Structure

The *North Avenue Review* is produced by a collection of Georgia Tech students, faculty and staff—all of whom have contributed writing, graphics, or time.

Unless otherwise stated, the views expressed herein are solely those of the individual contributors and are not intended to express the sentiments of the Georgia Tech community.

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**Meetings**

Meetings are usually held every Thursday at 6:30 p.m. in D.M. Smith room 105. Everyone who comes to meetings and submits writing, art, or time is an editor.

**Submissions**

Articles, Essays, Poetry, Graphic Materials, Announcements, Poetry, Fiction, Photographs, Surveys, Small Items of Interest, etc.

We welcome all contributions from students, faculty, alumni, and staff. Pieces may be submitted at any of the meetings, or mailed to:

*The North Avenue Review*  
GT Campus Mail  
P.O. Box 50271  
Atlanta, GA 30332

Please include your real name, p.o. box, and phone number on all submissions.

**Letters**

All letters are welcome. Your letter will not be edited, so submit it as you want it to be printed. You may request that your name be withheld from the letter, but we must know who you are.

**Articles**

All articles must be saved on a Macintosh 3.5" disk because we will use your disk to extract your article to layout. Articles must be typed in Microsoft Word or WordPerfect in Times font, 10 points size. We will not type your article for you. Please do not use any tabs or indentations; just leave a space between paragraphs. Please spellcheck your document. Facts are important, and please quote your sources. Be prepared to rewrite.

**Creative writing**

The art section, called fishrap, is dedicated to stories, poetry, and any other forms of art you can think of. Long poems and short stories must be saved onto disk following the criteria for article submissions.

**Graphics**

The *Review* can always use graphics. We encourage writers to submit graphics to compliment their pieces.

**Editing process**

At the deadline meeting, all submissions are put out for group review. The editors then read everything, offering anonymous, written, constructive criticism and suggestions. If an editor feels that a particular submission is unnecessarily inflammatory, he/she can bring the piece to the attention of the other editors in order to discuss the submission. A submission will be excluded from the *Review* with a 3/4 vote against printing it.

It is strongly encouraged that you attend the meetings to defend your piece during group review. Rewrites are usually due two days after deadline.
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The North Avenue Review, affectionately known as NAR to the contributors, is scheduled to be published only once more during summer quarter. The open forum that the NAR represents has never come about. A diversity of opinions was expressed on a host of memorable topics from race, gender, the environment, war and many others yet the viewpoint of conservatives was not expressed for a large part. The NAR was simply never able to bring in sufficient numbers of conservatives who wished to write for us. NAR died due to the apathy of straight white males.

Cover art:

Jean-Claude Suares  
Is Not the Typewriter Mighter than the Gun? (1973)
Techwood Diary

by Torrence N. Fike

The Techwood Diary is my experience in the Techwood projects translated to paper. I use the word Techwood to refer to the Techwood, Clark-Howell, and Herndon Homes projects collectively. I think this is a fair consolidation, since it's difficult for the unfamiliar traveler to tell when he has left one and entered another. The projects are right on our doorstep, yet all many Tech students know about them is their intrinsic danger to the unarmed. This idea is somewhat accurate, but there is much more to learn once you cross the boundary.

I hope you'll cross the boundary with me in the safety of your living-room. Maybe you'll learn something. Maybe it will raise you a little bit above the pseudo-reality of campus life. At worst, maybe you'll pick up some survival tips for when your car breaks down on Luckie Street someday.

Forward to The Miami Red Story

The setting is the Techwood projects. The Techwood Projects were the first government housing projects in the country, constructed by the WPA in 1939. The projects are located across the street from Georgia Tech. In fact, Techwood dorm is actually on the same side of the street as the projects. Every couple years a Georgia Tech student is shot in this general vicinity. In the words of City Councilman Michael Lomax, the residents of Techwood dorm are “lulled to sleep at night by the sounds of automatic gunfire.” In the heart of this community is a little library, called Anne Wallace. It is a branch of the Fulton County Library System. This is where I go to tutor children from the area. Besides this, I also administer their IBM PC clone. I was on my way to the library on Thursday, February 22, 1990, to install some new software I wrote for their computer. My trip to the library turned out to be more eventful than I had anticipated.

The quotes in The Miami Red Story are close paraphrases of what was actually said. Since this story was recorded after the fact, some details were lost. The essence has been preserved, though. I have attempted to reproduce the Techwood dialect in Miami Red's quotes. This may be distracting at first, but adds a picturesque local flavor.

The Miami Red Story

It was about 1:00pm, on a mild February day, and I was heading towards the The Anne Wallace Library in the Techwood projects. I was going a couple hours earlier than usual because I wanted to work on the computer before the kids got out of school. I normally tutor, but ever since the library received a computer, I have also been the volunteer system administrator. When I say system administrator, I mean that I wrote a menu program that allows the kids to run programs easily. If I was still working on it after school let out, I knew there would be melancholy nine-year-olds waiting to play Sticky Bear Reading. If all went well there would be no interruption of their
computer time.

To get to the library I take Techwood drive, which passes through campus and into the projects. The first light I come to after North avenue is Merritts street, and taking a right turn there brings me directly to the library parking lot. On this particular day, I caught the green light at Merritts, and was in the midst of my right turn when a group of men started to cross the street. This forced me to stop in mid right turn to allow them to pass. As the last man got across the street, he looked up at me. I looked back at him, and upon eye contact, he started walking towards my car. I have had many dealings with street people (and this he looked like) and am always interested in what they have to say. This guy looked like he, "Man, don't y' git hagh?" I said, "No I don't get high." He seemed disgusted by my answer. After a few moments of silence I began to get nervous. I asked, "What is your name?" He said, "Mah name's Miami Red. What's yours?" I told him, "My name is Torrey." He said, "Well look Tahrry, I'm gonna call ya T. T, take me t' da sto'." I said, "I can't take you to the store Miami Red, I've got to go to the library." More militantly he commanded, "Take me t' th' sto'l!" By this time we were at the library parking lot. There was one spot left, but it was very narrow. As I was attempting to maneuver into it he kept commanding me in progressively more militant tones to take him to the store. I was getting very nervous, and as I was trying to park, I was watching Miami Red at the same time. Before I knew it, I bumped into the car next to me. Luckily I was going so slow that it didn't hurt either of our cars, but after impact, Miami Red cried, "Yo' a crazy whiah! boy! Yo' a crazy whiah! boy!" After this I was so unnerved that I backed up my car and said, "Okay, I'll take you to the store." So he began guiding me deeper and deeper into the projects.

At this point, I could tell that he felt he was in control. As we were driving along, for no apparent reason, he said, "Man, Ah hate dose Chinks man. Ah was in Vietnam, an' Ah hate dose Chinks." In a desperate attempt to make conversation, I asked, "So you dislike Oriental people because of your Vietnam experience?" He replied, "Hey man, dat's mah bizniz man, don mess wid it!" I dropped the subject immediately. After a few minutes, and Miami's continuous under-the-breath mumbling as to how I was a crazy white boy, he said, "Pull ovah." I assumed we had arrived at the store. It's hard to tell the stores from the homes in this area because they are all identical square brick buildings. He pulled out a cigarette, tore off the filter, and lit it up. I waved my no smoking rule, not so much for his present comfort as for my future health. He turned his body so that he was sitting with the passenger door as his backrest, and began his psychopathic tirade.
Red be a bigger problem than speaking the universe into existence. I, of course, waxed this philosophical after the fact.

After he had ranted for a few more minutes, he said, "Take me back to the lib'ry." I'm not sure what prompted this, but I was happy to comply. As we were driving back he said, "Man, de hole projecs have seen me wid you. Man yo' insurbed. Ya know what Ahm sayin' man, yo' insurbed." I replied, "I really appreciate that." He said, "What chu mean yu 'preciate it? Man, you don' kno' what Ahm sayin' man!" I guess I have no idea what he was saying, but never the less, we were arriving at the library, and my saga was soon to end.

When we arrived at the library, he came over to my side of the car and asked if he could have five dollars. Usually I carry no money or credit cards into the projects, but I was slack today and had six bucks on me. He was just asking, but I was intimidated, and I wanted this guy to leave, so I opened my wallet and handed him the five. He saw the one and demanded that, so I gave it to him. He then walked off. Just before he blended into the woodwork I heard him say, "Nex'tirne yur in de projecs, y' come t' that coma an axe fo' me. Evrybady knos Miami Red."

I was really shaken up by this experience. I had been pretty presumptuous when I entered the projects, thinking I was invincible. I learned a valuable object lesson that day. I learned that I shouldn't test God, so I now I lock my doors and avoid eye contact with street ruffians. I faced death, and in a way I lost by fearing it. I'll be ready next time, though, and hopefully next time the occasion will come about under more noble circumstances, and not because I lack street smarts.
Reagan Marries Slut/Bush Cuts Deal
by Paul Philpott

Nancy Reagan is a bitch and a slut, or so charge a contrived assortment of minor socialites in the country's hottest selling book, Nancy Reagan, An Unauthorized Biography by Kitty Kelly. The national press has launched an exhaustive investigation, committing huge chunks of feature copy and editorial space to this titillating pseudo-topic.

The same national press meanwhile ignores an even more shocking charge, one leveled against Nancy's husband and advocated by respected international citizens eager to testify in court: Ronald Reagan, as a 1980 presidential candidate, cut a deal with the Ayatollah Khomeini to hold the 52 American hostages until after the election so as to ensure Jimmy Carter's defeat.

Unlike the inconsequential fodder aimed at Nancy, the allegations against her husband may compel a national crisis: the impeachment of George Bush, who as a Vice Presidential candidate supposedly consummated the hostage deal with his very own handshake—an act of high treason.

And who would add currency to such an outrageous hypothesis? The two adversarial presidents at the time, Jimmy Carter and Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, believe it or not, former aids to Reagan and Carter, a CIA agent who testified in federal court that he witnessed the deal go down, Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd, national columnist Jim Fain, and the PBS documentary hour "Frontline".

These are not your standard glue-sniffing radicals or talk-radio conspiracy nuts. Surely their story warrants more public play than Time and Newsweek's recent cover exposes of Nancy on her back.

To wit: Though we've all forgotten, in 1979, an Iranian revolution replaced a hated despot, the shah Reza Pahlavi, with a beloved despot, the Ayatollah Khomeini. Carter outraged Iran by harboring the fugitive shah, and by freezing billions of dollars of Iranian government funds that the shah had stashed in U.S. banks. Extremist Iranian students seized the American embassy in Tehran and took hostages that they hoped to trade for the shah and his pilfered money.

Carter's presidency crumbled as he failed to secure a concession-free settlement.

Yet Ronald Reagan's 1980 victory was hardly assured going into the November election. Seven days before the ballot, every national opinion poll separated Reagan and Carter by no more than two percentage points, with neither above 50%. Pundits had agreed for months that Reagan would win only so long as Carter didn't get the 52 hostages out of Iran by election day.

The Reagan/Bush camp feared an "October Surprise"—a hostage release just before election day that would certainly rally the the swing voters around the president and carry Jimmy Carter to re-election. They had reason to fear such a surprise. Iraq had just invaded, and Iran was desperate to close the hostage front and the attendant arms embargo which kept western powers from providing military hardware.

The "October Surprise" scenario, as it has come to be called, maintains that the Reagan/Bush camp cut a deal with the Ayatollah: Iran would keep the hostages until after the election, and the resulting Reagan administration would release all Iranian assets and sell Iran as many arms as it wanted on an ongoing basis.

Perhaps Reagan and the Ayatollah didn't cut a deal. But they sure behaved like they did. Within ten minutes of Reagan's inauguration, Iran released the hostages; within two months, the first of an unending secession of American arms and four billion dollars of frozen Iranian assets headed for Iran.

Most people, of course, think that Iran released the hostages because they feared Ronald Reagan. Not true, says Iran's then-president Bani-Sadr. Months before the election, he says, Carter negotiators had finally agreed to release the assets and sell non-lethal military parts, including for example crucial jet tires that had grounded the Iranian air force. A desperate Iran declined the offer even though it would have spared them ever having to deal with the supposedly no-nonsense, trigger-happy Ronald Reagan. Why? Because a sweeter deal was on the table, a deal that the American president knew nothing about.

Bani-Sadr—long since exiled to France for his advocacy of a secular, democratic government—
claims that Reagan's campaign chairman William Casey hammered out the deal in Paris that October. He also says that vice-presidential candidate George Bush flew in to personally consummate the deal.

Former Reagan employees support Bani-Sadr's charge. Former CIA agent Richard Brenneke testified in federal court that he attended Casey's Paris meeting, and was made aware of a subsequent meeting with Bush. Reagan's former aid Barbara Honegger now claims in a new book that indeed Casey and Bush cut the deal in Paris. Reagan's Secretary of State Alexander Haig, when asked about it, neither denies nor affirms the allegations, stating only that an unaccountable U.S. arms pipeline to Iran opened in early 1981. Because the shipments violated explicit U.S. policy, he tried unsuccessfully for years to stop them or at least to explain them.

Some of the most damning "October Surprise" evidence turned up during the "Debate-gate" scandal. You may recall that a congressional investigation was prompted following the revelation that Reagan prepared for the 1980 presidential debates with a copy of Jimmy Carter's very own debate guide and strategy notes stolen from the White House. The congressional subcommittee obtained Reagan/Bush campaign phone logs, diaries, and files. The subcommittee uncovered the existence of a network of for-pay informants and Republican sympathizers operating throughout the White House and CIA. All during the election, this network methodically updated the Reagan/Bush campaign about the hostage situation with classified documents and informal tip-offs. It was that network that provided Reagan with Carter's debate notes.

Anyone who plans to vote in the next presidential election should consider what else the subcommittee found, besides confirmation that the Reagan/Bush team indeed operated under the assumption that victory was theirs only if the hostages weren't free by election day.

In Richard Allen's phone log:
>'Partial release of hostages for parts.'
>'No release of anyone before election. Want to talk to Bush.'

Allen testified before committee that he could recall what none of those hardly-cryptic, highly-memorable entries meant, although he did recognize the handwriting as his own. As more evidence turned up, he was forced to admit that he was indeed approached by Iranians trying to cut a deal, but that he turned them down. He was also forced to admit that the Reagan/Bush camp did in fact monitor events and obtain documents via an informal intelligence network that operated throughout Carter's federal government. He however insisted that the network strictly avoided sabotaging Carter initiatives and stealing sensitive material.

The contents of Ronald Reagan's personal campaign file cast Allen's testimony in a perjurious light. The file contained documents marked "Top Secret—Eyes Only" and "Secret/Sensitive." Somehow, a private citizen campaigning for president accessed in 1980 documents that even today the public is not permitted to read.

Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd has since called for inquiries into the matter. In April of this year, PBS's "Front Line," Cox News Service's Jim Fain, and Columbia University Professor Gary Sick (who served under Carter) each insist that in all likely hood, the "October Surprise" deal went down and deserves close popular scrutiny. Even Jimmy Carter himself lends credence to the speculation.

"We...had reports since late summer 1980," Carter stated in 1989, "About Reagan campaign officials dealing with Iranians concerning delayed release of the American hostages. As you know, former Iranian President Bani-Sadr [has stated] that such an agreement was made involving Bud McFarlane, George Bush, and perhaps Bill Casey. I have trusted...that investigations and historical records would someday let the truth be known."

Ah, the truth.

Maybe the Reagan/Bush team didn't cut a deal. Maybe Bush himself didn't personally extend the handshake that kept our hostages captive for an extra six months. But this much we do know for sure:
Reagan's campaign team did employ dirty tricks of a nature more serious than the Watergate slush funds and wire taps; arms and assets did unexplainably begin flowing from the U.S. to Iran two months after Reagan took office; Iranians did approach the Reagan/Bush team with a delayed-release hostage deal; Iran did release the hostages at a time that denied Carter any credit and that maximized the highly-desired impression of Reagan as the swaggering new sheriff in town; and a growing cast of unignorable personalities do now suggest that such a deal went down.

Clearly our fascination with the notches on Nancy Reagan's purse-strap should be directed towards more consequential matters.
This is a short list of books with my descriptive reviews of them. It is not a complete list of gay literature or even a very thorough one. There's an incredible amount and variety of gay literature available today and continually growing and diversifying, from scifi and murder mysteries to psychology, religion, and humor. To illustrate the diversity of this genre let me mention some books I haven't reviewed here like In the Life, an anthology of black gay male fiction; The Spirit and The Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture, by Walter Williams; Bi Any Other Name, a collection of essays etc. by bisexuals about being bisexual and the trouble relating to non-bi's; various cartoon collections; novels like Dancer from the Dance this list, but these will have to do for now. If I had to pick which of these I thought you must read I'd say Loving Someone Gay, Consenting Adult, and Familiar Faces, Hidden Lives these are the ones which most people (gay or not) will most need and which everyone can get something more from even if they don't need them so desperately, and One Teenager in Ten would make a very good short introduction to what it can be like growing up gay.

Currently two hot areas for gay nonfiction are history and the military or especially the history of gays in the military, so I added four books on this subject to the end of the list, and described as best I can what they are about even though I have not read them yet.

The Well of Loneliness by Radclyffe Hall: The first lesbian novel? Definitely a classic, Hall did a wonderful job of portraying the lifelong oppression all gay people are faced with still today and even the butch/femme and other homophobic stereotyping can't detract much from that accomplishment provided you bear in mind that it is stereotyping.

