutch doors if that makes any sense. —*KMcF.*)

Michelle Grangaud, MÉMENTO-FRAGMENTS, ANAGRAMMES. P.O.L., 1987

_____, RENAÎTRES. Ecbolade, 1990

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Oskar Pastior, ANAGRAMMGEDICHTE. Verlag Klaus G. Renner, 1985

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_____, EXERCISES IN STYLE. New Directions, 1981

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MAN OF JASMINE & Other Texts, tr. Malcolm Green. Atlas Press, 1994

_____, GESAMTAUSGABE. Brinkmann & Bose, 1998

Kevin McFadden's <kjm7a@virginia.edu> anagram poems have appeared in Denver Quarterly, Iowa Review, American Letters & Commentary, Gulf Coast, The Ledge, Fence, and Archipelago (Vol. 6, No. 1), and are forthcoming in Chicago Review. He suggests that interested readers might look at an anagrammarian site, <<http://wordsmith.org/anagram/>>, which he himself has used on occasion.

archipelago

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