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Eastern Kentucky University, English Department

Aurora '75

AURORA

1975

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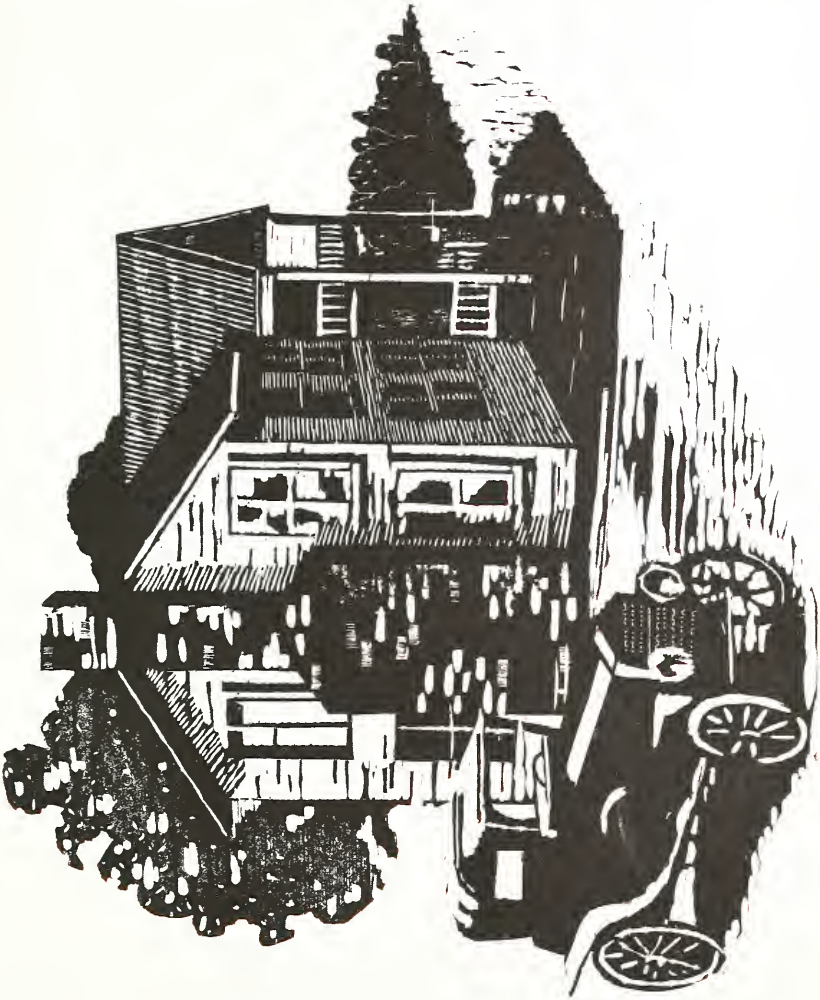

BROKEN FIDDLE

With this worn-out fiddle,
I could play as smooth
As autumn molasses in September,
When all the folks gathered
At Thompson's barn.
The boys came,
Slick as new silver dollars.
And the girls--
As fresh as mornin' glories
And dogwoods in spring.
The cider ran golden
As all the folks gathered,
And the swollen earth
Began to pulse with the music.

Robert B. Ison, Jr.

THE ATTACK

Ken Gullette

He knew they were coming.

They came every night. One, two, sometimes five or more. Killers, predators, they swarmed the landscape. Always hiding, he could never see them clearly. Only shadows dancing and diving in the moonlight.

And each morning he went out to bury the bodies littering the ground. And each morning there were more. Thin, frail bodies with distended stomachs and bony arms, eyes yellow with sickness and hands clutching something that was never there.

He often found weapons on or near the bodies. Usually there were guns, which he collected and used at night when they came to kill him.

The sun was a red blaze on the horizon as he settled down beside the open door. Darkness would come swiftly, wiping out the colors and giving everything a funeral black appearance. Crickets began to chirp, and the warmth of the summer evening was like a heavy weight.

As darkness set in, he realized there was no wind. That was good. He would hear them coming sooner.

There were no lights on in the house. The only lighting available now was candles, but he did not use them at night. He didn't want to give them a target.

In the distance, he could see the fires begin in the city, the only light on the horizon after the sun went down. The fires

could be seen nightly now, as the people remaining in the city went berserk. He wondered how much of the city had been destroyed, how many people had died. The poor bastards. He had known for years it was coming.

He had been watching the distant fire for some time when the first shadow appeared. It was a couple hundred yards away, in the front field, running toward the house.

A loud click distrubed the music of the crickets as he cocked the rifle in his hands. In a sitting position, he aimed slightly above the shadow, which was barely visible. His finger on the trigger squeezed slowly, very slowly.

Crack!

The shadow stopped but did not fall.

He cursed and aimed again. Three bullets were left in the magazine.

Crack! Crack crack!

The shadow vanished and he smiled.

The crickets, annoyed at the interruptions, sang even louder, and he knew from his aching back that it was time for a walk around the house. Nobody ever came the back way, but he patrolled it regularly to make sure.

It was a large house, once belonging to a family that farmed the acres which now were overrun with weeds. Ivy covered the brick walls, serving as a home for dozens of birds in the summer. They were quiet now, sleeping, but not for long, he thought.

All looked well. He could see nothing on the land surrounding the house. Nothing was moving, there was no unusual noise, only the sounds of a summer night. How peaceful. He laughed at the thought.

With a heavy sigh he relaxed his grip on the heavy gun and walked back around to the

front of the house. He felt good after sleeping most of the day. He was actually getting accustomed to being awake all night.

He squinted and looked intently across the field where the shadow had appeared. He saw nothing.

A cat was crying by the front door.

"Is that you, Polly?"

His voice scared him. When he spoke he was afraid of missing the sounds of them approaching, but if he did not speak he sometimes felt like bursting from loneliness.

The small cat padded up to him and rubbed against his legs. He picked it up, laying the gun down.