Consenting Adult by Laura Z. Hobson: A novel about a mother learning that her son is gay by a mother who learned that her son is gay. Wonderful insight into how both the parent and the child come to terms with themselves and each other. (The TV movie with Marlo Thomas as the mother is available on videotape and almost as good as the book.)

Rubyfruit Jungle & In Her Day by Rita Mae Brown: These two lesbian novels by this southern writer are each witty, intelligent, and insightful stories of strong women-loving-women dealing with the world around them. Rubyfruit chronicle's the life and loves of Molly Bolt as she bucks the system and the odds while being true to her self. Day centers on the relationship between a young radical feminist lesbian and her more established middle-aged lover in the early 70's. It faithfully explores both of their viewpoints.

The Quick and Easy Gay Book Review
by Cary McKeown

or Surprising Myself, and collections like Women on Women or Men on Men, and many others. Plus there are gay newspapers and magazines, local or regional ones like Atlanta's Etcetera, Southern Voice, and The News or national ones like Outweek, The Advocate, and Frontiers just to name three I know of.

For these reviews I only chose books I consider great and by the way I think heterosexuals will enjoy and benefit by them just as much as gay people, the term "gay literature" is not synonymous with porn as I suspect many people will assume, and all in all literature is about being human. I can think of several other great books to put on

The North Avenue Review June 1991

The Well of Loneliness by Radclyffe Hall: The first lesbian novel? Definitely a classic, Hall did a wonderful job of portraying the lifelong oppression all gay people are faced with still today and even the butch/femme and other homophobic stereotyping can't detract much from that accomplishment provided you bear in mind that it is stereotyping.

Consenting Adult by Laura Z. Hobson: A novel about a mother learning that her son is gay by a mother who learned that her son is gay. Wonderful insight into how both the parent and the child come to and how they cause each other to grow, presents beautifully crafted views of a variety of diverse individuals and relationships, and offers intelligent insights into the meaning and pitfalls of "movements". (Sudden Death is also a great lesbian-relationship novel, this time between a professor and a pro-tennis player. It deals with the uptight world of pro-sports, the scandal hungry press, and crowning closet cases.) These three a stories in which being gay in today's world is just part of life for many of the characters.

Loving Someone Gay by Don Clark: Best described as everything you
ever wanted to know about being gay, it is an excellent book; I can’t possibly do it justice. For anyone who cares about someone who is gay, anyone who is gay, or anyone who thinks they might be gay, it offers clear insights for anyone about being gay in our society. A true classic!

Gay Plays, the First Collection edited by William M. Hoffman: a collection of several gay plays, the introduction alone informs one immensely about gay theater historically and in modern times (defining it and listing a few dozen other gay plays) and many of the collected plays are excellent entertainment.

One Teenager in Ten edited by Ann Heron: Twenty-seven short pieces on being young and gay by male and female gay youth ranging in age from 15 to 24. (This one and the next both fit in the general category of coming-out stories, so do Behind the Mask and The Dave Kopay Story, there are lots of this kind telling how other people came-out and what it was like, or how to come-out to friends and family, technical descriptions of the ways and reasons people come-out or don’t, and various fictional accounts of the coming-out process, like Consenting Adult. We’re the only group I can think of that have this experience and it’s one of our few common bonds, so coming-out is very important to gay people and to understanding gay people, which is why we have developed a whole category of literature devoted to it.)

Familiar Faces, Hidden Lives by Howard Brown M.D.: An autobiography, its clearly written, fun to read, and it tells the story of being gay in America from the 40s through the 70s. Its thrilling to see how much has changed and flabbergasting to see how little. This book and the man who wrote it were turning points in gay history it is a classic. Anyway the library has a copy and there’s a paperback reprint now, so go read this book, gay people should learn some important history and the importance of not letting others make you ashamed for no reason and the rest of you might learn to stop being so cocky and start respecting others for their worth. (Speakin’ o’ which—one of our USC reps. might learn a little about gay student activists by reading it or at least the chapter titled, ‘Epilogue: The Future’.

Untold Decades, Seven Comedies of Gay Romance by Robert Patrick: Like it says seven plays by Robert Patrick all have been performed and each is set in a different decade from the 1920s to the 1980s. This book is on the list simply because I like it, each story is different from the others, the characters are warm, and the plays are good. I think any gay man will enjoy seeing “our” relationships portrayed realistically and with variety in these stories set in different times, locations, and situations. Reading the preface should convince you to read the plays. Military History, etc. I want to read these, collectively they should give quite a picture.

Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II by Allan Berube: Seems clear enough, military gays in WWII with information from interviews, military records, letters and diaries, etc.

Dress Gray by Lucian Truscott IV: On homosexuality at West Point. I believe it was frowned upon, wasn’t it? Well, I’ll have to go out and find the book sometime and see. (According to a quote by the author, people just disappeared from school suddenly without explanations. This book is a little older than the other three of course they’re 1990 so it probably isn’t that old, just ‘88 or older.)

My Country, My Right to Serve by Mary Ann Humphrey: The personal histories of 42 lesbians and gay men in the armed forces from WWII to the present. According to the blurb it is “a documentation of ongoing, institutionalized oppression, yet, also a tribute to the fortitude, humor and insight of lesbian and gay soldiers.” I’ve read only two excerpts but judging from them I would agree and highly recommend this book.

Gays in Uniform, the Pentagon’s Secret Reports edited by Kate Dyer: This book is a compilation containing all the reports the DOD has commissioned to examine its policy of excluding gays from military service since that policy was officially adopted in 1943, as well as some internal memos and such regarding it. Despite the melodramatic subtitle it sounds like an interesting book especially for the budding gay activist or historian, though I suppose that the reports themselves might be dull reading. From what I’ve gathered it boils down to this: the reports say that the policy is unsupported and ineffective and the memos say either “That’s not what we wanted to hear.” or “There are many well qualified personnel with distinguished service careers, doing their job superbly who you are to locate and discharge immediately if not sooner.”
McDonald's gleaming yellow arches grin as I drive by. I can't resist that Big Mac pheromonic attraction, and I dive inside for some healthy conspicuous consumption. Quick! Off with the bag, off with the Styrofoam container, off with the paper wrapper. Down the chute goes the two-all-beef-patties-special-sauce-lettuce-cheese-pickles-onions-on-a-sesame-seed-bun commodity.

Back to the street: a drive-by looting in my six mile-to-the-gallon Buick. Hey what's that? A sign. A big, bigass billboard telling me, shouting to the world buy this toothpaste and you'll fuck more often. Yeah, I think I need that.

I also need a new watch. A gold one. With little hands inside the big ones that tell me London time. A Rolex. Speaking of time, it's time to get more fuel. $1.74 a gallon?!! Well, that's not too bad, at least for me. After all I'm a Tech graduate. I can afford it. It could be worse you know—I could have died for the gas pumping into my car like the blood out of an Iraqi child's head...

Darting through traffic, I finally arrive at my destination; the modern day town square: the Mall. Only at this town square no one knows anyone. There is little exchange of human information, little real human interaction beyond the salesperson/customer relationship, no significant experience besides the Purchase. All us shoppers are concerned only with our next buying fix, the consumer's dope dependency.

The Purchase reveals its potential with every glance, in every shop, on every sign or advertisement. Anything my sight falls upon attempts to catalyze my need to purchase things into an actual transaction. Everything tells me to buy it. Everything begs for purchase (...and isn't she gorgeous, check out her tits! I'd like to buy her, too...) and I just can't resist. I want, I need, that jacket. I want, I need, that tummy trimmer or miniature Mount Rushmore replica. And if I don't buy whatever it is then my quality of life is decreased, its potential unrealized, and I am unhappy.

Maybe this is what is at the heart of our civilization and its discontents: crass consumerism. Our perceived quality of life is to a large extent dependent on our purchases; and purchases are dependent on how much money we have. An inherent contradiction arises: since no one may buy everything they think they need, they are bound to be unhappy.

The opposite may thus be true for some people: that every purchase, every appeal to buy, actually reduces the quality and value of life. So we must temper our consumerist tendencies. Quality of life may be found only in intangibles; only inside the individual may the starting point for quality life be found (although individuals clearly are greatly dependent on the human and biological community for certain necessities). Robin Williams's character in Dead Poet's Society declares that we must suck the marrow out of life; and life can't be sucked through a dollar bill or a Big Mac container. A more organic form of sucking is needed.

What is needed is community. And the left—broadly defined—offers at least this possibility. Being on the left does not mean Stalinist authoritarianism, the yoke of which was sloughed off by East European popular dissent. Nor should it mean big government. Being on the left does not mean a lifetime of ignoble and unproductive complaint and unhappiness; quite the opposite: the left, for me as a student, as an American, and as a human means not treating people merely as soulless gambling chips in our casino economy. Left thinking means not treating our environment merely as a private playground for industry. Left thinking signifies a deep commitment to democracy and all it entails. Left thinking is fundamentally life-affirming and optimistic about humanity's ability to create a future that does not reinforce alienation, to create a poverty-less future of participatory community where life is indeed worth living. Essentially, left thinking is the political manifestation of human decency.
Black Crooks
by Paul Philpott

White folks around the country grow increasingly disgusted at African Americans and their corrupt politicians. Blacks time and again elected a pig, Marion Barry, to lead the nation’s capital; they rally around Atlanta politicians who pad public payrolls with fat salaries for their lackeys and drain municipal coffers with sweetheart deals for their campaign contributors; they try to nominate for the presidency Jesse Jackson, who for years used a charity (Operation Push) to stuff his bank account and secure government and industrial contracts for friends and relations. The list, whites say, goes on and on.

It seems to them that blacks aren’t fit for the public trust.

As whites scrutinize today’s black politicians, they should remember that these public figures represent the first generation of African Americans to hold office since Reconstruction. That the first generation of black office holders seem inordinately corrupt should surprise no one.

Early this century, the first waves of white immigrants — Irish, Italian, Jewish, Slavic — elected their fellowmen to public office, and fairly cheered as these first generation politicians transformed city cashboxes into personal tills. Their history today reads like a how-to primer for all manner of back-scratching, corner-cutting, surface-skimming, tax-shamming, hoe-pimping, drug-running, back-peddling, side-talking, deal-making and election-fixing. From New York’s Tammany Hall to Mayor Daley’s “machine”, white ethnics applauded and cheered as their leaders plundered public treasuries and subverted democracy.

Then there’s the very peculiar tradition of white Southern political corruption. Prior to the 1970s, white Southern officials staged not a single democratic election, sanctioned lynchings and mutilations, and withheld public funds from a population of tax-payers whom they denied the vote. White citizens hooted and clapped as these terrible men tried to “out-nigger” each other. Some of these criminals still hold office, such as South Carolina’s Strom Thurmond, who rode to the Senate in 1948 on an “anti-lynching” platform, and Virginia’s Robert Byrd, the Senate Majority Leader and former klansman.

Mercifully, we’ve all been spared a first-generation of black politicians who are either as fraudulent as their white antecedents in the North, or as dangerous as those in the South. This moderation is especially surprising given that the very first time African Americans held office — during Reconstruction — their undisputed honesty (they remain about the only American group whose first office holders did not disgrace the democratic process) was rewarded with lynchings, shootings, clubbings, castrations, and human bon-fires.

Not only are today’s black politicians neither as nauseating as their white predecessors, nor as vitriolic as they could reasonably justify, they’re really not any more loathsome than their white contemporaries. For every Marion Barry administration, there’s a Reagan/Bush dynasty that can match him, to say the very least, dollar for dollar, and outrage for outrage.

Ronald Reagan and George Bush, it now seems, as 1980 running mates, cut a deal with the Iranian government to hold the 52 hostages six months longer as to ensure Jimmy Carter’s defeat. During the campaign, they paid moles to steal Carter’s debate notes and classified documents. As president, Reagan consistently opposed protectionist measures against Japanese imports; within months of his leaving office, Japanese business leaders rewarded him with a million dollar speaking fee that was arranged as government business by Reagan’s chief of staff travelling to Japan at public expense. Today, Bush’s inner circle submits lavish, non-itemized expense accounts even as he rails against budget fat. His Treasury Secretary owns substantial holdings in banks who’ve extended enormous loans to the very bankrupt Latin countries that he lobbies foreign aid for (aid that they will use to repay those loans.) Bush’s own son, with no banking experience, was named to the board of directors of a S&L, and signed his name to fraudulent loans that he now says he hadn’t the expertise to understand.

Yet no one therefore dismisses white politicians in general as graceless looters.

Marion Barry and other miscreants, even Reagan and Bush, and certainly Thurmond and Byrd, belong in prison. But contemporary African American politicians in general deserve no more of our scorn than their European American counterparts.
The Aliens Around Us

by Jeffrey K. Hostetler

After drinking a few beers with my brothers on the front porch, staring at the faint stars intimidated by the Atlanta skyline, conversation tends to get deep. More often than not, depending on the amounts imbibed, the question arises, "I wonder if there's intelligent life out there?"

I too have uttered this question, more or less in that form, wondering if intelligent life exists elsewhere in the universe. But after watching The Abyss for the umteenth time, a perplexing idea sent me into an all too contemplative mood in the middle of my English class.

In the above mentioned movie, a super-intelligent race of ray-like creatures has resided at the bottom of the ocean for eons, and when it finally meets the human race (interestingly enough, they meet a nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine), the alien race's intentions are immediately misunderstood and a Navy Seal team tries to nuke them. The intelligent, alien race professes the technology to control water for mechanical means, sculpting beautiful machines in the same way that humans build ships and planes out of metals. The aliens can also decompress people previously at terminal depths of submersion. (which totally ruins the movie for the people who go to a Superman movie, watch him fly around the world ten times and then say it isn't realistic when he crushes a lump of coal into a diamond, but totally accepted the movie up to that point).

I ask, "Is technology the only indicator of intelligence? Do the conventions of our race, such as tools, communication, and worldly achievements signify legitimate evidence on which to judge other potential forms of intelligence?"

At a technical school such as Georgia Tech, the average student may say, "Hell yes technology is the best indicator of intelligence! Anybody knows that aliens come from galaxies far, far away and would be able to conquer the principles of physics such as the speed of light. They'll have photon torpedoes and protective shields - I watch Star Trek!"

But what if technology isn't the basis of intelligence? As humans, we differentiate ourselves from the rest of the animal kingdom (in an evolutionary sense) by our ability to choose with whom we have sex and our ability to use tools. The sex thing is irrelevant, because everybody knows that Tech students are hard up, but tools are technology. This article was written on a computer. We put satellites into space so we can watch MTV. We use condoms to keep those hard up Tech students from contracting unwanted members of the animal kingdom.

But primates also use tools. Birds make nests from twigs, string, and mud; we build Astrodomes. Otters break open oysters with stones; we open crabs with mallets. Vultures drop bones onto boulders to break them open for the tasty marrow entrapped inside; we drop dynamite into tunnels to expose rare elements. Monkeys, especially chimpanzees (the species most like our own in both a mental and physical aspect), have been documented using sticks and rocks to defend themselves which opens another realm of our "intelligence."

Will we compare our "Big Guns and Missiles" with the aliens when and if they come? Humans are an incredibly violent species, but look at what our ancestors had to deal with (in an evolutionary sense, of course): lions and tigers and bears, oh my. Nearly all of our modern advances have been at the expense of human life. It's a fact that wartime, or preparation for it, produces the most innovative inventions. The space race was started out of fear of the Soviets being able to drop nuclear weapons on the Unites States "like children dropping stones from an overpass." It's true that space-age products have improved our standard of living, but one must look at the source of those advances - they are by-products of initially military interests.

Perhaps the aliens will not be war-like. It's no wonder that they haven't made contact, if they truly have visited the Earth. If they aren't militarily capable of destroying us, we'd capture them, run a million tests on them, and dissect them. As a visiting alien, I sure as hell wouldn't stand for that - especially from a barbarian race of advanced, hairless monkeys.

But let's suppose that technology has nothing to do with intelligence. Humans have always had the desire
to survive, reach out, explore, conquer, destroy, and reap; and we've done this more and more efficiently with our ever advancing tools. What's to say that what we define as intelligence isn't merely a banal instinct - the instinct to survive? Now that we've conquered our own planet, reaped (raped) it of its natural resources, and pushed even farther beyond it, into space, what have we overlooked in our hurry to make sure that we are "safe" from anything that might go bump in the night, "safe" from disease, "safe" from invasion and each other, "safe" from hunger?

The Abyss takes place almost entirely under water, in the ocean. We have scoured the planet, and save for a few weird sightings of Bigfoot, compiled tons of information in expensive computers to help us recognize signs of intelligence and found no "intelligent" life on the land. But what about the seas?

Whales are, by far, the most intelligent animals in the sea. Their cooperation with divers, trainers, the military, and each other cannot be overlooked, yet we condemn them as inferior because they do not build skyscrapers, use tools, grow their own food, pollute their atmosphere, kill each other in messy wars, or screw each other over for a few points on the stock market.

Communication is a tool that we as humans rely on for survival. We claim it to be one of our greatest differentiating assets, but birds communicate through speech, as well as wolves, elephants, bats, and primates, to name just a few. The complexity of these languages varies from instinctive grunts and expressions to distinct, simplified codes, but too many of the languages are beyond our understanding to be dismissed as random hoots and hollers. All of the above mentioned means of communication are in the form of sound propagated through the air. As a matter of fact, sound propagates better through water, and it has been known for some time that whales have a specific, complicated language through which they communicate, but its specifics aren't important.

Whales, like all mammals, are afraid of drowning. It is theorized that when a sick whale panics, it heads for shore, just as we would if faced with the prospect of drowning. Whales once lived on the land and through evolution have adapted to a life in the seas, but they die when out of the water for extended periods of time. So why do entire pods of whales follow a sick member of the pod into hazardous waters, even when that whale is terminally ill? These pods often become beached and die.*

We as humans may perceive this as ignorant self-sacrifice, but there is a point here that most of us miss: those whales could have left that sick whale alone to die, but instead they accompany it to its death. Whales care for each other. Sometimes this is more than can be said for the human race.

So where does this leave us? In the series of books under the title, A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, mice are satirically portrayed as the most intelligent form of life on Earth. As humans believe that they are putting the mice through mazes, testing their intelligence, the mice, who have the ability to travel interdimensionally, are in turn testing the human research scientists. It's an interesting idea based on perceptual relativity (big words) that makes our advanced scientific methods seem stone aged and farcical.

At each end of the intelligence spectrum, all findings and conclusions remain dishearteningly relative. It's all too easy for humans to claim to be the most intelligent form of life in the universe, but one needs only to look behind the scenes of our politics, business, and social behavior to doubt that claim. If a superior race should descend from the skies, how would we react? Would we act with the demeanor and intelligence on which we brag? How would the religions of the world react? Most of them already believe that we were created in the image of God. Pondering these questions can be both a healthy and a dangerous act.¹

I cringe when I hear of our race exploding nuclear weapons, killing each other for luxuries, and wiping out entire species of organisms for farm land or hair-care products. I believe that there is still much to be learned and even more to be understood about our planet, and I would hope that the masses in a democratic society or the influential minorities in an authoritarian society think about the implications of their actions. They affect us all.

When the aliens land or the whales get really pissed off, I hope that we'll be honorable enough to lay down our weapons and tools and be able to share the contents of our minds.

¹ Whale information redounded from the National Geographic Documentary Series.

¹ This type of thought provoking discussion often brings me to the chinks of religious faith, but I must confess, I don't know everything, nor do I claim to know much about anything. I mostly know what I see and perceive, and I have a great interest in how we as humans, Americans, and intelligent, reasoning beings live in our world. If anything we present a complicated, often exasperating form of life.
Accepting or Disregarding a Religious Philosophy

by Rafael E. Hidalgo

Atheists and religious individuals are generally not idealistically compatible with each other. The atheist accuses religions of restricting independent thought, while religious individuals shun atheists for their disbelief on the existence of an omnipotent creator. The essential difference between these two viewpoints, though, lies not in their beliefs, but in how they deal with new ideas. In other words, the mind of the atheist is structured to deal with each new idea and experience in a manner much different to that of the religiously inclined. Their particular structures of thought must therefore be understood if an individual is to decide which path to follow. This knowledge would also help towards the mutual understanding between these two contrasting viewpoints.

As an explanation example, consider the following parallelism between shadows and emotions. The shadows that solid objects generate due to the displacement of incident light serve as proof of their dimensional existence. In a similar manner, the emotions generated in the mind by the experience of external ideas give evidence of a person's conscious existence. Thus, by comparing a solid object exposed to incident light with the mind experiencing external ideas, the interpretation of ideas by the human mind can be paralleled with the displacement of light by a given configuration of solid objects. This paradigm can be develop further by comparing an established philosophy, such as a religion, with a dominating light source. For example, a person who faithfully follows the teachings of Buddhism would be paralleled by an object that produces one single, clear shadow due to the presence of one main light source (i.e. Buddhism). This functional model can now be used to contrast the mind of the atheist with that of the religious individual.

To compare both ideologies, let's consider the consequences of accepting or disregarding a religious philosophy. Referring to the parallel model, faithfully following a religion is represented by a group of solids (i.e. ideals within the individual mind) exposed to one main light source (i.e. a religious philosophy). The advantage of such a limited exposure is focused thought, but all their sides will be exposed by the multiple light sources. This implies that the atheist's thoughts are more informative, even though they are diffused by the multiple sources of external ideas. This clarity of meaning experienced by the atheists can be exemplified further by considering the overall landscape of their ideas.

Consider a bunch on solid objects grouped together; this represents the mind or idea landscape of an individual. If this bunch is exposed to one light source, each object in the group will generate an independent, diverging shadow. In other words, the thoughts of the religious individual will naturally diverge from any conclusions. On the other hand, consider this same bunch of objects to be surrounded by multiple light sources. Each object will generate multiple shadows that will eventually diffuse with others. The result is an overlapping of shadows from different objects. This overlapping can be considered to represent a contrasting of ideas that will naturally lead the individual to informative conclusions. Therefore, the lack of a

In contrast, the thoughts of the atheist have no guidelines to follow. Consider a group of objects exposed to multiple sources of light. Each solid generates multiple superimposed shadows; this results in an unclear perspective of the dimensional qualities of the object. Similarly, the atheist's thoughts are exposed to so many different viewpoints that the possibility of discerning any coherence behind all these external ideas is very low. This is the main drawback of the atheists. The natural advantage, though, is the increased amount of information to which they are subsequently exposed. For example, the objects in such a situation might not generate one clear shadow, but all their sides will be exposed by the multiple light sources. This implies that the atheist's thoughts are more informative, even though they are diffused by the multiple sources of external ideas. This clarity of meaning experienced by the atheists can be exemplified further by considering the overall landscape of their ideas.

Just like the solids that generate one clear shadow, the religious individual's thoughts are always clear. Religion offers stability and direction to the thinking process. The consequent drawback, though, is that such a philosophy guides thoughts to such an extreme that it limits independent thought. Referring again to the model, this idea is represented by the fact that a dominating light source will expose only one side of the solids. Thus, all thoughts are directed and clear, but incomplete. 

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religious philosophy allows the individual to experience a clarity of meaning hard to experience otherwise due to the lack of contrasting ideas. These observations are very helpful in reaching several conclusions about the need of accepting or disregarding a religious philosophy.

The principal reason why most individuals embrace a religion is the security feeling it represents. Not only do religions provide mental stability, but they project this stability into the future. In other words, religions provide the individual with a predetermined ideal path through the years in exchange for faith. The problem lies in the implications of faithful worship. It means not only believing everything taught by the religion, but usually shunning anything it disapproves of. Therefore, as a trade-off for mental peace, the individual sacrifices expanding his knowledge beyond those ideas encompassed by his/her particular religious philosophy. In contrast, the reasons behind the decision to be an atheist are very different from those just discussed for the religious individual.

The choice of the atheist is one based on a craving for knowledge. As was previously discussed, the disregard of a religious philosophy allows the individual to explore many varied sources of ideas. Because of this craving, though, atheism in frequently associated with egocentrism. The atheist, like everyone, is constantly searching for something to believe in. By disregarding religion, this search for inspiration will usually turn inwards, towards the self. Thus, the misinterpreted selfishness of which atheist are accused is nothing but a natural search for inspiration. There is one main advantage for the atheists, though. By taking the risk of not following a religion, they are free to find their own path. Thus, as a trade-off for knowledge, the atheist sacrifices the mental security offered by religions.

In conclusion, there are advantages to both accepting and disregarding a religious philosophy. The choice is simple: accept the stability offered by religion, or risk it for the sake of increased understanding. The division does not have to be as clear as that, though. The trick lies in gaining understanding of the implications of both choices before selecting either one. If both alternatives are properly considered, once the decision is made, the individual will remain sympathetic with the other persuasion because he/she will better understand the motivations for following the other path. Thus, choosing a certain path will stop implicating the rejection of the other.
Initiative

I left without saying hello.
It's not my fault.
My throat was clogged
with societal silence.
Right?
Of course,
Easy is good.
I'm a comet,
You're a planet.
I'm only nearby for a while.
You see me when I come in
to loop the sun,
and then again
when I'm on my way out.
It's cold out there, y'know,
way away from the sun.
Freezes you down to your soul.
It's not my fault.
Grab me before I'm gone, or wait
Until I'm back again.
It's up to you.
Right?
It's not my fault.
You're the one doing homework.
It's not my fault.

-b.s.
LUNACY
The thoughts of a person
who truly wonders if he is
insane

a collection of
poems and prose

by Hiram Horton Hanthrope

Pissed Off
(and not willing to do anything about it)

Today, I am pissed off. I’m not sure why, there
is no valid reason: I’m just pissed off. I told my friend that
I felt this way, and he said How can you be upset on such
a nice, warm, sunny day? I told him it was a shitty day!
Besides, the weather is absolutely meaningless when one
is in such a mood. How clueless could he be to make a
stupid comment like that, but I knew he understood; he
just didn’t want to let me spoil his day, for which I’m glad
for him, I guess.

It really isn’t safe for me to drive today. I hear
brakes squealing and people swearing at me over their
horn blasts. Fuck them! They should know better than to
get near me when I’m in this mood. It doesn’t matter that
it was my fault, I just don’t care anymore.

My friend also mentioned that I should be
thankful just to be alive. Yah, Right! What kind of life
do I have? Even if I did enjoy life, who the hell am I
supposed to thank for it?

I think I know why I’m in this mood, it’s a girl.
Isn’t it always? (No offense ladies, but you must feel the
same way about us guys sometimes, too) I find her
attractive, and I think she and I would be great together.
But I’m sure she has absolutely no interest in me, after all,
she’s a senior and I’m a sophomore, but what’s a few
years between us, besides the fact that she doesn’t even
know who I am. Sure, maybe I should try and ask her out,
that’s what everyone tells me. But I don’t see them
practicing what they preach. The chances of me asking
her out are probably less than the chances of you winning
the Florida lottery without a ticket. My life would be a
hell of a lot easier if she would just ask me out. Do women
actually ever do such things? Even if they did, it would
never happen for me! I have absolutely no self-confidence.
Don’t you realize that’s why I’m pissed off in the first
place?

H.H.H.

The Truth Will Out
(another aspect of being pissed off)

How many people have never been on a
date with a member of the opposite sex? Please
tell me I’m not the only one, and don’t assume
I’m homosexual. (No offense to the homosexual
community, I believe you have the right to have
feelings for someone of the same sex, I just
don’t share these feelings.) I did try to get a date
in high school, once. Of course, I failed
miserably! Those kinds of results can sure put
a damper on any future attempts. My record is
now 0 for 1. If I knew I could change this to 1
for 2, I might try; but then the prospect of being
0 for 2 just destroys all confidence. How does
one overcome such a deficit? I would probably
be a bachelor for the rest of my life if I failed
twice. I hope some of these feelings actually
ring home to you, I hate to think I’m all alone.
(Do also pity you if your life is as miserable as
mine.) Alone is definitely not what I want to be.
I should know, I’ve experienced it for 19 years,
and I’ve hated every bit of it. I will admit, it is
my fault that I can’t get a date. I have absolutely
no self-confidence when it comes to women. I
have this petty infatuation for a certain gal who
I am too afraid to ask out. “Infatuation” is the
perfect description here, because I think she is
absolutely perfect and truly believe she does not
share these feelings about me. In fact, I doubt
she even knows who I am, or cares for that
matter! (I told you I have no self-confidence.)
Sure, maybe if I were to ask her out I would
know all the answers to my questions and self
doubts. That’s probably exactly why I haven’t
done it yet. I use the word “yet” because I still
have an inner desire to know these answers,
even though I don’t want to know them. I hate
that! I wish she would walk up to me and tell me
that I am a total jerk, then I wouldn’t care
anymore. I never get what I want.

H.H.H.

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I once was told
That the only thing I could
Be sure of
Was my own existence.
That it was perfectly
Reasonable
To assume all others and all events
Are a figment of my imagination.
I know this to not be true!
For if all things around me
Were created within my mind,
Surely I would be happy.
Why would I surround myself
With a sea of people who do not
Make me happy?
Why would I imagine an environment
As dreary as its name,
"Tech"?
Why would my life be a constant
Struggle to define myself for myself?
Only if I could take my imagination,
And turn it into reality....

H.H.H.

My Feet Are Not Dead

Why are my feet so ghostly white?
My legs are dark, even somewhat red
And my arms and hands show a reasonable tan.
For all the sun I get,
I cannot alter the hue of those ghastly, ghostly feet.

Maybe it's because I'm always wearing shoes?
Ah, but this reason is too simple!
That whiteness is death, my feet represent
a part of me that is dead.
This part of me paled, lacking the blood of life
And stank the stench that makes one vomit.

Yes part of me is dead!
But I know CPR
And tomorrow I
shall revive it.
For tomorrow I shall wear no shoes.
And all shall stare in awe!

H.H.H.

Know It All: Know Nothing

I must say more, for I have so much more to say. Those who speak Greek would refer to me as a "wise fool." For although I know much, truly I know but nothing. After all that I have been taught, can I say I have learned anything? Am I now able to give answers to the questions of the world? Will I now pass the test of life? Will my existence and my deeds ever be of any consequence to others but myself? No, No, No, Maybe! Maybe, just maybe, I can enlighten others with the knowledge that they, too, will never be enlightened. Knowing this, they will know all there is to know.

H.H.H.
I can't tell for sure.
My initial doubts were absconded,
But as time wore on,
New doubts arose.

Now I question myself:
DOES IT REALLY MATTER?
I set off in search of
fulfillment of ancient, forgotten dreams.

It wouldn't have mattered to me
Had things gone as planned.
You were just an object in the plan.
You weren't supposed to come to life.

So now I find myself
Looking to others for the void
Hidden within myself.
So, what about substance?

-b.s.  5/13/90

I turn to you
with bubbling gagging pleas
burning the lining in my throat
pouring from my sockets
in foamy white poison
I lift my eyes to you
showing reealined rims
showing sleepless hours
revealing my insecurities
I spread them around you
like yardsale trinkets
I watch you
run your fingers over them
appraising them
as I stand behind the tree
peering over roots
around limbs
and peeling, bug-filled bark
I see you noticing
my humming throat
then I hear it too
and I wonder
can you explain to me
the meaning of my tone
the meaning of the sale
the sale of my parts
but you turn
you turn your eyes and hands
to the scattered wares
fingering them once again
with the clumsy hands
of a bored consumer
as I cringe
sweating sadness
and restless hope
wondering
daring to wonder
do you ignore me
or are you thinking
searching
for me there?

4/23/91
Pastor Williams walked gracefully through the church’s dimly lit halls, his loose fitting slacks swishing. The sterile stone floors and cream colored walls made the church look like a school, but the elegant decorations and woodwork were breathtaking in the main gathering room, a maximum capacity facility capable of seating fifteen hundred worshipers.

Williams had come to the Newgate Forest subdivision ten years ago when it was not yet completed. The church had grown from a small congregation dwarfed by their surroundings to an overflowing mass of worshipers which required three Sunday masses and a Saturday mass in order to file them all through so that their souls would be saved for another week of sin.

Newgate Forest was neither a rich neighborhood, nor did it cater to the poor. This suburban, pre-planned housing development had made several builders very rich and given Texas one of its most successful public school systems. The high school, middle school, elementary school, and kindergarten were all located in a centralized location, the other feeder schools residing on the fringes of Newgate’s sprawling borders. It was a model of planned progress. The pastor’s brother, Vincent, had also started up a church in a similar situation created by the same contractors, but it was in the first stages of development, consisting only of forty completed homes. Williams looked forward to its success, though; hundreds of homes were in the works, and Vincent’s church was growing.

Pastor Williams pushed the cracked front doors closed against the bitter cold and biting wind outside. It was Christmas Eve. For eight years Williams had kept his doors open on Christmas Eve and every year was pleased to find that a pastor’s presence was always necessary. Even though Newgate Forest was a model community, functioning like some well oiled American machine: Christmas decorations contests, capacity crowds at basketball games, Easter Egg hunts, beautiful prom night gatherings, monstrous Fourth of July parades and fireworks displays, community-wide Labor Day block parties, unmatched football game attendance, and a Halloween night that lived in youngsters’ minds forever, not to mention a PTA, homeowners association, Rotary Club, and Women’s Club that pulled the several hundred home community together weekly; Newgate was not without its common family problems: teen suicide, drug abuse tearing families apart, minor crime, death, depression,
broken hearts, and general civil disobedience.

On Christmas Eve especially, these problems seemed to seep up from the ordinarily sane woodwork of family holidays and wander their way into the church, crying, flushed, confused and broken. The pastor had just driven a balding man in his late forties home after he had stumbled into the church in tears, crying for his lost son. The boy had run-away three weeks ago and not returned. The police had had no success in finding him. Jim Brantley's son had been a high school dropout, a dope head, and a general nuisance to the community - until December eighth when he didn't return home after walking to the near by mall to see a dollar movie with his girlfriend. Josh, the boy in question, had lost his driver's license two months before on DUI and MIP charges. He was stopped by a constable and busted for having bad breath and an empty beer can in the front seat of his Mustang.

If there was anything Pastor Williams disliked it was Newgate Forest's constables. Their inflexible temperament never worked to a teenager's advantage, and in Josh's case, this rang true. So Josh had hoofed it to his girlfriend's house and then to the movie. Then the fireworks started even before the cartoon was finished. Josh was reported as having slapped the girl in the theater, causing her to flee in tears, and then left out the fire exit at the back of the theater. The police had checked up on this story, the last time that Josh was seen by human eyes, and told the father who told Pastor Williams.

"I'll have to do something about those constables," Williams thought aloud, staring out the front window next to the doors. It was raining lightly, but the wind and intense cold made it almost unbearable to stay outside for any extended period of time.

Williams turned around and walked toward the auditorium's double doors. The sound of shoes slapping through puddles made the pastor turn around. A boy of sixteen burst through the front doors, bringing a gust of freezing wind and moisture with him. His breath rattled and wheezed from between white lips.