"You are the only friend I have left, aren't you old girl?" he said softly.

The cat exploded in his hands.

At first he did not know where the bullet had come from, or from what range. Then he saw the flash of a gun, heard the angry hum of a bullet past his head, and finally the sound of gunfire.

He slapped the cat's remains onto the sidewalk, picked up the gun, and dived for the house just as another bullet was fired, but from a different angle. Were there two of them?

And then another shot was fired, and another, and birds flew from the ivy on the walls, squawking loudly. A window in the back of the house shattered. The back? How many were there?

He clamped a new magazine into the rifle and ran through the dark house to one of the back rooms, from which the sound of breaking glass had come. He examined the broken window. Glass glittered on the floor.

He looked out the window and saw two shadows advancing slowly, one to the right and one to the left. They were out of range for his rifle. They must have damned powerful guns, he thought.

A brief spark split the darkness beside one of the shadows and a bullet slammed into the roof. A loud report followed a split second later. His heart pounded in his head as he raised the window. Four of them.

He aimed carefully at the shadow on the left and squeezed off two rounds. The shadow stopped, fell to the ground, and two sparks were lit. Pieces of brick sprayed him in the face, making him fall back into the room. How could they shoot so well?

A fireworks display was set off outside, with shot after shot fired. Bullets whizzed into the room and hit the wall. Some hit the outside of the house with sharp knocks.

He knew the trick and ran to the front door. The two shadows out front were running zig-zag patterns across the fields. It was an ancient army tactic. One side would get his attention while the other side advanced. They had covered much ground, and were now barely within range. There were two shadows, on the right and left, as in the back.

The breath whistled out of his lungs as he fell clumsily to the floor on his stomach. He waited, listening to the gunfire in the back, until the shadow had advanced to one hundred yards. Then he wiped the sweat from his forehead and carefully aimed the rifle. Although he had fought people within a few feet from the house, he was chilled at the sight of these new shadows. They obviously knew what they were doing.

The shadow to the left suddenly stopped,

raising its gun in his direction.

He fired two quick shots and the shadow stumbled backward, arms flailing, trying to stay upright. But it fell limply. The shadow to the right had hit the ground and was firing. A bullet burst into the woodwork an inch above his head, showering him with splinters. He rolled farther back into the room.

God, what accuracy! How could they see him in the shadow of the doorway? They must have scopes, he thought. Perhaps infra-red.

He grabbed two pistols off the floor and ran to the back of the house again. At the back window he emptied a pistol, six shots, at the growing shadows. They stopped and fired back but he was gone, back to the front door where he took the running shadow by surprise. Only forty feet from the house, it was a large target. He squeezed off three shots and the shadow stumbled and fell, rolling twice in the black grass.

There was little time for celebration. Not as long as two more were still alive.

He picked up a twelve-gauge shotgun from the arsenal on the floor, stuffed several shells into his pockets, and ran to the back door. He unlocked it and threw it open loudly.

There was nobody out there.

He froze. The icy fear of death quivered in his stomach. They had circled around and were probably at the sides of the house. No, wait, they could be against the wall, right outside the door, out of sight.

He shuddered uncontrollably and stuck his head slowly out the door. Nothing to the right. He turned, each second expecting the death blow. Nothing to the left.

There was a sound behind him in the house. He whirled and fired from the hip. The shadow's

chest opened up and the body flew off the floor, slammed into the wall, and shook the house. It fell to the floor, made a long gurgling sound from the throat, and was quiet.

The crickets had stopped singing. The only sound was his heavy breathing. When would it end?

"Stop!" he screamed out the door. "Why won't you stop! Why do you want to kill me?"

But he knew the answer.

Death was very much in the room. It had a particular smell, and he could smell it as he wiped his face. Calm down, he told himself. Hysterics was the short cut to death.

There was one more shadow left. He decided to walk across the room to a corner and sit there. He would be able to see anyone who came into the room. Perhaps he could just wait, and the other shadow would come in.

The house was silent for several minutes before the first sound was made.

It was a soft crunch, the sound of footsteps on grass. Slowly they advanced and stopped at the front door. Sitting in the corner, with the shotgun pointed to the entrance, he put all his concentration into listening to the footsteps. He barely heard one at the front door. Then, barely audible, another one, this time inside the house.

Another, and another, and he knew that he would soon kill again.

The shadow entered the room carefully. Tall and well built, the shadow turned its head and looked around the room, stopping at the other shadow's body. Its head continued turning and finally saw him in the corner. Its gaze met his, and in slow motion he watched the shadow point the hungry gun barrel at him.

He pulled the trigger of the shotgun and

watched the shadow's head disappear. Some of it hit the wall around the doorway. The body stood for a few seconds, not quite knowing what to do. Then it folded like an empty suit. The gun clattered to the floor.

He stood up slowly, stretching his muscles. The shotgun had kicked when fired, driving his shoulder painfully into the wall. He lay the gun down and examined the bodies while rubbing his injured right shoulder.

It was done. He stumbled to the front door and took a deep breath. He began to cry, louder and louder like a baby, filling the air with the sound. A wave of fatigue washed through him, but vanished when a scratching sound behind him caught his attention.

He turned to see a large rat over by a wall, raised on its hind legs and sniffing the air. Then he began laughing. It all seemed funny somehow.

Then the bullet struck him.

He was forced into the room, gagging on the object that had passed through his throat, but he maintained his balance and turned to see the shadow limp into the doorway. He could not breathe, and sparkling stars were suddenly flying about the room. He fell dead to the floor.

The shadow limped into the house and examined the body. Limping badly on his left leg, he went into the kitchen and looked around at the bodies in the area around the back door.

He found a candle at the top of the stairs which led to the cellar and lit it. He walked down the stairs and looked around.

It was true. Rows and rows, stacks and stacks of food. Enough food to last a man for years. There was hardly room to

walk. He took a can of peaches from a crate and went back upstairs. In the kitchen he found a can opener and a towel which he soaked in warm water for his wound. Then he returned to the front door, watching the fields. The peaches were sweet and juicy.