"Whoah, young man. What's the-.

The boy's eyes were wild with fear. Panic had taken control of his mind, but his sense had remained long enough to get him in the direction of the church.

"Help me," the boy whined, staring out the front window, trying to penetrate the darkness. The pastor watched the boy's face intently, seeing the youth and terror there, feeling the magic of that combination. "It's coming - it's coming for me!"

"Now calm down, young man," Williams said smoothly, taking the boy's shoulder and leading him into the auditorium. The boy was shaking uncontrollably; icy droplets of water ran from his soaked hair and dripped from his shirt. He wore no coat.

"Awfully chilly out. Where's your coat?" the pastor asked in vain. The boy merely looked around the familiar church, peering behind every pew and into every shadow.
"Young man, you’re going to have to tell me your name before I can help you."

The boy’s blue eyes met William’s dark brown ones, and his tongue loosed.

"Matt… Matt Wilkes."

"Now, Matt, from whom are you running on such a dreadful night? You should be home with your family."

Williams could see the boy slipping away from him again. He was regaining his body heat, and his hands had stopped trembling, but his eyes still searched for a way out, an emergency exit for an unseen emergency.

"You do live in Newgate, don’t you?"

The boy nodded, relaxing a little. He and the pastor were standing half way down the center aisle to the main altar. Williams could smell the fear on the boy. He could also smell the irritating presence of stale cigarette smoke. Looking into his earmarked family files, Williams tried to remember the Wilkes family. Soon it came to him: father of forty-three, no mother – killed in a drunk driving accident, not her fault, sister of eighteen, lived in the East Section, attended church regularly – Sunday service, second.

"Does your father know where you are?" Williams asked.

Matt shook his head; his big blue eyes looked as delicate as the day he was born.

"Does your sister know?"

Again Matt shook his head, but very slowly.

"Hmmm?"

"Well, she knows that I was in the bayou . . ."

"What were you doing in the bayou?" Williams asked, picturing the drainage system’s equilateral walls and tunnels, each ravine twenty feet deep. It was a hang-out for playful youngsters and, unfortunately, the rebellious teenagers who had gotten into drugs and found a safe place to stash their dope and pills and other paraphernalia.

"Nuthin’.

Williams winked at the boy and said, "Come now, you can tell me. I won’t tell your father."

"Well… I was smokin’. My dad and me were fightin’. He hit me, and I ran out. Th-th-then it came!" The boy’s eyes had gone back to their glazed, wiry state, dancing around in their sockets.

Williams could feel the boy’s heat, now. It came off of his young body in healthy waves. His breath, though, still wheezed, evidence that smoking was taking its toll. Williams pitied the youth who ruined their health and minds. They were useless baggage on humankind’s brilliant tour. Such unhealthy cattle needed to be slaughtered. When so many worked so hard to achieve goals high above their peers’, their struggles should not be devalued and held back by so many worthless stragglers, sponges on society, leeches on the body of humanity.

"Go sit on the front pew and prey, young man. I’ll call your father. He’ll be relieved to hear from you – you could have frozen to death outside!"

Matt wandered forward and followed William’s orders. The pastor walked briskly to the front door and awaited the
arrival of the other.

It was waiting outside, looking in the front window. It knew the boy’s whereabouts, but was hesitant to enter the church’s respected and hallowed halls. The pastor opened the front door and motioned for the creature to enter. Even after the doors were closed, a cold draft came from the creature’s direction.

“The boy is near the altar. He is full of warmth,” the pastor said, looking into the creature’s bloodshot, yellow eyes.

It could be easily mistaken for a man: it moved with a human’s signature gate and wore a man’s clothing and trench coat, but one look at its face would tell the truth. It looked past the pastor, staring at the crack of light in the auditorium’s double doors.

Williams slapped the creature to get its attention. Its skin was ice cold and firm, and its eyes burned with an intensity found only in the greatest of predators: the reddish brown ovals seemed to glow in the dimly lit hall, but it was only a trick of reflected light, like a cat’s or dog’s or deer’s eyes. They enhanced its night vision in the same manner.

Now those eyes scowled at the pastor, and it hissed like a cat, revealing long, pointed teeth where sane, flat teeth should have been. They also looked feline, carefully adapted to tearing flesh, especially that of the throat.

Williams shook the creature, speaking in a rasping voice into its ear. The creature’s attention, despite its origin in great intelligence, was incredibly hard to hold. Like a cat, its mind worked a simple equation of chase. Little could distract it from its goal.

“The boy is warm and calm. You are cold as the night, half dead, and hungry. Feed my son. Feed.” Williams let go of the creature, releasing his grasp on its bony, but powerful shoulders.

The creature glided to the doors, moving with a grace lost by the human race eons ago. Its yellowed, gaunt body was a tangle of tension and strength. Long hands grasped the auditorium’s door handles, and curling fingernails, formerly talons, clicked wickedly against the brass. It took one last look at the pastor, hissing in triumph, revealing a thin, white tongue that flopped hungrily in that pernicious maw. And it slid into the auditorium silently. The doors closed on themselves with a double click. Seconds later there was a girlish scream, a slurp and wet tear of ripping flesh, and the sound of feet being dragged effortlessly along thick carpeting.

Williams walked back down the dim hall toward his office. Again the pastor’s slacks swished around its gaunt legs.

“Constables,” it mumbled, gracefully striding down the hall in a thoughtful trance. It stopped in front of a large mirror that had been donated by a now wealthy young boy whom Williams had helped get into Yale some years back. My how Williams had loved that boy. Today he was a successful corporate lawyer in New York City, and the mirror was one of the pastor’s favorite donations.

“If only more human children were as productive,” it sighed, winking in the mirror, admiring the way that its eyes reflected the dim lighting—like cat’s.
She remembered hating the visits to Aunt Vera's house on the hill. Her mother would force her to go, not physically, but through the art of manipulation. She would look down on Clara disapprovingly, her brown eyes radiating golden shards of blame into Clara's pale blue ones until the girl felt too guilty not to go on the monthly and sometimes weekly trek to the old woman's dark, thickly decorated house. They would trudge up the mountainside driveway, lifting their skirts high to keep them from dragging in the red mud. They couldn't drive up the driveway, ironically, because it was so deeply rutted and perpetually quicksandlike, even during the summer droughts, that no car or truck or even four wheel drive jeep with chained tires could manage the ascent.

As far as Clara knew, the old woman had never left her hill. Perhaps she was too feeble to walk down the treacherous driveway. She had no reason to leave, anyway, because she grew her own vegetables in the small but fruitful garden behind her house. Squash, green beans, tomatoes, and even a few corn stalks sprouted alongside parsley, catnip, sage, and many more mysterious herbs which Clara did not recognize. Once she had ventured to ask the shrunken old woman about the herbs and had regretted it. Aunt Vera knew numerous uses for each herb and she recited them all to the fidgeting Clara, her bright marbled blue eyes reflecting the late afternoon sun like a placid lake. Clara had not been able to listen to the old woman's explanations because she was hypnotized by those intriguing eyes. In them, green algae swayed and sequined fish flashed their scales flirtatiously. Aunt Vera's feeble voice could not compete with the life in her eyes. Instead, it faded to background noise, blending with the distant croaking of the bullfrogs and the clucking and fussing of the geese and guinea hens that pecked at the dirt in the driveway and chased each other like ill-mannered children when one of them discovered a grasshopper or a crunchy beetle.

Clara hated those birds. The growling, hissing geese and the stupid, gadding guinea hens that always greeted her and her mother as they ascended the boot-sucking driveway were the worst part of the visits. They would hobble towards her and her mother, clucking and whining like spoiled children.

Sometimes, for no apparent reason, one of the geese would gurgle or squawk as if someone had called it a dirty name and lunged at Clara or her mother, usually at Clara, with its sharp beak open like scissors, ready to slice an ankle or at least ruin a good skirt. At first, Clara would scream and hide behind her mother when one of the geese had a fit like that, but she learned that they were as easily scared as she was and she began reacting with angry words and flapping arms. Once when she ran at an offending goose in this manner, she caught a glimpse of herself as if from the outside and she felt a horrible melting sensation in the core of her belly. She was acting just like one of those ridiculous geese, she realized. She felt disgusted with herself. She said something about it to her mother, who shrugged and said, "That's the only language they understand, I guess."

"I guess," Clara agreed reluctantly as she picked up a sparkling piece of fool's gold and tossed it at the hissing goose, "I hate these stupid geese!"

The guinea hens never tried to attack Clara. They were too silly. They couldn't even walk straight. The clucking, murmuring birds walked around with their beaks hanging open, just like that retarded boy in Clara's class at school who never closed his mouth and drooled on his misused (in Clara's opinion) notebooks. The guinea hens wandered around in circular patterns, unable to break from their winding and rewinding, like a tape player with only two buttons and no PLAY or EJECT. Their circles and figure eights sometimes widened and shifted to other parts of the yard, but the brainless birds never went far and they never broke from their patterns. They ran into trees and walls and sometimes they even collided with the legs of a goat or the milkcow. Once when Clara had commented to her mother about the ignorance of the birds, her mother told her that when it rained the hens would stand out in it with their necks tilted back and their beaks open and some would drown. Clara could picture the dumb birds drowning themselves in the rain and she wished she could see it because she would laugh really hard.

Clara wasn't sure if she hated the geese or the guinea hens worse. She did know, however, that she hated Aunt Vera more than anything that lived in her yard. She hated entering that dark, stagnant-aired...
I coughed, the sun heartbeat. I was watching the white cats, green interest. Aaron!

I learned to sulk continually. Soon she did it unconsciously. She began to sulk even when she was having fun, even when she wasn't at Aunt Vera's.

Aunt Vera never commented about Clara's sulking, but her mother reprimanded her for it incessantly.

"Your mouth will freeze that way!" She would warn Clara with a frown. Clara would just turn away. She despised her mother for making her go to Aunt Vera's. She just wanted to go home. She felt very insecure at Aunt Vera's, as if someone had taken away all of her belongings and she was left, all alone, standing defenseless on the sharp end of a needle.

Aunt Vera didn't care if she visited, she thought, because they rarely talked or even looked at each other.

She and her mother would knock on the crooked, shrunken door if Aunt Vera was not outside in her garden and she would come to the door a few minutes later, followed by a train of opium-eyed cats, and greet Clara's mother with a toothless smile. She either ignored Clara or asked who she was. Clara's mother would say, "This is my daughter, Clara May." Aunt Vera would gaze into Clara's eyes with her tiny blue ones, which lay cushioned in folds of sagging skin like sapphire marbles dropped in mud. Clara always looked away first. Aunt Vera and her mother would disappear together, usually, leaving Clara to entertain herself. The cats wouldn't play with her, the geese were too mean and the guinea hens too boring, the cow was too placid and the goats were too wild. Clara spent a lot of her time sitting in the yard, wishing she could go home.

"Why do we have to go to Aunt Vera's again?" Clara asked her mother one especially languid day in late August. She'd asked her the same question several times but had never been satisfied with the answer.

"Because she's lonely," Clara's mother told her, her eyes fixed on the rutted mud of the driveway. "She doesn't have a family."

Clara had known that. She had never really thought about why they called her Aunt Vera, however, and it suddenly bothered her.

"Why do we call her Aunt Vera if she's not even kin to us?" she asked her mother as she scanned the way ahead for angry geese or silly guinea hens.

"Um... I'm not sure," her mother struggled. She slipped on the rust red mud but regained her balance before her knees could hit the ground. "Granny always called her that," she said.

"Oh," Clara murmured, still unsatisfied.

Aunt Vera was so old that Clara could not even guess her age. She had been visiting her for as
long as she could remember and she couldn’t picture her any older or younger than she was now. She didn’t look like anyone’s aunt, either. She was crouched, like a crab, with stiff-angled elbows and soft, melted mozzarella skin. Her age-bleached hair grew wild on her head like wheat on a hillside. It was long and she never bothered to pull it back in a bun like Clara thought all old ladies were required to do. Each strand had a life of its own and her hair stood out several feet around her face and shoulders, making her small, thin-featured face shrink to the size of a walnut. Her eyes saved her face from fading away altogether. They scintillated with unnerving brightness, the sunlight kind that causes blindness if stared at long enough. Clara feared Aunt Vera’s gaze, although the old woman never recognized her. She always knew Clara’s mother, however, and had no problem distinguishing between her cats. She could recognize any one of them all the way across the yard. She could even recognize them wet. Her recognition surpassed the limits of vision.

Clara had never asked her mother who Aunt Vera was or how her grandmother had known her, but that had seemed irrelevant back then. Besides, she’d felt as if Aunt Vera was just another member of the family, another elderly kinsperson she was obligated to visit. But Aunt Vera was very different from Clara’s other relatives. She never demanded kisses, she never commented on Clara’s growth, she never gossiped about other family members. In fact, Aunt Vera never talked much at all. Not to Clara. She always grinned her pink-gummed, lipless greeting when Clara and her mother visited and her sentences were invariably short and practical.

“Want some raspberry tea?”
“What a pretty dress.”
“Would you like a goose egg omelette?”
“Bella died yesterday.” (Attached as she was to her cats, she never showed emotion when one of them died. In fact, once when an old calico, Natasha, gave birth to four dead kittens, she merely dumped the tiny pink corpses in the herb garden, where they were immediately discovered and devoured by the geese. When Clara had expressed concern, Aunt Vera croaked in her tin foil scratchy old woman’s voice, “That happens all the time. If I hadn’t fed them to the geese Natasha would’ve eaten them.” Clara had felt so disgusted and sick as she watched the growing, hateful geese peck at the tender flesh of the hairless kittens that she ran into the bathroom to splash cold water on her face. The pipes groaned as if she’d disturbed their afternoon nap. “Oh, shut up!” she grumbled impatiently, twisting the intricately fissured porcelain

knob until the noise stopped.)

Clara never would have thought back then that she’d continue visiting Aunt Vera even after her mother died. Actually, she never would have imagined that her mother would die—ever. But she had. Cancer. The same kind that had killed Clara’s grandmother. With both women it had begun in the ovaries and spread. Eventually it reached the throat and lungs. Clara didn’t know much about the disease except that it had killed her mother and her mother’s mother, weakening them first as only a cowardly disease like that could, and wearing them down into pale skeletons of their former selves until they eventually succumbed, mercifully. Clara had seen both women die and she feared the disease more than anything, even Aunt Vera’s geese.

During the months when Clara’s mother was fading the fastest, after her once luminescent brown eyes had lost their flecks of gold and green, Clara had not visited or even thought about Aunt Vera. She had never gone there without her mother. She had never desired to go. Standing in the throbbing heat of the July sun at her mother’s funeral, however, she thought she saw Aunt Vera standing right outside the crowd of stern-faced, church-clothed relatives. She realized that she was hallucinating, however, because, number one, Aunt Vera never left her hilltop house, and number two, the Aunt Vera she saw at the funeral was nude and laughing. Clara was appalled. She completely lost her composure and stood, mouth gaping like one of those silly guinea hens, until she blinked and the image disappeared.

Although Clara dismissed the vision as a hallucination caused by too much sun and grief, she still couldn’t get Aunt Vera out of her mind. That night as she curled in bed with her knees pressed against her chest, she realized that she would go back.

Climbing the mud-slick driveway the next afternoon, Clara felt a strange calm wash over her mind. She felt for the first time a connection to her mother, to her mother’s mother, a connection so strong that she felt as if the two women were there with her, ascending the slippery, steep driveway to visit Aunt Vera and her geese and her cats. For the first time, she smiled at the guard-dog geese. For the first time, she looked forward to seeing Aunt Vera with a gentle longing. For the first time, she walked into Aunt Vera’s dark, cat-infested house without looking at her watch. Aunt Vera smiled and in her eyes, which drew Clara towards her with the gravity of twin suns, shone recognition.

The North Avenue Review  June 1991
THE BLACK STATION

by Christopher Aniedobe

I am not a writer
I am a painter
I paint with words
I paint on the walls of your mind
All I seek is to share my visions with you.

As I lift my brush, mother, I recall
my childhood days when our tears mingled freely
and our lachrymal plea for mercy from our landlord
and your nightlong sobs that broke my fledgling heart
and drove away sleep from my young dreamy eyes
and while still an infant, I lost my childhood
and the innocence which other children took for
granted
as, like an adult, I became plagued with matters of survival
as I sought to understand the crime of whereof, my being me was
born.

Mother, let me recall
the tearful days in the homeless shelter
where with pride you starved yourself to death
when it dawned upon you that you could not give me
the childhood that you never had
that you wanted dearly for this precious fruit of your womb.

When you gave up your life, you also gave mine up
as without your maternal guidance my teenage years wasted away
The system that plucked a newborn from his mother's breast
beset me behind, before and allover
and branded me dysfunctional
as it sought other reasons to destroy me.

If you were alive, you would be ashamed of me
that suckled your breast that once overflowed with pride
you that once held dreams of grandeur before my misty eyes.

I am now a young adult, as you probably know
I am still black, but now a man, and a jail bird
my eyes are no longer a wellspring of tears
as my glands have long since crusted up.
All night long, I stay awake
trying to understand the belligerent racism that took
you from me
longing for your balmy embrace to soothe my shredded heart
as I live in constant fear of the society to which I was born.
And in my solitary moments I cry, O! thunder
was thou not created as I was
what fairness is there that I should live in awe of thee?

Standing upon this ground, where once, with our tears we watered
mother, grant me your support as only you can
so that I may sing
Shore me up from side to side
Set me on a pedestal, from where I can look down on
my audience
Start up my imagination
Tune up my limbic system
so that I may send them home awash with pathos
Let me sing my sorrowful songs
but let my sorrow be not prolonged.