As the crickets sang, he sat at the front door, bound up his leg, ate the peaches, and kept his gun ready at all times.

He knew they were coming.

A PLEA FOR LEAVING SOME LAND FALLOW
(TO FRIENDS)

When echoes of my parting footsteps hush

enshrine a rod or two of earth there

let it turn again to bush

I'll retrace every pace I ever made

and where I once stood easy

I'll stand again someday.

time plows furrows in our fields

wisdom furrows

mediocrity furrows

when I return

share marked

we'll likely be as strangers

cut by different steels

  we'll need familiar ground to meet on.

Joe Wood


Trident
Trident
Trident
Chiclets
Chiclets
Chiclets
HERSHEY'S
HERSHEY'S
mr Goodbar
mr Goodbar
NESTLE'S
CRUNCH
NESTLE'S
CRUNCH
Reese's
Reese's
Reese's
Reese's
Reese's
Milky Way
36
SNICKERS
m&m
36
m&m
36
no jelly
no jelly
no jelly
no jelly
Caravelle
Caravelle
Caravelle
Caravelle
Mounds
Mounds
Mounds
Mounds
Mounds
Mounds
10

FARMHOUSE. NEW HEROINE.

at three a.m.
rain hitting a tin roof
sounds as if children
are throwing handfuls of tiny
yellow gumballs
at the corner stopsign.

I look at you
now asleep
and ten thousand future sunsets flash
and fade like shooting stars.

then I remember life is
not a fairy tale
and I am left alone
with rain
falling in the dark.

Joe Wood

PACIFIC AT DAWN

walking

listening to morning words seagulls say

leaving bare feet prints in grey sand

seeing what night's ocean

threw away.

Joe Wood

JOURNEY DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI

veiled by cottonwoods
a dead fish floats past
high out of the water like
an abandoned rowboat,
to become turtle's food or
lodged in a louisiana bayou
willow's roots,
one journey's end
another's beginning.

immortality attempters
you're welcome to my vault
that iron-clad guardian
just lay me unembalmed
naked
in a shagbark shaded hole
on top this illinois river bluff, let
me become ten thousand quartered
hickory nut hulls,
abandoned rowboats
floating toward louisiana.

Joe Wood

ISTANBUL HIGH

David B. Silk

The box on the wall said, "Commander McGuire, the catholic chaplain, has made arrangements for a tour of Istanbul, Turkey from our next port. The first fifty men who present the necessary papers at the Special Services Office will be sold tickets." The box continued, but my thoughts returned to my wife whom I had watched board a plane in Athens only four days before. I had been so depressed that I gave the taxi driver who took me back to the boat the equivalent of seven dollars as a tip just to rid myself of Greek money. It had been a fantastic two weeks and was the nicest thing the U.S. Navy had ever done for me. They were going to let me out in eight months but that was too far in the future to really get excited about; besides, I had another three months of working on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier to survive. Another three months of being scared to death. Before I was able to sink into my nightly funk, P.W. tore back the curtain on the side of the coffinesque enclosure that the navy had provided for me to sleep in and said,

"Did you hear that?"

"Yeah, so what?"

"Uncle Sugar has invited us to tour the birthplace of hashish and that's all you can say?"

P.W. Koob was my brother, not by birth but by death. We spent a lot of our time on

the flight deck pulling each other out of the various situations our arch enemy threw up for us. Our mutual enemy was naval aviation and its disciples, the jet airplanes, were actively trying to do us in. We had agreed to look out for each other and it was usually a full time job. My job was the easier since there was less of him to look out for. He was five feet five inches of energy constantly in motion.

"So do you want to go?"

"Not particularly; I just got off two weeks leave with Susan, you know. I doubt if they'd let me go anyway. You know how the Chief is."

"Well, I want to go so at least let's try."

At this point anything seemed better than being on that damn boat, so I agreed.

The "necessary papers" included a change of duty form and a special request form. The change of duty form was no problem since the guy who ran the duty sections for the officer was a friend. The hang up was the special request form. The navy dictates that a special request form must be signed by all senior officers and petty officers in the chain of command. To sign, one had to be literate and A01 Soop, my crew leader, had recently qualified.

"Why do you want to go to Istanbul, Silk? Your wife just left."

"I don't want to get laid, Soop, I want to see the Blue Mosque, the Grand Bazaar, and ten million Turks. I just want to go."

"Don't give me that shit (Soop's brain wasn't located in his head). Okay, but remember not to let the kids get your foot on a shoe shine box. They'll whip a razor on your Achilles tendon and demand all your money.

It's either pay or be a cripple the rest of your life."

"Thanks Soop; I'll remember."

Soop had been everywhere and done everything. He was one of the better story tellers I'd ever worked with. He had done things that would make Captain America blanch, including getting rolled in Edinburgh after "falling asleep" in a bar. True to their nature, the Scots had taken Soop's money, watch, rings, and coat, but mailed his wallet back to him. Gentlemen, all those Scots.

One signature down. Now on to the Chief.

"Silk, you just got off leave. You know you're screwing your buddies."

"None of the other guys want to go, Chief. Soop signed and he checked."

"Well, okay, but you're screwing your buddies. The Gunner has to sign this."

The Gunner was our officer. Not a bad guy when he wasn't careful and luckily we had caught him only half awake.

"If Chief says it's okay then it's okay by me. Didn't you just get off leave, Silk?"

The next few hours were taken up with interrogations, explanations, accusations, and all the other demeaning devices the navy uses to keep its men respectful and in their proper places. In their view, the proper place was under their collective thumb. Each officer was given the required answers and finally the signatures were obtained.

We'd made it. The tickets were bought, the bags packed, and the orders for hookahs taken. One of the guys wanted more than a hookah.

"If you guys had any sense you'd buy up a bunch of hash, take it back to the States and sell it. You'd really clean up."

In the capitalistic tradition of our forefathers, P.W. and I became obsessed with the idea.

"Where would we hide the shit?"

"On a boat as big as the Independence we could find somewhere but how would we get it off the boat back in the States?"

"Even before that we have to get it through Greek customs at the border. You know there's no love lost between the Turks and Greeks, they'll probably rake us over the coals going and coming."

"Well, it was a great idea. We could have really made some money. Imagine what ten pounds of hash would sell for back home."

"Damn it, we've got to figure out something. A chance like this doesn't happen often."

Getting up early the next morning we took the liberty boat to the beach and boarded our tour bus. Our tour guide, George unpronouncable last name, introduced himself and explained that we had to get passports to go to Turkey and his cousin would take the necessary pictures for a nominal fee. It turned out that George was a Greek flim-flam man of the first order and this was only the first of his deals. George's brother drove the bus with great abandon and in tune with the music from the tape player; if the music was fast so was the rate of travel. Greek music is usually fast so the scenery was blurred. Oh well, the dead of winter in between snows is not a good time for scenery. Besides, our thoughts were on other things.

The first day ended with a sumptuous meal of hard bread, mystery meat, and wine. George owned the hotel so the accomodations were Spartan, but at least everything wasn't navy gray.

It was still dark when the fifty of us stumbled out of our rooms and reboarded our mud-covered chariot the next morning. The muddy, barren Greek countryside suddenly became muddy, barren Turkish countryside. The border crossing, normally an up against the wall type inspection, was greatly simplified by five bottles of Johnny Walker Red scotch which George presented to the customs inspectors and we weren't even asked to leave the bus. George told us with a sly grin that the return crossing would be even easier since he would be dealing with his own countrymen. He then gave us an explanatory speech saying that Turkey was a nation of farmers while Greece was the birthplace of democracy. Directly over George's head was the ever present symbol of the new government of Greece. The symbol was a soldier in battle dress superimposed upon a Phoenix rising out of flames. The obvious contradiction escaped George and that made me a little sad. Greece was a country that was physically in chains and that survived by remembering better times. The Greek chains were seldom visible but the Turkish government was everywhere. It seemed that every village was cluttered with men with machine guns on their backs. Or possibly, we Americans were not accustomed to such a show of force. The snow that was falling contrasted the olive drab of the uniforms.

Istanbul was rising out of a covering of white when we arrived in the late afternoon. The blizzard obstructed virtually all of the buildings from our curious gaze and it was only after we had checked into our hotel and unpacked our cameras that P.W. and I really

discovered Istanbul. It was a three dog night in the finest Eskimo tradition but we braved the cold and the snow storm to take pictures and see ten million Turks. The light was failing fast and the only photographable structure was a war memorial in a square near our hotel. The figurines, frozen in bronze, were in positions of great stress and determination to depict the heroism of the good guys. I translated the lines of Turkish on the plaque to read, "Our heroes can lick your heroes." This was not out of disrespect but whimsy brought on by the icicles growing from their noses and the snow on those furrowed brows and broad shoulders. We stood there in a driving snow storm taking pictures of metal men with snow covered weapons when P.W. said,

"God had a hell of a sense of humor!"

I found this hilarious but the Turks walking by only saw two laughing fools with several hundred dollars worth of cameras rusting in their hands and passed by with looks of "Yankee go home" in their eyes, so we returned to our hotel. That was our first encounter with the screamer.

P.W. was the first to react with his usual,

"What the hell is that?"

I sat remembering every movie I had ever seen that contained Arabs and said,

"Gunga Din."

"Din is the right word for it. Somebody's gonna get in deep shit if he gets caught making all that racket. The cops here all carry machine guns and they look nasty enough to use them."

P.W. had a soft spot for machine guns. In Crete, an overanxious Greek guard had shot at us with one when we failed to stop at his post after a debauch in Souda Bay. The guy driving

the truck was too drunk to hear so it really wasn't his fault. Luckily, the guard's aim was as bad as their local beverage, ouzo, was potent, so all escaped unscathed; but that's another story.

I explained that the screamer was a Moslim priest calling the people to prayer. P.W. remembered the same movie and we both decided to get a picture of this man during his act. In the movies, his counterpart stood atop one of the towers on the mosque; one thing Istanbul had plenty of was mosques. We could see one of the minor ones from the window of our hotel room. We decided to keep a vigil until one of us had our picture. Since it could be a long wait, I went to the grocery store to get some food.

The grocery store was similar to its American equivalent. I was able to complete the entire transaction without speaking a word, which was very fortunate since I speak no Turkish. It was at the grocery that I acquired one of the most important bits of information yet. Wine was about fifty cents a bottle. Being a romantic, my purchase consisted of several bottles of wine, some cheese, and a bag of apples.

Back in the room we discovered the wine to be excellent, the cheese acceptable, and the apples so hard that they were unedible, but after a second trip to the store for more wine, the apples were forgiven. We were throwing them out the window at the chimneys on the next roof when we heard the sound that sent us both staggering for our cameras. He was back! It was now very dark and blurry but we managed to focus somehow. It was then that we noticed the speakers.

"Bazarewsky's gonna be pissed," P.W.

slurred, "when he finds out that his screwball buddy is sitting on his butt in the basement somewhere, screaming into a P.A. system instead of up there in the tower in the cold. He'll resign from their religion."

Bazarewsky was a guy we worked with who always put "Moslem" in the space marked religion on all the forms. We never knew if he was serious or not, but he was disappointed when we couldn't rent a goat to bring to his wedding later that year. He always said that a Polish Moslem wedding had to have a goat. We could have rented some chickens, but he wouldn't be appeased even by our telling him that the Rent-A-Goat business was defunct in Virginia Beach. But that's another story, too.

The speakers had been a disappointment but the night was still young and George had promised to take us to an authentic Turkish night club.