This is no song of love, it is a bad song
like a sad song composed by a benevolent spirit
in a remote place, upon seeing human cadavers
human flotsams of a terrible wreck.
It is like a song rendered by a mourning bird
no virtuoso itself
like a duet composed by two orphans
both feeling the need to commiserate the other
and there was defiance, but it was human, therefore
we must listen.

Hark! sad songs of defeat.
Hark! a piercing sigh as of victims of perfidy.
Hark! the groans as of a woman in travail
like the wailing of a mother, an African mother
who returned, smiling, graceful, with victuals and all
to an empty house, victims of inhumanity.  
She wailed because her children had been abducted and the villagers by now accustomed, gathered around wondering whose turn next time around.

How can a harpooned dolphin pull on the chords of justice?  
With an arched back, it reminds nature to adjudicate on the suppression of one creature by another.  
what plea O! falcons  
to thy favor by the falconer.

This is the land of falcons, it is the black station if you come to it, do not stop  
if it comes upon you, close your mind to it.  
Do not stop because the blood of innocents were spilled here  
and no laughter can be heard  
Here, infants were trampled upon  
and the unborn are in silent perpetual vigil.

This is the black station  
where heros cannot be found  
j ustice was murdered, evil is served here  
lives are begrudged and there is no sanctity for human life  
and the living are not welcomed.

This is the black station where dew does not gather at dawn  
even the wind detours from it  
and its only river mourns along its course  
and there is an eerie stillness of melancholy  
and vengeance is written everywhere in its unseen somberness  
and only the macabre song of the dead may be heard.

This is the black station  
where still births stop to announce their futile efforts and aborted children congregate to meditate upon the treachery that beguilied them and drink the puss of their mothers’ moral decrepitude.

Do not stop at the black station  
it is the graveyard of the oppressed and dispossessed  
it is the practice ground of neoslavery mentality  
and do not search the faces that get off here  
and if your mind lingers upon their sadness, blank it off  
do not meditate upon it or try to understand it just move on.

If your best friend who was black got off here  
do not let emotions overwhelm you  
do not go searching for him or her  
you might be called a black lover  
do not even think about it, just move on.

If that cute little black girl sitting beside you wants to get off at the black station  
do not restrain her  
do not plead with her  
do not try to understand the lugubrunity in her eyes let her go. She belongs here  
Her father is here, so is her mother just move on.

Silence. Silence everywhere  
Silence as of a grave yard in the middle of the night  
Silence like a thick fog surrounding the black station  
If you look up there is a thick black canopy of silence  
do not contemplate upon it  
do not let guilt feelings about your political inaction conflict with enjoyment of your middleclass privileges just move on.

If the old woman sitting across from you  
wants to get off here  
do not let her bony framework bother you  
this is already a repository for bones  
If you could, help her get off as your eyes fall on her puckered skin and notice its maculation  
as you notice her thick arteries running wildly through her hands like the work of a bad plumber  
do not let her remind you of your old age  
do not contemplate on the smoothness of her thighs or you might learn the futility of lust and despise your spouse and your own sensuality.  
Do not let her remind you of the inevitability of change.  
Let he go. Just move on.

If you see a blackman trying to get off  
do not wonder about his place here.  
A victim of repression, he was politically infirm he had no real freedom, the systems overwhelmed him.  
If he looks fatigued and battle weary  
do not empathize with him  
do not look inside his eye
or you might see the pain it bears.
If he has a basketball or football
do not wonder if recreations are held in the black station.
It is only a momento to remind him
that he fought a tactless battle
this was a warfare of the mind
that he fought with bare hands
his muscle clad body belies the emptiness that he feels
do not think about it, just move on.

And if you see a pregnant blackwoman
trying to get off here
do not worry about the fate that will befall her unborn child
the judge said she was just a womb for rent
and all the hormonal changes she underwent had its price
ten thousand dollars to be precise
and all the community of women moved on
Do not try to console her, this is the black station
others moved on, do not try to be a hero
there are no heroes here, just move on.

As you move on, close your ears with your thumb
or you might hear the silent drums of lamentation
and the lyrics of animosity
dand you might loose it like I did
and let the black station become your monomania.

How I came by the black station, I do not know
perhaps it was thrust upon me so that I may tell its story
and I suffer a devastating lingering of its sadness
and haunted by the images I beheld
hence, I make songs of this killing field.
Here many lives were quelled in their springtime
and many a practitioners of false morality come to collect dubious credits on a regular basis.
Reagan was here, so is Sununu
these folks uphold the black station to maintain political constituency
and perpetrate political savagery against their better judgement
David Dukes reside here permanently
O! raging bull, without matadors' messengers
thou would loose anarchy upon the world.

Mr Bush drapes it in white
just a new habiliment, still the same essence
since when did kinder and gentler become synonymous
with kind and gentle
or is kind and gentle not a virtue to be pursued?
Ah! political chicanery, your subtleties astound
even the profoundest thinkers
How you spill your williness upon the hearts of mortal men
and mobidify their minds
and you let anchor men, mongers of melodramatism,
unschooled in morality, become bearers of national conscience
by you these falconers plead insanity
by you they espouse political mafioso
and yet even you cannot assauge the human tragedy of the black station.

If chants of lamentation break the silence of the black station
a welcome song for its newest inmates
do not look for me I am not there
If you are terrified, do not reach out
consolations are not offered here
you might loose your soul
Do not look for me the maker of sad songs
I won my manumission, when I met the teacher
in prison, I cried out in desperation and he came to me
then I begged the teacher and he taught me
I am spinning along, along with the teacher
along my path, destiny's path.

So just move on until you come
to the meeting point of life and death
there, a buffer zone for all souls in transit
there a pageant ground for the gods that spawn intrigues
there you will be tried as a culprit
and be found guilty of your political inaction
and of pursuing a dream that is founded in inequity.
What can the falconer say for the falcon
for together they looted the world that was to sustain all.
With the teacher, I shall be present in the end
to witness your home coming song.

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"a...b..."

The child's eyes strained to remember. Sweat leaked from his trembling brow.
"c...d...e...f...g..."

His young hands trembled as he clenched and unclenched his fists.
"h...i...j...k...l...m...n..."

The veins bulged out of his supple neck. Blood roared in his ears.
"o...p...q...r...s...t..."

He paused and swallowed a harsh gulp. His nostrils flared and his smooth face burned.
"u...v...w...x...y..."

A buzzer sounded and the boy twitched and gave a sharp cry.
"Times up," said a booming voice. A black clad man stepped out of the shadows, raised a silver gun, aimed it at the child's mouth, and gently pulled the trigger. Blood exploded on the wall behind the child, and even before he had a chance to collapse, two short and deformed beings caught him and dragged him away.
"Next," said the booming voice.

David Klein

Rebel Exposed

Hey young rebel...
I see you with radical idealism.
You have strange clothes...
All black, maybe sandals too,
No, wear the combat boots.
White face and a weird haircut.
Oh, you don't ever cut it?
Say rebel, don't you think pop
Culture feeds the idiotic masses?
Your music is so violent, angry, obscure.
I like it.

I am a young rebel now also.
I am unique.
Today a man asked me why
We become young rebels.
And I told him the truth...
We do it for attention.

-Michael David
Spirit

A mismo que, my beloved
Just the same, what may
I do-if you do not love
Me the same?

May I want Not? Should
I continue or leave you in peace?
Life is so precious-
Lo siento que no puedo vivir
En su vida real.

Life is precious, yours is most
Especially so. What more may
Be done to see the true
Spirit of stars and Earth?
Of the wonder created within
This world?

F. Patricio Ruis

Dreams of the Lost

Jeannie, Emily-
As I view you in my mind,
I long for those days that
Have passed into memory.
Days that may only be cherished.

Jeannie-I wish for
A better understanding
between us.

For all those wants we
Had years ago, yet
never realized, I wish
we could have
fulfilled them.

I long for the opportunity
To be again a
part of your
Life.

Emily-also, I wish to
Again see you. The
character that shine
forth from you is
rare indeed.

To hold you once more-
A dream, yes, but
'worth all I have yet
'seen on this
Earth.

Friends once, always,
perhaps again.
To live without the substance
You bring to life is
not life in truth.

F. Patricio Ruis

Naranjas

As I watched you through the years
the pride and jealousy lying dormant
within,
I wished many times to be with you,
to be by your side.

It may be said people do not find their
Better halves but for once in a life-
La media naranja.

How does one find, though,
When the better half has slipped away?

F. Patricio Ruis
Portal Prophet

I walked the line, the delicate line
The silver line, immersed in time
Ahead I stared, for what I feared
To left and right, nothing neared
Again I stepped, with trembling foot
Towards the door, where someone stood
My face was blank, for lack of sight
Oh quivering legs, drive to the light
Encased in darkness, too thick to breathe
I cried in grief for my reprieve
The door grew closer, and closer still
My tense soul's screams became so shrill
And as I tripped along the line
The doorway figure became defined
With shimmering hair and lips so sweet,
Broken chains around her feet,
Outstretched arms that called me near,
And dark eyes clear, but filled with tears
For loss of words, I touched her palm
Her searing warmth filled me with calm
But sooner than I could do more
For all my grief, she closed the door.

David Klein
Caustic Cosmetic

Piles of dead cells
Heaping
Sprouting
Growing
Flowing
Curling
Bristling
Colors Burning
  Of reds and browns
  Oranges and blacks
  Whites and yellows
Let me run my fingers through the death,
For your hair is quite beautiful.

David Klein

Fear and Longing

I remember the
  Sweetness of
  Your image.
The sweetness of
  Inner strength
  And character
  You maintain.

I wish, among hopes,
  That we could see
  Each other
  Once more.

It has been too long
  these years,
  Most especially
  The last.

I care for you
  More now than
  I could ever
  Admit to you.

I wish now,
  More than ever,
  I had had the
  Courage
  then.

F. Patricio Ruis
Silent Poets

A, Marie Selck

The poet in me reigns free

Though of nothing I implore thee

My mood aloof, my spirit grey

I shall not beg you words to weigh

The wars we fought are done they say

And knowing this we've naught to say

Disfigured people have ambled home

Their faces stone

My personal guilt, to whom atone?

Foolish, ignorant, joyous mass

Who's techno-crass

Excited by Lockheed's newest blast

While economy drops, its all time low

And children live with streams that glow

But if I must, and yes I must

And speak my mind with courage thus

then I'd speak

with passion bleak

and voices meek

I'd whisper in a softened tone

SILENT POETS DESTROY OUR WORLD!

let the poets speak

Know It All: Know Nothing

I must say more, for I have so much more to say. Those who speak Greek would refer to me as a "wise fool." For although I know much, truly I know but nothing. After all that I have been taught, can I say I have learned anything? Am I now able to give answers to the questions of the world? Will I now pass the test of life? Will my existence and my deeds ever be of any consequence to others but myself? No, No, No, Maybe! Maybe, just maybe, I can enlighten others with the knowledge that they, too, will never be enlightened. Knowing this, they will know all there is to know.

H.H.H.
**Oblivion**

she rides in the night  
into oblivion  
the last of her kind  
her time is lost

eyes blaze darkly  
memories of friends lost  
her blade hungers for release  
and she willingly obliges

blue-white flames dance  
on the dark, sharp blade  
as it kills her enemies  
as it finds its way in the night

sated and spent  
the blade surrenders itself  
to her sheath  
she rides on

she seeks her enemies  
she rides in the night  
her eyes are dark  
and her name is Oblivion

---

**Inanimate Interrogation**

Are those my fingers?  
Are those my hands?  
Are those my footprints in the sands?  
Are those my legs?  
Is that my skin?  
Can the ocean cleanse my sin?  
Is that my mouth?  
Are those my eyes?  
Will the gulls ignore my cries?  
Are those my arms?  
Are those my toes?  
Are the waves my friends or foes?  
Is that my hair?  
Are those my ears?  
Are those my thighs sinking in tears?  
Is that my chest?  
Are those my knees?  
Is that my mouth tasting the sea?  
Is that my spine?  
Is that my tongue?  
Is liquid death flooding my lungs?  
Is that my heart?  

by David Klein

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**a flag on the mantle**

It is cold and misty today. They came to me today and said that you were dead.  
You always wanted to die like that. In the line of duty, in honour. Well, I hope your death served your life well. As well as you lived. Because all that remains of you is a picture, some ribbons, and a flag on the mantle.

C.A.
I awaken almost every night when I feel him between my legs and I am always shocked, even though he has been raping me in my sleep for many years—many more years than I can even remember. Sometimes I try to go back to sleep because I know that nothing I can do will stop him and he even likes it when I resist. He thinks it is a game. He laughs at my struggle and says I look sexy when I squirm. He likes it when he has to hold me down. I won't give him the satisfaction any more. If I can't go back to sleep, which is usually the case, I pretend I am asleep. Sometimes, that gives me a sense of power. If I act like the things he does to my body do not affect me in any way, then maybe he will get bored and leave. At least that's what I thought years ago. He hasn't stopped yet, though. One time I even tried to talk to him. I said what he did to me was wrong and I didn't want to do it anymore. He didn't understand. He said our bodies were our own to do with what we liked. I think he missed my point. Then I said that I didn't like what we did, but he said I was just too young and inexperienced to understand. I knew then that he would never empathize with me. He didn't want to. So I told him that I would tell my mother if he didn't stop. He just laughed at that. I hate his laugh. He sounds as if he can't catch his breath. He wheezes. He always wheezes when he rapes me, too. He breathes into my cringing ear with the sour breath of a thousand mornings, sometimes whispering nauseating words which I try to block out by thinking about lacy snowflakes falling on the noses of Alaskan sled dogs or on the beautiful stained glass windows in the church that he and I both frequent. Somehow his disturbing words always break into my thoughts, however, melting the snow into toxic sludge. You're so sexy. I want to spend the night together. You have such cute little titsies. Why are his abominable whispers so loud? The words resound against my eardrums like nuclear explosions. "I'm going to tell my mother!" I would warn him sometimes when I didn't think I could take it anymore. He told me one night that she wouldn't do anything about it because he did the same thing to her. But he didn't say it that way. He didn't say that he did anything to her. He said we do the same thing. He actually thinks the raping is mutual. I guess he thinks tears and protests are natural female reactions to sex. Or maybe he just doesn't see or hear them. Well, I'm going to tell someone else, I told him. I'll tell them about Mother too. He wheezed again. Who are you going to tell, sweetie? Who? There's not a woman out there who will care. There's not a woman out there who will do anything about it. You know why? Do you want to know why? Because I visit them every night too. I even visit some of them during the day, at work or at school. I never leave some of them. I thought I was going to vomit. He wheezed his laughter at my widened eyes and bent down to scrape his jaw against my chest. I knew then that the only way I could survive was through denial. I had to ignore him. I had to pretend I was asleep all the time. I had to pretend for myself, pretend to myself, that I was asleep. I had to fool myself. That was the only way I could remain sane—if I wasn't insane already. Just think. Soon we can be together all day and all night, too. Won't that be nice?

by Jilliana Babb
the seeking

grey eyes
seeking through the fog
an answer
not forthcoming

the searching endless
elusive prey
seductive yet not
pleasureable

a race to be completed
not won

C.A.

Vengeful Vegetable

In soulful meadow I did walk
To leave my troubled truths behind
I stepped among the seedy stalk
To disregard my seething mind

Footfall on the soil did sooth
Soon lost, was I, in natures cares
Bliss prevailed, for I did loose
Myself from galling mournful snares

As through expansive land I wove
My orbs of sight were caught by light
And to the flower of light I strove
By no means was this flower trite

Its beauty was beyond compare
And in my youthful lust and greed
The coiling roots I did tear
From the earth that it did need

But as I realized my mistake
I was entwined in squirming roots
In my heart fear drove its stake
As vengeful soil engulfed my boots

My legs became the greenest stem
The fullest leaves sprung from my side

by David Klein

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A LETTER TO CLARA
by Zuzana Thomas

Dear Clara,

I am writing this letter to you, and I am looking at your beauty while you are sleeping. I am quietly sitting in the dark with only the light of a street lamp. You know, I don’t want to awaken you. You are sleeping so sweetly as I am writing to you. If you saw me now, you would smile, caress me, and ask me why I am writing to you when we are so near each other. Believe me, I have a good mind to stand up, kiss you and talk about your beauty and my love for you. But I can’t do it. That is why I am writing to you. This is the only way for me to speak to you.

Our relationship used to be heaven. You were the first woman whom I really loved and cared about more than myself. I was happy every moment we were together. But suddenly, you became very cool towards me and said, "Our relationship" (for me a paradise) "is gone."

I really don’t know what you told me after that because I wasn’t able to listen to you. I looked at your lips, eyes, and face because I believed that I was seeing you for the last time. It was a great blow to me, one that I had never expected.

I have always covered up my deep emotions, so you wouldn’t know that I had lived only for you. I thought that I would lose you if you knew it. You see, on that day, when we broke up, I hid my emotion again, so you thought that I had taken your decision easily. You went out quickly and left me to die. Yes, Clara, I felt that I had died. My lack of emotion was only a cover, nothing more. I can’t tell you how much I suffered because I would only remember those ugly days and hours.

After two weeks, when I believed that you had gone forever, and I was alone, you came to me. You were so beautiful that I quickly forgot what you had done to me. You smiled at me, and I invited you in. You told me what you had been doing, but I didn’t listen to you. I just looked at your lips and into your eyes. Just before you left my house, you invited me to your apartment. I don’t remember what you wanted, but I was sure that you wanted to make up without any words.