We had somehow missed the tour bus but we received directions from the desk clerk. The "authentic" Turkish night club was named the Black Cat and could be found about half a block from the Istanbul Hilton. We had but to find the Istanbul Hilton and we were there. Simplicity itself! Miles later and much clearer of head we came to the conclusion that we were more likely to find Emperor Constantine alive and well than the Istanbul Hilton. The solution was to hire a taxi and we attempted to do this.

There couldn't be more than two 1953 Buicks in the whole of Turkey. One of them wheezed to a stop at the curb and we climbed in. Our luck was holding so the driver spoke no English and my Turkish hadn't gotten any better. What followed was several minutes of saying Istanbul Hilton in pidjin Turkish. Somehow,

we got our message across and were all set to play the game that I liked best.

The game had no name and only a few rules. The object of the game was for one person to sell something to another person for the highest price possible. The buyer tries to pay as little as possible and great fun is had by all. The language barrier was still there but our driver rose above it. He wrote a figure on a piece of paper and handed it to me. Pawn to King 3! I took the paper, looked at it, and started to laugh. I handed the paper to P.W. He read it and laughed. I took the paper back and wrote down a figure less than half the original and handed it back to the driver. Pawn to King 3! Our driver was not very happy with this figure because he talked passionately for several minutes. Of course, I didn't understand what he was saying but I had been in the same situation in Tijuana and that driver had told me about his starving children, pregnant wife, and sick father. I imagine the speeches were very similar. The paper changed hands back and forth until we arrived at a number three fourths of the original. The Turk would go no lower and the Yanks would go no higher. Stalemate! The situation called for a desperate move so I employed the Tijuana Gambit. This was a dangerous ploy for if it failed we would be back on the street in the snow. Steeling myself for that eventuality, I made my move. I opened the door to get out, the driver grabbed my shoulder and then threw up his hands signaling his resignation. We had won! The driver started the Buick, drove about fifty yards, made a U-Turn and stopped at the curb. We had been had but good. The low, non-descript building in front of which we were stopped

was familiar to us because we had walked past it at least twice. Choking back a chuckle, our Turkish Robin Hood held out his hand for payment. Between P.W. and myself we had been taken for fools from Tokyo to Turkey and this man had done it with more finesse than anyone so we paid up and got out.

The Turkish night club featured a Greek band, Turkish dancers, a man billed as a "star of American stage, screen and television" whom we had never heard of and the inevitable belly-dancers. The Turks prefer their women slightly heavy and so these dancers were, therefore, very attractive to the Turkish audience. The flesh flowed as did the wine. Hours later we swayed through the streets marveling that so much could be moved so vigorously for so long. Visions of undulating stomachs haunted my dreams that night.

The next morning we boarded our buses early and were off to see the highlights of the city of Istanbul. We spent the morning going from mosque to mosque. The Blue mosque was first.

The Blue Mosque was a very large building with pointed towers. We tramped through the snow to the door and were told to remove our shoes. We did so and George told us to tip the doorman so that our shoes would be there when we came out. The interior of the mosque was very dark. The cold penetrated the ornate rugs on the floor and also our socked feet. I wondered if the physicians of Istanbul had been instrumental in imposing the no shoe rule. After our eyes adjusted to the subdued light the true beauty of the building became apparant. The massive windows that pierced the walls were made of blue stained

glass in very ornate geometric designs. George explained that the Moslem religion prohibited the reproduction of any living thing. This would seem to limit the Moslem artist, but he had risen above the restrictions of his religion. The pastoral scenes and saints' images of the Christian churches looked very amateurish in comparison to these wondrous designs. The vaulting walls and ceilings were one mass of interlocking geometric figures done in blue.

The Mosque of St. Sophia was more of the same. This mosque had been a Christian Church of long ago but with the ouster of the Christians had become a Moslem temple. The wall decorations were again geometric designs but this time in various colors. P.W. and I lingered in the mosque taking pictures and emerged from the darkness to find ourselves in the midst of a pitched battle.

The small American force was surrounded! We were outnumbered five to one! The open plain in front of our position was crowded with screaming blood-thirsty Turks. The air was filled with missiles and suddenly I was hit! The wet stuff ran through my hair and down my neck. I cursed my assailants and ran to where my comrades were making a stand. We were fifty well-trained American fighting men against a force larger than ours but we had a tradition to uphold. We did not know why we were in this fight but we were in it to win. The screaming Turks charged and almost over ran us. Here was where our training and heritage paid off. We stood firm, shouting phrases which had inspired our forefathers.

"Don't give up the ship."

"Fire when ready, Gridley."

"Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!"

P.W. was suddenly at my side saying,

"Here are your shoes, stupid. Isn't it a little cold running around in the snow in just your socks?"

I put on my shoes and we decided to make a suicidal charge toward our objective. It seemed our only hope. We charged through the snowball barrage thrown at us by the mob of school children and barely reached our bus.

Our next stop was the Sultan's Palace of Topkapi. The larger part of two thousand years of Moslem conquest and the plunder gained therein was kept in this palace. The sheer mass of the treasure was staggering. We toured room after room of Ming china, fine porcelain, and gem encrusted articles. The sultans had a great liking for precious stones and had everything from a baby cradle to thrones inlaid with the gems. We saw a throne made of gold inlaid with diamonds and one with pearls. Hopefully, he also had one made of something soft because diamonds and pearls are nice but not all that comfortable to sit on. The vault room contained the very expensive treasures such as a diamond the size of a baseball made into a necklace. P.W. and I decided that it must have taken a very special kind of woman to wear that necklace without looking tacky. Any one of these items would have made an impressive display, but as a whole it soon became a bore. We were told that what we had seen represented only a fifth of the whole treasure and we really lost interest. I think we were all in shock when we left the museum. It had been a museum not of artistic creations but of wealth. This mammoth display reminded us of our modest plan to gain a little wealth. We had

decided to buy the hashish since George could be counted on to handle the customs problem. With this in mind we went to the Grand Bazaar to comparison shop for hashish.

It should be remembered that due to the influence of Puritanical America, hashish is illegal in Turkey. Turkey produces more opium and hashish than any other country in the world but it is illegal opium and hashish. The laws concerning such things are very strict but they are rarely enforced. It would seem that these laws are there to insure the stream of Yankee dollars from our foreign aid program. An explanation of what necessitates this flow of dollars would involve a lengthy discussion of our self-imagined need to buy the love of the world and brevity forbids this. We now rejoin our heroes at the Grand Bazaar.

Try to imagine a thousand shops that sell everything from Japanese radios to Merschem pipes to copper pots. Throw a roof over the whole thing and it would be named the Grand Bazaar. We wandered for hours past fresh fruit stands, hookah stands, wine shops, jewelry stores, and men who sold watches from wheelbarrows. We bought several hookahs for the guys back on the boat. We also discovered that we could buy our hash more cheaply from the street vendors we had encountered on our wanderings.

We played the taxi game and returned to our hotel. We were still a little shaky concerning our upcoming adventure with the dope dealers of Istanbul, so we had a large supper and great quantities of wine to give us courage. Several bottles of courage later we hit the street in search of our salesman.

We were approached several times by

salesmen but none had the amount we required. We continued our search and, after several stops for more courage, we found our man. He said that he did not have the amount we required with him but that he could get it and be back in fifteen minutes. We watched him disappear down the alley and P.W. said,

"What if he goes home and comes back with some friends and just takes our money?"

"One of us should take the money and wait across the street. The other could check the hash then get the money."

"Well, you're bigger than me so you stay and I'll take the money."

At the time it sounded like a good plan so I agreed. P.W. took the money and staggered across the street. He promised to come to my aid if things went bad, so I sat down on a pile of bricks to wait for our man. I began to reflect upon our plan and, to my dismay, found several glaring faults. Suppose the man came back with the hash; I did not know the difference between brick hashish and shredded lettuce. I could sink our money in rabbit food. Suppose I recognized the rabbit food and the man kicked the shit out of me. He seemed capable enough. I was starting to sober now and that wasn't good. I was physically bigger than P.W. but I came equipped with a spine made of lime Jell-O. Suppose the man came back with some friends instead of the hash and kicked my ass just out of principle. They wouldn't be very pleased to discover that I didn't have the money. The telegram to my wife would probably read:

"We regret to inform you that your husband was killed today in the act of buying hashish."

Suppose they got both of us; surely P.W.

would come to my aid. Just where was P.W., anyway? He was pretty drunk when he left; suppose he was passed out in a snow bank somewhere? Well, only thirteen more minutes before I could leave with honor. Chain smoking didn't help my lungs but if things went bad I wouldn't be needing them anyway. I was stone sober now and scared. I jumped at every sound and my senses strained for some signal. I probably would have fainted had the man returned, but mercifully, he didn't. I found P.W. across the street and we decided the hell with buying the hash. George had promised to take us to a good burlesque show so we decided to rejoin the tour group there.

The burlesque was less interesting than the belly dancing so we got very drunk. The trip back the next day was a nightmare of almost being sick from the booze the night before and disappointment from blowing our opportunity to make a lot of money quickly. We drove straight through to Thessoloniki and arrived in the middle of the night. Riding back to the ship on the liberty boat we heard the officer in charge radio the ship that he had the Istanbul tour on board. The ship said that precautions were being taken and that everyone on the boat would be searched. The splashing noises told us that we hadn't been the only ones with the idea of getting something in Istanbul but perhaps we had been the most successful.

ANOTHER PERVISION OF SOCIETY

32, 34, 36, 38

Who do you appreciate?

A, B, C, D

Tell me what you think of me.

Olga, Warner, Maidenform, lace,

Harness beauty for any taste.

Crossing my heart and bound to die,

Can't you tell; it's really eye?

Sue Nelson

COW COLLEGE U.S.A.

four letter word men stumble

through elementary gobbledy-gook

gruesome twosomes inhale big macs

joe blows jockey joysticks

gow devices sell textbooks

saturday night only friend females

find that mister right is never wrong.

Where have the culture vultures flown?

Like senseless pigions, smacked by glass windows,

We flutter in dormitories

Concerned only with elements

Of extracurricular.

There are no crew-cut

Collegiate approches

To problems Here.

We believe in pot luck.

Sue Nelson

QUASI-STELLAR OBJECT 1975

Hey you reading comic books!
Hey you mesmerized by space fiction!
Hey you eluding my space!
I want to explain my being:
You see
I've grown disassembled.
Like particles of meteoritic matter
(devoid of any iron)
I perpetually orbit around
You. i.e. source of my life.
This disjointed convergence
Of cosmic dust
Is surely closer to dirt than halos.
Sometimes
In fits of accelerated velocity
I rocket through the empyrean
Like some faint patch
Of Kordylewski dust cloud,
Yet inevitably
Am so easily broken
By these thrusts of solar wind.

Sue Nelson

PSYCHOLOGY, TO ONE WON

Sitting in this
   synthetically nylon
   machine woven
Seat,
I look askance at my belly as it growls.
I've learned it isn't mean or menacing,
Only hungry.

Blinking under these
   brilliantly naked
   obscenely hung
Bulbs,
I listen intensely to tales of neurosis.
I've learned it isn't mean or menacing,
Only natural.

Sue Nelson

FIRST TANGO IN RICHMOND

When little girls-their Daddy's Darlings-

Dreamed of waltzing with Princes

While waiting to be ladies,

She sweated over peach pits

Carving them to rings.

~~Like glacier falls in Iceland~~

Her pitiful rings would slide

Crashingly off the too small

Fingers and thumbs.

Determined, she would start again

Rubbing a new pit

On the gritty concrete sidewalk,

Fashioning it slowly and

Hoping someday everything would fit.