I was looking forward to seeing you soon when I came to understand one important thing. But before writing it, I want you to know something.

My dearest Clara, you are the only woman I have ever really loved. I dream about our life together although I know that it will never come true. You have been refreshing water for me, enabling me to live in the middle of a desert. I drank your cup fully and felt that I would never die. But suddenly, you said, "This is the end," and the cup cracked. The water spilled out, and the dry ground soaked it up. When I had finally gotten used to living without your water, you appeared and offered me a new cup with fresh water. Now I am giving it back to you because I could not survive your leaving me again.

Oh, you moved a little bit. Maybe you are awakening. I must not see your appealing eyes because I would tear up my letter. I am leaving, Clara. I am leaving in order to never see you again.

Paul

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The Teacher and I

by CHRIS ANIEDOBE

I THE LEGEND OF THE FARM

Did not my parents name me
Izakabuwanamuzubengbulie
hoping that I'd grow up to embody the positive sides
of Izaka
and have I not grown up otherwise
to be me, a humble legend of the farm
a detached inquisitor to the nature of man?

I am the legend of the farm, I am free.
I do not grapple, I do not strive
I am civilized in being uncivilized
Tomorrow is not uncertain, It will be like today
I will eat my grass when I like
I will mount a mare when I am aroused
I will roam the plains and the fields and the hills
if I so desire.
I do not compete
I do not have a need for followership
I do not contend
I do not have friends or enemies
I do not associate
I do not recognize a king or a servant
My world is devoid of class, I am free.

When I see the farm tender fret about
I say, "surely, it must be a curse to be human,
surely, intellect is a scourge to humanity".
They must deal with good and bad
and that which is better than good
and thus their mind clutters up
and their freedom is removed from them.

Thank God, I am free for
When I look up, I see the glory of God
and when I look down, all I see is divine providence
Then, I look at the farm keeper
and absent mindedly reflect on how he must have lost touch
with his maker
then I bend down to feed on the grass
that the good Lord has so graciously provided.

I said to the farm keeper,

"I do not understand"
and the farm keeper said,
"why don't you ask if you do not understand?"
Then I asked and the farm keeper says,
"why don't you understand?"
Then, I said,
"Hurrah, Hurrah to the illogicality of power
Hurrah to the animal world
Hurrah to us that do not purport wisdom
Hurrah to us that do not seek understanding
Hurrah to the mind of an animal,
we are not wearied with information for
When they turned away from their maker,
they filled their memory cells with garbage
but if they turn back to him,
it might please him to instill in them,
the wisdom of life."

They live in mansions and they complain
They eat the finest foods and they are not satisfied
They wear the finest clothing
bedecked with jewelry, but see not the beauty of life.

I do not live in mansions, I live in the fields
like one of their kind who had no where to lay his head
I do not seek the finest food,
the good Lord provides for me
like he provided for a mighty prophet of old fleeing
from a king
I do not seek fine raiment
I live like the voice from the wilderness, the announcer

I am the legend of the farm, I am free.

II THE TEACHER AND I

One day, a teacher came by
"Where have you been", said I
"From going up and down instilling peace in distraught souls" said he
Then I said, "O warden of peace why do you look sad,
That wasn't he a homosexual, if not why 'The human kings
Let us set a control with a human being
Desiring the knowledge of freedom
Upon which I told him that Jesus was Lord
And the fellow said, "Was Jesus white or black
Wasn't he a revolutionary, a renegade
Wasn't he a radical dissenter
Wasn't he a homosexual, if not who was his girlfriend
Wasn't he a woman hater, how many women were his disciples
Wasn't he a hippie, he wore his hair long"

"Then said I, "O raging mind
Be quiet so that I may teach you
That which is simple is profound
That which is complex is superficial
He is truly learned who subscribes to the simple truth of life
One man by torturing himself and enduring
The sadomasochist system of worldly education
Became learned in such matters
But peace eluded him
So many honors did he win
And so full was he of himself
That one day he said to the Lord
"Come let us arm wrestle with our minds"
And we snuffed off his tortured mind."

"Then I said to the pupil,
That which is permanent is impermanent
That which you see, you do not see
And that which you know, which is what you see,
you do not know.

"Then he said, "Science. Science men, Scientific method
Science, the great beacon of western civilization
Bring Jesus to me,
Let us verify that he is Lord
Let us put him to a test
Let us make him do supernatural things
Let us set a control with a human being
Let us confirm that what he can do a human being cannot do
Let us thereby thoroughly understand him
Let us model him so that we can predict him afterwards
Then will I be satisfied that Jesus is Lord"

"Then I said, O fickle mind
The Jews of his day, with whom he dwelt saw him

but did not acknowledge him
They saw him whom they did not see
And the heard him whom they did not hear
Because they had eyes that seeth not
And the had ears that heareth not
For how can one recognize him
Whom they do not know
Even if he is seen by them
Hence did he not say, "Blessed are those who do not see
But believe"

"Then I said, O blind and insalvable soul,
Pray that your eyes may see
Pray, that your mind so heavily littered
May be cleaned by heavenly garbage collectors
Then pray again for wisdom
It might please the Lord to send you a teacher"

III THE FARMKEEPER'S PRAYER

Then, I said to the teacher,
"How might the farmkeeper regain his freedom?"
And the teacher said, "Let the farm keeper pray thus,

"Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to-thee
Take it not being made fuller by it
Instead a loss, but so, you will not be denied
That which is rightfully yours

"Take my strength and let it be yours today and all my days
Take it not because you are made stronger by it
But so that I might learn to rely on your protection

"Take my eyes and let them be,
yours, a useless contraption to me this I know
For it would be better to be blind and led by you
Than to have eyes and not see at all

"Take my ears and keep them close to you
Let them be intent and earnest upon your word
And if today your voice is finally heard
Let my heart be soft and yielding to your will.

"Take my voice and keep it far from me
Restore it not, but for your glory
If restored, let it loose the ability to utter any unkindness
Let it loose the coarseness borne by greed
Let it be soft and mellow and remorseful of its ignoble past
And when it speaks as it seldom should
Let it speak only of thy truth

"Take my intellect and wrap it up
Keep it, let it never be part of me
For now I know that a knowing mind begets a troubled body

"Take the rest of my faculties and let them be
yours to dispose of as you wish
and let my days be spent in humble resignation to your will

"The stone which the builders reject
sometimes become the corner stone
This is the sort of marvel for which you are renowned
Let me be rejected by the community of men
Let me not seek the acknowledgement of my kind
Let me not seek to be a cornerstone in their designs
But instead, let me be as ordinary as that which the builder beautifieth not
Let me be effacing even to myself
Let my days be spent in constant communion
with you my Lord.

"Come, O my God, come
Come from your dwelling place come
Come bringing calm and peace to my sorrowful mind
Come and disperse this tale of misery
Come you will be loved."

IV A MESSAGE

And I said to the teacher,
"what may I say to the people in the midst of whom I dwell?"
And the teacher said, "Thus says the Lord;

"To be rich is as futile as to be poor
To be loved by mortal man is as unnecessary as to be hated by him
This generation of infidels put their trust in technology
but technology will not avail an insalvable soul.

"They come to me singing with affected piety
but all I see is fats of greed dripping down their faces
They come to me singing of love
yet they hate one another and discriminate with utmost belligerency
They come to my church, hoping to be rewarded like Jacob
But I who made Jacob made the rest of the world.
I am the God of Love, I do not discriminate, I reward justly.

"Why should it matter to me if a man comes from Iraq
or the United States of America?
Out of the depths of the sea, I raised both countries
I gave them their bounties and their splendor
I put Mississippi in one and Tigris in the other
I raised Abrahams in both countries
Through one, I raised for myself prophets and patriarchs
Through Abraham of Uh in Iraq,
I raised for myself the children of Israel
Through Abraham of Uh in Iraq,
I raised for myself the children of Ishme
I raised Jesus from among the midst of Jacob’s children
And Mohammed from among the midst of Ishmel’s children
And when the cries of Negro spirituals rose to my presence
I raised for myself Abraham in the United States
and relieved the oppressed Africans of their burden
I am the God of Love, I do not discriminate, I reward justly.

“Men conduct wars on the relative worth of a peoples life
but I judge all men on their hearts disposition towards me
Presume then not to be honored of your God
Presume not chosen and in harmony with me
Presume not my interest, that your enemies should perish
Presume not God.

"You bear your technology at heart
And you come seeking divine approbation for your evil ways
And you rewrite my laws,
hoping to glaze over your permissive ways
And you say, “the God of Jacob is our stronghold”,
and yet you have deserted from the ways of Jacob.

"I have seen the segregation in my churches,
a testimony to your obtuseness
You adore my Christ, but you do not recognize
universal brotherhood
under him
You read about the scribes and the Pharisees
And you say, “Thank God I am not like them”
and yet you say to me “I am white, I know I ought to
be rewarded
more than blacks”
And you say to me, “I am black, you will destroy the whites
you will extract my reparation from them, you will
avenge my loss’’
“Why should a man take me to task for making them to
my delight?
Behold a man delights in beauty, in variety and in color
and he faults me for raising in their midst,
races, each according to my delight.
I am the God of Love, I do not discriminate, I reward
justly.

“Man of himself, by himself is of no reckoning
Let not mortal man presume that his actions has a
direct bearing
on the wellness of his maker.
Walk into my presence, humble and solicitous of your
own welfare
and desist from arrogance that is festering your minds.

“Am I impressed by dudery and foppery
that you walk with haughty contempt into my house?
Indeed what do seek in my house?
To be entertained by choirs and fiery preachers?
Behold, I am not moved by the outwardness of sensual
men
or the untowardness of their verbalism
What then do you come to my house for?
To sway me by the gaiety and swaggery of fanciful
dresses?
Behold, do I not know that beneath each dress
is a rump that spews forth faeces.

“You cackle like birds in their breeding season
and strut from aisle to aisle
accompanied by bells and whistles and impertinences
hugging, kissing and exhibitioning
claiming you are stars strayed from their paths
seeking to be magnified in the presence of your God
I am the great and terrible God, I will reward justly.

“Come, commune with your hearts and be simple
Come into my presence proclaiming the greatness of
your God
Come bringing your thanksgiving, singing for joy
Come, it might please me to renew your flagging
spirits
and teach you wisdom in your secret hearts
Let all who are wearied slither to the house of salvation
There to dwell in the shadows of their God
For the day of reckoning is drawing nigh
and all account shall be rendered fully, without
omission
and all sons of men shall be judged according to that
which was instilled in their mortal conscience.”

Then I, the legend of the farm said to the teacher,
“Pray, tarry yet awhile
Let me bring together all the animals and plants

Let us magnify the Lord together
for we all tell the story of the glory of God”
And he tarried. And the glory of God was manifest
And I thanked God who made me an animal.

V THE PONDERER

Here might I lie
until the wind of hate is past
then to continue my journey to my makers home.

Here might I lie
humming the tunes that were instilled in me
in harmony with the music of creation
hence shall I arise and return to my father.

Here might I lie
pondering on the exile from my home of unbounded
beauty
longing for the day I shall again see the face of my
God.

But my trance soon took leave of me
and my troubled mind seized upon me
and I began to ponder on the nature of my kind.

Have I not applied my mind to the toils of man
to all the businesses about which his life is contained
and have I not seen like the Preacher, that all is futile
and striving after the wind.

Why does a man strive from morning till night
and from night till morning
and grapple ceaselessly all the days of his life?
What is the true nature of my kind?
Why does a man conduct himself with arrogance
so palpable that it stands in the way of his progress?
If this is not a psychological resource
is it then a subterfuge
or is it the wanton expression of abysmal ignorance?

Why does a man need to be civilized,
erecting structures and substructures in every facet of
his life
in a feeble attempt to freeze unpredictability?

Are men thus motivated by uncertainty
or by the needs of men
or by the uncertainty of the needs of men?
Are the needs of man to make certain that which is
inherently uncertain?
Are the purposes of the toils of man then to eliminate
uncertainty
or to reduce it if it cannot be eliminated

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or to modify it if it cannot be reduced?
Is man not then plagued by the falsity of his truths
or the truths of his falsities?

O thoughts so far strayed
it cannot be rescued
O that a teacher may sever our irksome association
and calm may again fall on the troubled waters of my
mind.

Upon whose head should it lie
to reorder his neighbor's house?
One whose house is disordered?
Not upon the head of an impostor.

Upon whose mind should it rest
a vision of peace and calm to a troubled world?
One whose heart is calloused beyond the pleas of
compassion?
Not upon the mind of an impostor.

Upon whose head should it then lie?
Upon the sickled head of a mindless moon?
Upon the blazing head of a busy sun?
Upon the twinkling detachment of a distant star?
No. Upon our heads, all of us
Upon us who esteem not our lives worthier than
others
Upon us who embraceth not,
a false foundation for a universal order of peace
Upon all men desirous of true freedom
releasant pursuers, hounders after the quarry of
universal justice
Upon all men who wait not to pay their dues of
brotherhood.

When the dawn is over, it goes to sleep
and awakes in the morning
Let us not wait for the dawn to awake
Awake and awake the dawn
Let the reel of a new and just history roll
Let us not wait for the wind of hate to pass
The wind of hate stalls and convolutes
Round and round it goes
nurtured by the ideals of treacherous men
and racial supremacists
and stoked by institutions
where men of learned unrighteousness
are gathered, to breed unrighteous laws
far removed from the exigencies of fairness and
distributive compassion

Instead, let all soldiers of justice arise
Blacks and whites, yellow and red, arise
Arise for we are firmly persuaded of the righteousness
of our cause

Arise, pick arms and into the wind of hate charge
Let new lines of war be drawn, the civil war anew
Let Armageddon be, Gettysburg in our hearts.

Let the guns of battle rage on
Let all the cannons roar
Let the muskets throw up their contents in anger
And let men who are still intent upon slavery,
slip and be routed, Gettysburg in our hearts.

Let us fight on,
until the wind of hate is driven to the outskirts of town
away from the boundaries of the union
and then only then to the ends of the earth
and political and economic emancipation is won
first for all Americans and then for the rest of the
world,
Gettysburg in our hearts.

Yes let us stomp away with righteous indignation
upon the fortresses of injustice
Until from Alaska to Australia
and from Chile to Siberia
all sons of men raise their hands in triumph
proclaiming in unison, proclaiming slogans anew
Dignity, at last dignity.

When the dignity of man is found at last
then the rat race is finally run
all aching feet shall be lifted off the ground
and all wandering minds a refuge found
all listening ears shall hear the sweet songs of true
liberty
and all seeing eyes shall see spring anew and
everlasting

When the dignity of man is found at last
all hands shall with one accord be joined
and there shall gush forth from the wind
songs of praise to our God, mighty, powerful and
fearworthy
by whom all withered plants shall be revived
and all desolate lands rejoice with verdure
and the tumult of joyous ululation will be seen upon
the face of the sea.

Awake. Awake from your spiritual slumber, awake
Awake with flutes and drum, awake
Awake with instruments of soulful music
Awake for the wonderousness of our God shall be
revealed
Who with man on earth would dwell.
VI A PONDERER'S PRAYER

Grant most blessed, most gracious, most inexhaustible Grant most blessed, most gracious, Grant that I may die giving, giving my gifts of blackness to the whole world. Grant that I may die accepting, accepting peoples gifts of whiteness, yellowness, redness, blackness without fear or favor. Grant that I may die shouting, may my voice not be smothered by the raucous din of violent men. Grant that I may die defiant, confronting the men who still drive slaves protesting ceaselessly the end of slavery. Grant that I may die a nonconformist, with by back turned against the ways of sorrow, sin and hate and the arrogance which deaden men's conscience. Grant that I may die standing, bestriding the thinning river of injustice dying as a world citizen, embracing the universe that gave birth to me bequeathing to her the fruits of all my labor of love.

VII A FINAL NOTE

Today, the foreign affairs department of all nations is their gaming department. It is the place where political jugglers and sleights of hand are gathered and charged with a no-loose game with the rest of the world in a winner take all.

For over 40 years, we stood anxiously by and watched the superpowers throw out their cards in a dangerous game that could imperil the whole world. In a post colonial world, as part of their strategies, they sought to increase their sphere of influence and dished out foreign aid as a vehicle for cultural, ideological and technology transfers and in the process underdeveloped the rest of the world.

Sadly enough, this dangerous game has not yet ended. It has taken a new dimension, fired up by a very unsettling vision of a new world order. A new world order is not the imperialist domination of the rest of the world. It is a world where the dignity of man is held high in an unambivalent new light. Hence, the fight before us is not one that would be fought with high tech weapons. It is the restoration of the dignity of man. It is the restoration of world peace in the light of the concept of the universal man or the oneness of man. It is a sacred feeling of universal brotherhood that impresses upon the Jew that his life is not worth more than that of his Arab cousin and on the Arab that a Jew deserves a safe and secure life as a matter of fundamental human right. And on the white South African that his black compatriot, being human, is subject to the same sensitivities. It is the establishment of the spirit of camaraderie that encourages all Americans to work side by side in equal opportunity.

It was an elating feeling to see American troops return victorious and virtually unscathed, but the hearts of the rest of the world was saddened by the fact that the Administration's vaunting over the outcome of the war was not tempered by deep feeling of sympathy for over a hundred thousand Iraqis that lost their lives. It is a sad arithmetic to try to persuade the world that Saddam Hussein's life is worth that of over a hundred thousand of his compatriot or that an American life is worth over a thousand Iraqi life.