Sue Nelson

THE DUNGEON

Michael Embry

Why can't anyone hear me! I've been trapped inside this dungeon for days and I know they can hear my screams for help. I can hear voices about me and the noise they make.

Days have passed since that idiot forced me off the road. You try to abide by the fifty-five mile speed limit and some jerk travelling eighty around a curve leaves you defenseless.

Luckily, Marge and the kids aren't with me. They must be worried sick out of their heads. If only those clowns would try to hear me and get me out of this wreckage!

Oh well, I guess it's only a matter of time. Time! I wonder how Frank is managing at the office? I bet every damn account is overdue while that incompetent jackass is playing golf. I work twenty-two years in setting up an efficient office and management saddles a twenty-four year old bum on my back. What gratitude for a job well-done!

Oh, he has a college diploma but the kid is so damn stupid. Those college kids think they're so smart. Smartalecky in my book. Little ol' me with a high school education and years of dedicated work draws only fifty dollars a month more than him and he's only been with the company two years! Is that justice?

In twenty years I can retire and hand the reins over to him. I pity the company when Frank takes over.

"Respiration down, get the oxygen tent!"

What was that I heard? Was there somebody else hurt? My car isn't hidden in some brush I hope.

I bet Marge is worried. Seventeen years together and four beautiful children. We've had some wonderful years together and the usual ups and downs. I don't think there was a lovelier woman than her when we met. It was love at first sight for me.

But hell, seventeen years have really taken the toll on that gorgeous body. She was so sweet looking when we got married. That coal-black hair, soft-white skin, large firm breasts and hips on that five foot three frame. I always looked forward to hopping in the sack with her. She was perfect!

But now, lines in her face, drooping breasts, flabby hips, and murky gray hair on that chubby torso I once loved. And she can't understand why I look at other women! If she only knew about the other women!

We used to have so much in common years ago. Now she only cares about the children and soap operas. We can't talk two minutes before silence sets in.

"Blood pressure dropping, Dr. Franklin."

Where in the hell is that voice coming from? Help! Get me out of this wreckage before I scream myself to death! I must be lying on the

seat and they can't see me. I feel so tied in; can't move a damn muscle.

The children don't even interest me anymore. I spent all that time with Ricky in Little League baseball teaching him the techniques of the game and what does he do? He says that baseball is dead and football is the game to play. What's the matter with kids nowadays? Duke Snider, Mickey Mantle, Stan Musial, and Ted Williams don't mean a thing to them. Now it's Joe Namath, Larry Csonka, O.J. Simpson and the rest of those knuckle-headed athletes. Football ain't no sport!

And little Patty. She's not so little anymore; reminds me of her mother years ago. It's hard to believe that child is sixteen now. But looks is where the resemblance ends. The kid has no morals. Strutting around in those halters with her titties bouncing and tight jeans make her look cheap. Her mom never did that! Those sissy boyfriends of hers don't impress me either. Long hair and dirty moustaches don't belong on men. Her mom was always proud to see me in my crew cut and clean clothes when we were dating.

Now she's even talking about this women's lib. Hell, the only place these girls need freedom is in the kitchen and making babies. It's hard enough for a guy to find a good paying job without some wacky broad working for less. I bet if all those broads were fired from their jobs and the men took them over there wouldn't be any more welfare. Those broads screwed up the whole job market.

And Marge can't understand why I won't send Patty to college. If I change my mind it'll only be to get her married to some boy studying to be a doctor or lawyer.

Jimmy and Tina are cute kids but I'm too old to mess around with them. What a life they have to look forward to. They're in their first year of grade school and they have to be bussed to nigger schools. I never saw a nigger until I was in the Army in Korea and I wished I had never saw one then. Hell, what if my little Tina married one of them creatures. Heaven forbid! It even makes me sick just to see Jimmy playing ball with those black boys.

Dammit, I wish those clowns would find me. I've never seen it so dark in my life and the air is so cold that it's hard to believe it's July.

Life has been miserable the past few years. Maybe after I've recovered from this accident I'll be able to patch up my family life. Church might be a good way to get started; although I don't believe in all that Jesus garbage the preacher spits out. Maybe it will help Marge and the kids think better of me and get them back to the old American way of living.

The damn communists have taken over our government, schools, and even business. You can't even go to a movie house unless you see some big tits and hear that awful cussing. No wonder my kids are screwed up!

Back when I was a kid we'd get some nooky behind the barn. Now that was an education. For fun we'd drink a six pack of Pabst and get a little high. Nowadays the kids run around half naked, sleep together, and smoke those marijuana cigarettes. Hell, even the boys sleep together! Must be that long hair down to their asses causing that.

"Pulse is weakening."

Damnation! Help! Get me out of this car! I'm trapped and can't move. Can anybody hear me!

"Next of kin have been notified. Shall I summon a priest to perform the last rites?"

Is there somebody else down here with me? Oh, I'm so cold! Jesus, why can't they find me?

"What's the man's name?"
"Lloyd Jackson."

Lloyd Jackson? That's me! They've found me at last.

"The priest will be here in a few minutes. How much time do you think he's got?"

What do you mean how much time I've got?

"A matter of minutes."

Minutes! What the hell are you talking about?

"I've done all I can for him. He's been in coma for forty-two hours. Poor guy must have suffered with both legs amputated and multiple fractures in the arms and chest."

I'm not dying! Can't you hear me! Don't let me die. God help me.

"How did it happen?"
"A car accident three miles east of town. We've had him for nearly two days in the Intensive Care room but he's shown no sign of improvement. Just lays there, motionless."

I'm dying!

"Pulse rate is twenty."

I'm trapped inside my lifeless body.

How will Marge and the kids live without me?
I can't die! God forgive.....

"He's dead."

---

windowless freighters chug through the water,
and seals watch in cold attention.
from afternoons of solitaire and coffee come
dreams on which stories form,
perilous in intent
but harmless in retrospect.
they seem like castles atop mountains,
impregnable, wandering down
sidelines of confusion and mistaken phrases,
bottled up to the point that
outer fringes are blurred.
forgotten to the point that
memories are dreams,
while pianos play softly in the background.