A new world order must be based on the concept of one world people, one life. It should be a self policing world where the banner of universal love is held aloft; flapping about in the breeze of our unflappable commitment to equality and freedom; beyond the reach of dictators, despots, self seekers and powerful nations with multiple standards.

Until we learn to respect other people and their ways of life, until we begin to understand that the lives of everyone is interconnected, until we truly appreciate the fact that the economic reasons that lead to the deforestation of the Amazon or the growing of coca plants in South America would have dire consequences for people everywhere, then until then, would we know peace. Then we would charge our foreign policy departments to conduct their affairs in a win win situation knowing that what befalls one would ultimately befall the other. Indeed, all systems, physical, chemical, biological, sociological, economic, all systems however arbitrarily defined have an irrepressible tendency to drive towards equilibrium and those who resist peaceful transitions from one state to another, leading ultimately to a stable state of equilibrium would make violent transitions inevitable. It is time to think of the world, not as comprised of many nations, but as comprised of one world people, united in a common quest for freedom, equity and mutual prosperity.
There is LIFE

And there is DEATH

But in between shall exist the NOTHINGNESS From which all of us strive to ESCAPE

For if everything were clearly marked BLACK

and

WHITE

What would be the point in EXISTENCE?

In the end, everyone is caught in the middle.

H.H.H.

HIRAM HORTON HANTHROPE
INFLUENCE
by
Francis Flick

by Steven Arnold

Look into a pond and spit
For I do not want him as hollow as me.

Look forth for a mind,
The body will wane with time.
With a will of his own
And some left to guide me.
Make him not dull but with a subtle wit.
Open enough to understand my madness
And strong enough to withstand it
But not so strong that I will be smashed.
Forgiving - but remembering
So I will not forget too often.

A figure - showing nature's beauty in youth.
A hear strong enough to outlive me,
For when I find him I do not want
To be left behind.

She was dragging her jacket behind a little
and the buckles were scraping the road. The balls on
her wrist and the clasps on her boots were clanking
and she sounded as if she were wearing chainsail.
Short black hair and pale skin made her eyes glow, but
not with vibrancy. No, they glowed more with
intensity than any jolliness. She clumped across the
intersection and the streetclamps flickered. Wind blew
the traffic signals high and low. The street was silent
except for her scraping and clanking. After she passed
the crossing she stopped, let the jacket fall to the
ground and sat on the dashed yellow lines. She was
looking straight at me and I felt it extremely difficult
to breathe.

It was a mix of fear and entrapment that
kept me standing by the phone booth, but I think it
was mostly her eyes that paralyzed me. Her face was
stern and she wasn't blinking. I tried to stare her
down, but the wind and cold made my eyes water so
much I blinked to keep from crying. I put my hand in
my pocket for my cigarette case and took one out. My
fingers trembled and as I fumbled to light a match I
burned the tip of my thumb. But I couldn't show the
pain I just lit the cigarette and felt the nervous finger
get so hot until it stopped shaking. It pulsed with hot
pain, the blood rushing from my head, rushing into my
fingers and my stomach sank as though I might be ill.
She put her hands behind her and crossed her legs still
not blinking. That was the worst part. Had she
blinking it would have shown me she had to deal
with reality, but without blinking she seemed
completely sure specter expressly here to do me in.

An German roadster with a bunch of
drunken students from the Latin Quarter came
speeding down towards her, swerving back and forth
across the road. Their lights bounced off her back, and
they screeched their horn at her as they went
wobbling past, inches from her cost. I could only feel
fear for them if they had run over anything, even her
cost. She didn't stop looking at me and at this point
I was seriously getting chilled. I decide to treat her
like a dog, not show fear, just turn around and walk
calmly away. A took a few steps past the booth,
completely delicious to my original intention of making a call. That was the farthest thing from my mind. A few more steps and I looked back.

She was on her feet, striding towards me. The gap between us was closing too quick for me to have faith in the canine theory so I took off running. She did too and I could almost feel her breath on my neck when she finally pounced on me, pushing my face straight into the concrete of the sidewalk. She pushed her hands up into my crotch and took hold of me. It hurt, but she wasn’t trying to hurt me yet. She said, “Don’t think about it. I’ll hurt you before you breath again.”

She was right. I was holding my breath and gave up any fantasy I had of resisting. My teeth chattered and I stuttered out like a moron in broken French. “What do you want from me?”

She pulled me up from the ground and told me to shut up and look at her. I wiped the blood from my mouth took my eyes from the sidewalk. My cheek were stinging from the scraped skin, but I tried not to let it show. She told me to follow her and before I could she punched me so hard I fell back onto the wall behind me. My head slammed against it and my hands were bent beside me. Slaughtering her boot on my left wrist she grined, my bone made a noise much like a pegcel, and when I tried to scream in pain she had he fingers around my larynx keeping it still. “Don’t consider backing out on me.”

I was definitely going into shock at this point. That was I repeated to the French police later. “I was definitely in shock by that point.” That’s why she did what she did next, to completely push me into shock.

A warm wet feeling slid down the back of my neck and she had her hand there holding my head up. With her other hand she showed me the blood on her fingers. Licking them off, getting a lot of blood on her lips, she kissed me. Her tongue was warm almost like a furnace and the salt from my blood tasted like seawater. Pulling me into the alley she sat me against the wall, still in the light of the street, but it was very dim. Holding my eye open with the bloody fingers, she started unzipping my pants, and I was getting numb and more lost. She pulled down my undershorts and ran fingernails across my thighs. I don’t know how or why but I became hard and she started to kiss me. Her tongue flicked back and forth and the bloody fingers forced me to watch it all.

After I came she kissed me again and I tasted a saltier sea this time. She lifted me from the floor of the alley and the hurt from my wound was ebbling away but I was definitely still petrified. It was like some kind of torture trick. She was being so soft and compassionate now, right after she’d just shattered my will.

I followed more out of loyalty then fear. It was so natural then, to do what she asked. It seemed impossible now to believe, like it was someone else it happened to. She clanked down a few more blocks and I followed. She had given me a gun, and we washed my blood off in a gas station two blocks from the restaurant the Ambassador was drinking at. She waited on the corner while I entered the blisten. I told him my name was Troutfalt, he said he had a reservation for me and I was seated very near the Ambassador’s party. I stood up after the name of left. I walked up to their table and pulled the gun from my jacket. No one even noticed me until I fired all five rounds into him. I don’t remember it too well. A lot of my memory comes from what I’ve read about it in the papers. I don’t know who she was, some people said he had a mistress and the police think she’s it. Even though they’ve closed the case. I don’t know. I can’t even go out at night anymore. But I wish she’d come visit me. She has to know I’m here. It was in all the papers.

The doctors are nice to me, after my bones healed most of them quit visiting me. But the Dr. Penrault still visits me everyday and sometimes he takes me out of the hospital. But not at night, never at night.
The emptiness of this place sickened him. He was bruised down to his soul, and he sat motionless on the concrete block. He looked around at the gray steel walls around him once again. There he sat in the center of it all, the only color in the colorless room. A red spot caught his eye - a spat of his own blood on the slick, placid floor.

They had taken him away from his abode. Visions of the meadow permeated his mind. He had never wanted to lose it. When they took him away he put up a fight, but to no avail.

The confusion and sickness mounted up through his stomach and ribs. It had all happened so quickly. He never even saw their faces. He had fought them, yet he knew not who they were. His last vision had been the black gloved fist angling toward his face. Now he was laying on a dirty slab of concrete. Again he passed out.

His dreams were filled with birds. He ran through the high grass and danced to their songs. One perched on a branch close to the ground. He slowly reached out his finger to touch it, but recoiled in horror as the bird burst into flames.

He awoke in blinding light. After averting his eyes, he realized he had been staring into the sun. His face burned fiercely, but he ignored the pain, for there was no apparent method of relieving it. He was being drug over white sand by two towering figures, both identically built and clad, with gray robes and hoods that covered their faces. Each had a firm grip on his arms with their black gloved hands. He contemplated struggling, but he knew it would not do any good. Instead he directed his energies into observations.

The sand stretched as far as he could see, which was not far, for the intense light of the sun reflected off the sand and forced him to squint so hard that his eyes were nearly closed. He attempted to gain the identity of his captors, but even though the sun was igniting the landscape, nothing but blackness could be seen within their hoods. He glanced back at the trail that his dragging legs had left in the sand, and sharply drew in a breath when he learned that those were the only marks behind him - the gray ones left no footprints.

Suddenly, his head jerked forward as they came to an abrupt stop. His captors yanked him to an upright position and took a step towards him. They both faced him, one at his front and one at his back. Slowly, they advanced forward. Their gargantuan bodies began to crush his comparatively small frame. He couldn't move. All he could see was the gray robe that was smothering him. He felt a sharp pain in his midsection and heard a sickening snap. The pain in his head was so severe that intense lights flickered throughout his vision. He then lost consciousness.

He awoke once again with severe pain throbbing all over his body, but pain soon gave in to anguish and panic as he realized that he was inside a small wooden box. The box was the length of his body and just wide enough that he could move his arms, but not very far. He was in a coffin.

A deep and acute sense of fear rose slowly through his inwards. sounds, but stopped when he heard a muffled voice coming from examination, he found the voice to be rather several voices in

"He is dead. We may now construct as we choose. He is dead...."

The voices became fainter and fainter as the sound of soil and heavier. Within minutes all was dark and silent.

He began to move his lips before he spoke, as if to test his of the sides of his new abode - "I am not dead....yet."

by David Klein

The North Avenue Review June 1991
My object is not to patronize the radicals by patting them on the head as "in advance of their time"—that tired cliché of the lazy historian. In some ways they are in advance of ours. But their insights, their poetic insights, are what seem to me to make them worth studying today.

Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*
Guesswork

The Pseudoscience Behind the SAT

by Jeff Cronkhite

More than two million students take the SAT every year, knowing that it may be the major factor in determining where they go to school. Colleges and scholarship-granting agencies nationwide use the test scores to help decide who gets in where and how much money they get, and an entire industry has developed around training students to improve their scores. Why do the SATs have so much clout? For one thing, the SAT is a fairly successful predictor of students' first year college grades. Moreover, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB), which administers the SAT, claims that the reason for this prediction value is that the test measures intellectual abilities fundamental to success in college. And students have been conditioned to believe this is true—that the SAT measures how smart you are and, therefore, how well you'll do.

But is the claim true? The answer takes on added importance now, since the ETS announced in October of last year that it plans to make sweeping changes to the SAT, ostensibly so that it will better measure those abilities it is supposed by ETS (and most of the rest of us) to measure. To address the issue of what the SAT measures, it will be helpful to take a look at where it came from—the field of psychometric testing. It is from here that the SAT draws its claims to validity.

The SAT was not invented from scratch. It draws upon ideas and techniques from the same branch of psychology which gave rise to IQ and other mental tests, and is based on the same assumptions about human mental functioning. It is widely believed by psychologists (as is often asserted in introductory texts) to measure the same thing as IQ tests. The definitions usually given by psychologists for “scholastic aptitude” and “intelligence” are identical. What most people don’t know is that the origins of these tests were not only unscientific, but also based on a desire to maintain the social order that existed in America in the early 20th century. That social order conferred severe disadvantages to certain groups of people, and the biases that existed against those people were explicitly incorporated into the tests.

Dubious Origins

Psychometric testing in its modern form began with the development of the first intelligence test by Alfred Binet in France in 1905 for the purpose of identifying children who might benefit from remedial instruction in school. The Binet test was translated and imported to the United States several years later, principally by Henry Goddard at the Vineland Training School in New Jersey, Robert Yerkes at Harvard, and Lewis Terman at Stanford. Terman was the author of the now familiar Stanford-Binet IQ test.

It was Goddard who first imported and translated the Binet scale in America. Although his test was derived directly from Binet’s, he made radically different assumptions regarding its meaning and interpretation, believing the scores were a measure of a single, innate entity which could be used to rank all people according to intellectual worth. Goddard wrote in 1920, “... our thesis is that the chief determiner of human conduct is a unitary mental process which we call intelligence... this process is conditioned by a nervous mechanism which is inborn...” Goddard used his version of the Binet scale to identify people he labelled as “feeble-minded”, with the intent of curtailling their breeding to prevent deterioration of the American stock. Of such breeding he wrote in 1914: “If both parents are feeble-minded all the children will be feeble-minded. It is obvious that such matings should not be allowed...”

Lewis Terman was the primary popularizer of IQ tests in America, and it was his work that led to their widespread use. The Stanford-Binet IQ test developed by Terman has
become the standard against which most other such tests are validated. Some knowledge of Terman's work is therefore important to a general understanding of the progression by which today's tests evolved.

In addition to the original Stanford-Binet, which was administered to individuals one-on-one, Terman also developed a version of the test which could be administered to large numbers of people en masse, paving the way for more widespread testing and the growth of IQ testing into a multi-million dollar industry. He constructed his tests by first writing questions he believed measured intelligence and administering them to a group of people. The results were then studied to find correlations between success on test questions and various criteria of intellectual success, such as scholastic performance, teacher evaluations, and in the case of adults, educational and occupational level. Thus, for example, if well educated professional people tended to do well on a certain question while poorly educated laborers did poorly on that question, the question was incorporated into the final version of the IQ test. If the opposite occurred, or if no difference was seen among individuals in performance on a question, that question was modified or thrown out. Terman also made sure that each question was well correlated with the other questions on the test. This was done to make the test consistent with Terman's belief that intelligence is a unitary quantity which encompasses many different aspects of mental functioning (in agreement with Goddard). A person with high intelligence should then be good at all tasks embodied by intelligence, with no possibility of being accomplished at some IQ-related tasks but poor at others. Hence, if two questions were well correlated with scholastic performance, but not correlated with one another, they could not both be part of general intelligence. Even on much later versions of the test, this strategy was pursued; in Terman's words (with Merrill), "Tests that had low correlation with the total were dropped even though they were satisfactory in other respects" (Terman and Merrill, 1960, p 33). As for Terman's method of constructing test questions from scratch, this is rather fuzzy. Terman often stated as his theoretical definition of intelligence "the ability to perform abstract reasoning," but never showed how one could rank concepts in terms of "abstractness," or even what criteria could be used to determine which types of reasoning were abstract. How Terman might have used this definition of intelligence to construct test questions is unclear. Questions commonly appearing on Terman's test asked the examinee to identify famous people such as sports heroes, recognize brand names of commercial products, and make value judgements about a given situation. One question on the Stanford-Binet showed the child who was being tested a picture of several human faces and asked, "Which is prettier?" The correct answer is the face having classic white Anglo-Saxon features, while the incorrect answers are those possessing features common to other ethnic groups. Not surprisingly, all of these questions satisfied the correlational criteria of social class, etc. mentioned above.

Once the test questions were fixed and the tests administered to a group of people, Terman arrived at an IQ score from the raw score by dividing by a factor correcting for age (hence the name intelligence quotient) and statistically standardizing the scores for the population. The age correction factor was designed to reflect the belief that intelligence is an innately fixed quantity which cannot change as a person grows older; the observed fact that scores tended to increase with age thus necessitated the correction.

Today, with the benefit of hindsight, it is clear to us from IQ test questions constructed by Terman and his contemporaries that they held a view of intelligence strongly connected with their beliefs about class, race, and social standing. It is also clear that these views were closely related to beliefs about social and economic justice. To most psychometricians of the day, IQ was a measure of a person's economic potential. Since intelligence is innately fixed from birth, they believed, and since it is the primary determinant of a person's ultimate success in life, one could conclude that existing inequalities of wealth and social status were due to differences in natural intellectual ability. The poor were those who had fallen to the bottom of social ranks because they lacked the genetic capacity to do better, while the genetically well-endowed naturally rose to the social and economic pinnacle. Moreover, since intellectual ability was an unchangeable quantity, there was nothing that could eliminate existing inequalities. Goddard, speaking before a group of Princeton under graduates in 1919, stated: "... workmen may have a 10 year intelligence while you have a 20. To demand for him such a home as you have is ... absurd ... How can there be such a thing as social equality with this wide range of mental capacity?" Terman proclaimed that professions of prestige and high income were virtually closed to people with IQs below 100, and hoped that his test would "determine the minimum 'intelligence quotient' necessary for success in each.
leading occupation”. He wrote in 1919 that “the feeble-minded, in the sense of social incompetents, are by definition a burden rather than an asset, not only economically but still more because of their tendencies to become delinquent or criminal…”

This use of IQ tests to justify the prevailing social order found what was probably its greatest influence in the arena of immigration. Henry Goddard, on the invitation of the United States Public Health Service, administered his battery of tests to newly arrived immigrants on Ellis Island. He dutifully reported that 83% of the Jews, 80% of the Hungarians, 79% of the Italians, and 87% of the Russians were “feeble-minded.” This information was later made part of important testimony during the Congressional hearings that led up to the infamous Immigration Act of 1924. So was the work of then Princeton psychology professor Carl Brigham.