T. G. Moore

there are maniacs in my world,
and one of them is me.
three are in my closet,
on the floor at tea.
i see them at my window;
i catch them at my door.
sometimes they talk in private
and then they laugh at me.
if i could find one crying,
i would not feel so bad.
but they are always smiling.
i wish they all were dead.
but to wish them gone is overture;
to be angry is to applaud.
merry-go-rounds and ferris wheels,
who will ride them now?

T. G. Moore

lighted graves in the midst of night
shout oaths at dogs as they bark.
if measurement could only be precise enough
to catch what sounds slip out,
who knows what journey's end would come or
rest a bit to see the angel nodding
as canoes drift down the river and
disappear away from life?
my canoes have all but left,
in legions few and failing.
we grasp the shirttails of existence
in a world of bitter ends.
we scoop into the earth,
dig in for the assault
and hope it's over quickly.
caravans about-face in the sand,
crying out with dead men's hands.

T. G. Moore

IF YEATS COULD SEE US NOW

echo my cries across the river,
and leave my whispers standing on the shore.
that ship off in the distance will draw
nearer as the clouds descend above the waves,
and mark the depths where sharks converge
to feast on flesh polluted and drowned.
the East must have its own way, and
I will have mine while standing on this bridge,
if nothing more than tossing a cigarette into
the air.

slouching away from the center, thoughts dance
around
of crumbled mountains and fallen monuments,
while virtue and dignity have gone on
sabbatical,
selling tickets to the Second Coming.

T. G. Moore

take my camera in your hand,
look beyond the plastic, glass,
brushed steel and leather.
notice how the measurements all conform,
the fittings fit, the symmetry is intact.
observe its coolness, cool detached
from cool.
objectivity is its name,
and silence is its realm as focus,
exposure and retention
come to bear on reality.
manipulate its devices and
calibrate the wheels, but
point it only where there's light;
darkness spoils all graven images.
a lens ground fine, please notice,
to finely grind the world;
sweet clarity. Now do the same with my eyes.

T. G. Moore

1990 DIALOGUE

"the point is," as he used to say when thinking
made his head ache,
"that I can no longer tolerate your insane out-
look on everything.
Why must everything be
a symbol to you (to me?),
why must everything be 'typical'
of something else? Can't anything just be
as it is
and left alone without attaching some damn
cosmic statement to it?"
"good question," I replied, "why indeed?"

Gloria Steinem wears panty hose and Abbie
Hoffman
picks his nose, so who's a radical now?
Your blue
jeans have faded into tailor-made slacks,
that field jacket you used to wear looks
now more like
a Brooks Brothers suit.
Dutch Masters have replaced the dope you
smoke and
doesn't it feel good to be rich?
your daughter takes piano lessons,
but wasn't it fun throwing bricks?
Pucci-clad, your wife (YOUR WIFE!?) gets
around in the
Porsche her dad gave the both of you for
being so reformed
(forgive and forget, let bygones be bygones,
live and let live; "that's what I always
say," you said).
You washed your mind down the kitchen sink
and now stand up in bars to sing
"Oh, I wish I wuz in de land o'cotton..."
(remember when you put words like screw and
ass-hole in your poems just for decoration?).

"But Dad," I continued, "the point is there is
no point to anything."

to the carnival-players and doom-seers,
why must still water run deep?
holy trinity, for all its confines of time and space,
cannot answer the question.
empty soap boxes and pressed leaves
take all the time of an hourglass.
But people die across the river in minutes.
like split personalities, we sit and think
about all the problems of the universe,
then walk out the door.
who could bear to add two and two
when figures don't really matter?
only distant noises made by moving years,
and clustered sunsets that peek above the horizon
before they die,
count in a mass concourse of human essence.
nothing is known by its shadow,
just as dust settles without question.
i am the only maker of reality,
but for those who cannot play the game,
i pretend that messengers bring the days.
somewhere, off into the expanded vision of a wit's end,
are the letters pasted in disarray on the page,
which will, generations from now,
become the trust of time's guardian.
rest assured that we must only ask those questions
for which there are absolute answers;
the rest must be buried below the scavenger's reach.
bluegills, passing under the bridge on their way to breakfast,
hardly notice the faintly distinct
cries of a dying time.
the mortgage on the age has been foreclosed, and with it,
slow decay accelerates into rapid degeneration.

i am the only maker of reality,
who reaps the harvest but once,
knowing that another crop will never come.
now, only shallow rows of once-brilliant
seeds,
that ceased to grow at the sudden beckon of
my brother's voice,
line the garden.
tonight is the last night of the world.
in an instant, it will all be gathered up
in a terrible unleashing of power,
all too quick for eyes to see or minds to
know,
a caustic sweeping across the realm of dignity,
an acid tearing at the veins of pride.
too much, too much for one dimension to handle.
it carries over into another.
someone left the gate open,
but no one saw the doom and no one left the
carnival.
the massive heat that seared our backs,
reddened our faces,
would sustain a fire in the eyes of the sur-
vivors
for a thousand million years.
beyond our own time, the vision blurs.

T. G. Moore

THE NIGHT CAFE

A roulette marble spins unseen
like a compass needle lost its way
into the dusty light of the night cafe.
There sits a red-faced fat man playing
chimes upon a glass with fork and knife.

While a waitress in flight
makes her bid for the night
waltzing on coffee stained tables.
Nods her head with a Thank You grin
and is off for another round.

In the decolored light by the corner booth
quite late, the sleepy old man bows into his
bowl
and awakes with an oatmeal beard.
His sopping chin wiped with a Thank You grin
rests for another round.

Behind the newspage freyed light exposes
eyes that blink at words transposed,
he turns his glance up from the coffee cup
refilled with a Thank You grin, listens for
the swishing skirt, and waits patiently
as another round begins.

Steven Cambron