Carl Brigham wrote what was then considered a landmark book, *A Study of American Intelligence* (Princeton University Press, 1923). In it he analyzed data compiled on immigrant IQ, and came to essentially the same conclusions as Goddard had earlier, that recent immigrants, particularly those of Alpine and Mediterranean ethnicity, scored far below the American average (and below immigrants of Nordic origin). In an interesting additional analysis, Brigham discovered the “very remarkable fact” that among immigrants IQ was related to years lived in America; those residing 20 years or more were equal in IQ to “native” Americans, while those who had lived here less than five years were feeble-minded. Instead of suspecting that this finding suggested that IQ scores were heavily influenced by exposure to American culture and language, Brigham urged the abandonment of “feeble hypotheses that would make these differences an artifact of the method of examining,” and proclaimed, “we are forced to… accept the hypothesis that the curve indicates a gradual deterioration in the class of immigrants who came to this country in each succeeding five year period since 1902.” Continued immigration and racial mongrelization, Brigham argued, raised the specter of decline in the level of American intelligence. “We must face the possibility of racial admixture here that is infinitely worse than that faced by any European country today, for we are incorporating the negro into our racial stock, while all of Europe is comparatively free from this taint…” In the final sentences of the book, Brigham recommends that “immigration should not only be restrictive but highly selective.” And the Immigration Act of 1924 accomplished exactly that. Immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe (including Jews attempting to escape Nazi Germany in the 1930s) slowed to a trickle under the law’s restrictive quotas. Congressional hearings and debates had continually invoked the immigrant IQ data and Brigham’s analysis, to which a parade of American Psychological Association members testified their support.

There is no evidence that the views of Brigham, Goddard, and Terman were in any way iconoclastic in the psychological community. In all the hours of testimony before Congress leading to the 1924 Immigration Act there is not a word uttered by any psychologist to the effect that the immigrant IQ data were being abused or misinterpreted. And Terman was elected president of the American Psychological Association in the year Brigham’s book was published. Brigham himself would eventually be elected to the secretaryship of that same body. But his immediate work was pursued as secretary of the College Entrance Examination Board, where he used his expertise in psychometrics to design and develop the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

In retrospect, from the standpoint of attitudes that have changed over sixty years, it is obvious that the reasoning behind the tests of Terman, Goddard, and Brigham was full of holes. Without the burden of the biases that blinded the early psychometricians, we can today easily see their errors:

1. Test questions were written without any definition of intelligence to serve as a guide. No theory of intelligence existed, and the tests were never checked to see if what they actually measured corresponded to the definitions of intelligence given by the testers. Hence, there were no constraints to prevent the personal biases of Terman and his contemporaries from affecting the type of test questions they constructed. It is thus no surprise to us that the tests did not measure what the test authors believed was being measured.

2. In attempting to validate the notion that IQ measures intelligence, the testers committed the old error of believing that correlation implies cause. They took correlations between test questions and various criteria such as scholastic performance to be indication that IQ measures the cause of people’s performance in the areas covered by the criteria. But it never occurred to them that non-Anglo children might tend to answer wrongly to “Which face is prettier?” and to do poorly in school for completely different reasons.

3. It was assumed that intelligence (as measured
by IQ) was an innately fixed, unchangeable quantity, even in the face of evidence which could have been taken to contradict this (e.g., the immigrant IQ data).

These are not the only errors made by the early psychometricians, but they are the ones I consider most important because they are central to the conceptual foundation of mental testing. They also have in common the same underlying flaw, which the early psychometricians fell back on again and again: a faith in assumptions which haven't been verified. Brigham's analysis of the immigrant IQ data exemplifies this flaw. When his data showed a trend which could have challenged his beliefs about IQ and ethnic origin, he invented an interpretation to get around that challenge; since his interpretation hadn't been disproved, he felt free to believe it. I've therefore named this flaw "Brigham's Credo", after the SAT's inventor: "If an assumption hasn't been tested, it must be true". As for the three specific errors that have grown out of Brigham's Credo, I'll call them "Terman's Errors" for future reference.

Modern Testing: If It's Broke, Don't Fix It

IQ and aptitude tests have undergone periodic revisions and rewrites since their flawed beginnings, and modern testing advocates assert that today's tests reflect an improved understanding of the abilities they attempt to measure. But despite the fact that the most egregiously biased questions have been mostly eliminated (although the 1960 version of the Stanford-Binet retained the "Which face is prettier?" question), so-called intelligence and aptitude tests, including the SAT, still suffer from all three of the errors (outlined above) that were responsible for the abuses of the earliest tests. Today's tests may be more acceptable to us because they reflect our modern beliefs about what "aptitude" is, but these beliefs have no greater scientific foundation than did beliefs that were contemporary in the 1920s. It is common to think of our ancestors as foolish and ourselves as enlightened. Of course, the same was true in the 1920s with respect to previous eras. It reflects the prejudice and parochialism of what people think of as "modern times".

Terman's Error Number One. No theory of "intelligence" or "aptitude" has ever been constructed from which IQ and aptitude test questions can be built and verified. Even the definition of these concepts is elusive, so much so that the famous psychologist E. G. Boring has even suggested we avoid the dilemma by simply defining intelligence to be whatever IQ tests measure. Many psychometricians wish to avoid Boring's tautology, and attempt hand-waving definitions of aptitude. By far the most common of these is Terman's own - "The ability to do abstract thinking." Test manuals often claim this concept is utilized in the construction of test items. A vocabulary section (which virtually all such tests contain) may thus begin with the explanation that the words are ordered according to increasing verbal abstractness. This point is usually supported with a self-evident example. The word house, the example says, is low in its level of abstractness, while fairness and liberty are highly abstract. Upon closer inspection, however, one does not find the words fairness or liberty anywhere on the test. Why not? Because these are words which virtually every college-age American understands, even those who score very low on aptitude tests. Instead, one finds the test full of words which express simple concepts in obscure terms - words like redolent, veranda, talisman, contiguous, and palisade [A. Whimbey & L. S. Whimbey, Intelligence Can Be Taught, E. P. Dutton, 1975]. Serious attempts at ordering ideas in terms of abstractness have led to the conclusion that for the vast majority of concepts there is no objective basis for scaling abstractness [Keith Hayes, Psychological Reports, 1962]. This explanation does not provide even a superficially convincing case for what aptitude tests measure.

Terman's first Error contains what is from a scientific perspective an even deeper flaw: no way has been found to verify whether test items measure what they are claimed to measure. Even if a theory adequately describing aptitude did exist, there is still the problem of demonstrating that a test actually measures aptitude. The claims by ETS that various SAT questions measure "mathematical reasoning" or "reading comprehension" have no foundation beyond one's willingness to believe them on the basis of Brigham's Credo. This problem of untestability of the tests by itself renders the claims about what is being measured entirely unscientific.

That point made, I could end the discussion of Terman's first Error here. In a purely scientific forum, I would. But I am often amazed to find that people (including many psychologists) are usually inclined to ignore this flaw and follow Brigham's Credo, accepting the assertion that test questions measure some particular aspect of "aptitude" without any evidence whatsoever. People with this bias will often believe any unsupported assumption provided
it contributes to the argument that the tests are valid. I am the one who is unreasonable, they argue, for failing to recognize that what is being measured on, for example, the reading comprehension portion of the SAT is "plainly obvious" from inspection of the questions. Because of the popularity of these kinds of prejudices surrounding aptitude testing, the de facto burden of proof lies heavily (and unjustifiably) on those who would criticize the tests.

Which is not to say that such proof doesn't exist. Psychologist Stuart Katz of the University of Georgia in Athens (I know, I know... but he is a very respected researcher) administered reading comprehension questions from the 1983 SAT to a group of 197 college students, none of whom had taken the SAT in 1983 [Psychological Science, 3/90]. The reading comprehension portion of the SAT requires the student to answer a group of multiple-choice questions based on information stated or implied in a short passage preceding the questions. In administering the questions, Katz introduced a novel twist: one group of students took the test in the usual way, while a second group was given only the questions to answer, with the reading passages deleted. The results showed that the scores of the students who did not read the passages before answering the questions were much higher than what would be expected from chance alone. Furthermore, the students' scores on Katz's experimental reading comprehension test were strongly correlated with their pre-college SAT scores, regardless of whether or not they were able to read the passages before answering the questions. In other words, the no-passage test is about as effective as the test with passages at assessing which students are likely to do well in college (as predicted by their real SAT scores). Thus, the SAT reading comprehension section does not distinguish between good and poor students based on their ability to extract information by reading passages.

When confronted with Katz's data, ETS psychometrist Cathy Wendler argued that this is because the test measures "general verbal reasoning skills" rather than "reading comprehension" or any other specific skill [Science News, 3/31/90]. If this is so, one might be inclined to wonder why the passages were ever included in the first place. It is also prudent to ask how the ETS knows this explanation is the correct one. Was a detailed scientific study conducted to arrive at this result, or has ETS resurrected Brigham's Credo? If a study was conducted, it is rather curious that a different ETS official, Irving Broudy, gave a different explanation when confronted with the same data [Discover, 8/89]. According to Broudy (who is administrative director at ETS), the test still measures reading comprehension, even without the passages. The students are simply correctly reading and comprehending the questions.

Setting aside the problem of their mutual contradiction, the question remains whether either of these explanations is plausible. To find out, I tried Katz's experiment on myself by trying to answer reading comprehension questions from a previous SAT released by ETS. While doing so, I tried to pay attention to what skills I might be using to answer the questions without the benefit of information from the passages. Although there isn't space here to include a discussion of all the questions I answered, here is an example which I found to be typical:

The "youth market" in our country

A. refers to others besides teenagers
B. refers to adults who act like teenagers
C. is confined to "Beatle-worshippers" and "pop-art" devotees
D. has come into being within the last few years
E. refers to anyone who feels young

Based on my previous knowledge of the phrase "youth market" I immediately eliminated answers B and C as being absurd. Answer D seemed unlikely for the same reason; also my experience with this type of test indicated answers which are in a different category from the others or stand out as different aren't correct (D is the only one that doesn't answer who "youth market" refers to). Answers A and E are similar, but E is a subset of A. I therefore chose A, which turned out to be correct. From this analysis it seems clear that I used previous knowledge, an understanding of the test-makers' thinking, and finally a little common sense (to choose A over E). Apparently the human mind functions in a more complex way than advocates of the "plainly obvious" view (which clearly includes ETS) would have us believe. But this shouldn't surprise us if we recall that claims about what the test measures were never verified in the first place.

Terman's Error Number Two. Test makers believe the false assumption that correlation implies cause. The justification used by ETS for including any individual question is that it correlates with some appropriate criteria. The technical name for this is item analysis, and it is Terman's method unmodified from its first use. Most students have encountered this practice directly; the SAT
nearly always contains one “experimental” section which contains questions (items) which are candidates for inclusion on a future test. The decision of whether to include an item depends on how well performance on that item correlates either with students’ first year college grades or, what is more often the case, their performance on the current test. Correlations are measured on a scale from zero to one, with zero representing no prediction value and one representing perfect prediction. On this scale the correlations with college grades are .35 for SAT-math, .40 for SAT-verbal (according to ETS; independent reviewers have reported simple arithmetic errors by ETS which make the figures inflated [W. V. Slack and D. Porter, Harvard Ed. Rev., 1980]), and .52 for high school grades. But the assumption that this says anything about why the SAT is so correlated is a classic, even clichéd, error. We saw earlier that the Stanford-Binet contained items which correlated with school performance but were absurd as measures of its cause. Most people can probably think of trends in their own experience which are correlated but causally unrelated (e.g., my age and the price of a six pack - both increasing).

As in the case of Terman’s First Error, my experience has been that people are often inclined to ignore the flaw of the correlation-and-cause error, preferring to maintain their pro-test biases. Comments like the following, from psychologist Arthur Whimbey, are common: “...scores on the Stanford-Binet correlate as highly with the SAT as they do with any other traditional IQ test, indicating that all such tests measure basically the same mental abilities.” ETS states that a correlation coefficient is “generally the most accepted” way to “describe how closely what the test giver wants to know corresponds to what is actually measured.” Obviously, an example is once again in order. Consider the correlation between a person’s childhood IQ and adult socioeconomic status (SES), which is as high as .85 according to some studies. Psychologists have long taken this to indicate that IQ is a major cause of success in life. But it was shown in 1974 that when one considers only persons of similar childhood family income, the IQ-SES correlation all but disappears [S. Bowles and V. Nelson, Reviews of Economics and Statistics, vol. 56, p 39]. Conversely, the correlation between childhood family income and adult SES remains high even when one considers people of similar IQ. In other words, childhood IQ predicts adult SES only because it is a rough measure of childhood family income; when it fails in that respect, it also fails to predict adult SES. As geneticist R. C. Lewontin has quipped, “If IQ tests do measure intrinsic intelligence as is claimed, then clearly it is better to be born rich than smart.” Could a similar case be made concerning the SAT’s ability to predict first-year college grades? To find out, a similar statistical manipulation could be performed for family income and all of the other myriad characteristics one might imagine. Of course, for those who accept Brigham’s Credo, the SAT-grade correlation can be taken as an indicator of causation without any such test.

While correlation does not imply cause, lack of correlation does imply lack of cause. It is therefore informative to look at some things with which SAT scores do not correlate. Numerous studies have shown that college students’ SAT scores do not show any consistent correlation with their actual accomplishments in social leadership, the arts, science, music, writing, and speech and drama [e.g., Holland and Richards, 1965, and Elton and Shevel, 1969; Research Report nos. 1 and 2; Iowa City: American College Testing Program]. Not even a small tendency exists for better-scoring students to outdistance poorer ones in the “real world”. The same has been shown to be true for college grades, even in the case of highly “intellectual” careers such as scientific researcher [Taylor et al., in Scientific Creativity, ed. Taylor and Barron, 1963]. One might wonder based on this why colleges have any interest in freshman grades, let alone SAT scores that are supposed to predict them. Apparently, the interest shown in correlations by ETS, the College Entrance Examination Board (which created the ETS), and college admissions officers has its limits.

Terman’s Error Number Three. It is assumed that the tests measure something unchangeable, even in the face of contrary evidence. ETS has long claimed in its information booklets that coaching or drilling for the SAT does not significantly increase one’s scores. ETS has, in fact, conducted studies which tried to improve students’ scores through special training and failed to do so. But this does not indicate that there is no way that any training course can improve test scores. Many studies have shown, from the 1930s on, that various approaches can improve IQ and other aptitude scores in children and adults. In 1965, Joseph Marron conducted a study to determine whether full-time preparatory schools that train students for the SAT actually get results. Marron pointed out that the coaching programs evaluated by ETS and the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) had been limited to one or two hours of practice per week over several months. He studied the scores of students...
attending ten SAT prep schools across the country which gave intensive training for roughly six months. The results showed that student's SAT scores improved significantly, averaging 136 points higher than they had been before the training. One might think that ETS and the CEEB would, based on these results, recommend that colleges adopt programs for incoming freshmen to raise all students' scores (and therefore, presumably, their college grades). Instead, both organizations continued over the next 20 years to assert that scores could not be significantly affected by such coaching, only dropping this claim a few years ago following widespread publicity surrounding the score-raising successes of high-priced prep programs such as the Princeton Review. The testing organizations cannot claim ignorance of the 1965 results; it was the CEEB that funded Marron’s study. Thus, we finally witness the abandonment of Brigham’s Credo, but only in favor of the new policy, “ETS’s Credo”: “Even if an assumption has been tested, and proven wrong, it still must be true.” (For details of the scandalous suppression by the CEEB and ETS of the large body of evidence about coaching, see chapter 6 of David Owen’s book None of the Above).

Like the other two of Terman’s Errors, the belief in unchangeability of test scores is both widespread and hard to challenge. I have often read published research papers in which the authors show a preference for “genetic” explanations of human mental traits without substantive evidence. The authors of a widely publicized study from the early 1980s purporting to find a difference in men’s and women’s average mathematical SAT scores, for example, came down on the side of inborn differences as the cause, with the justification that no other explanation could account for such a large difference. The difference of which they wrote was smaller than the improvements seen in Marron’s 1965 study, among others.

Despite the blatant lack of scientific merit of the SAT and other aptitude tests, their use has persisted because the unfounded beliefs about what they measure have flourished. Why has this happened? While ETS and the CEEB certainly bear some responsibility for promoting such beliefs (partly through deceitful misrepresentation of evidence), it is my opinion that we, the test-taking public, are very much to blame for our eagerness to accept them without explicit justification, and even to go out of our way to avoid any evidence which does call them into question. When I counter people’s belief in the unchangeability of aptitude test scores by telling them of Marron’s data, I often hear something like, “Well perhaps one can raise scores by 136 points, and this is certainly significant, but I would still think that really large gains, say 300–400 points, are not possible.” But this is an entirely arbitrary assumption. Why choose to believe it? “You are biased,” I say, and point out that the Milwaukee Project did achieve equivalent gains in poverty children (average IQs went from 94 to 124). But this simply elicits a new round of inventive assumptions. It is the same technique used by ETS in response to Katz’s reading comprehension study: if the results don’t suit you, simply concoct a reason for them to not matter. Given Brigham’s Credo, this method will fly just fine. Most of us (excluding ETS, I think) do this not because of ill intentions, but because what is really bias often comes disguised as intuitive Truth, so obvious and clear that to question it at all may seem absurd.

The existence of these popular biases puts a limit on the ability of science to debunk aptitude testing myths. No matter what research results like those of Marron or Katz show, true believers can always fall back on Brigham’s Credo, inventing arbitrary assumptions to explain the evidence away. Often the results are simply ignored. Does this mean the tests will never go away? Perhaps not. Terman, Goddard, and Brigham all ultimately renounced their racist, hereditary views about intelligence. But they did not do so in response to new evidence. It was only during a time when such views began to fall out of fashion in academic circles that they recanted. Likewise, the aptitude testing morass in today’s society is not likely to change significantly unless we as a society can part with the underlying biases that allowed us to become seduced by psychometrics in the first place.

In the next issue, I’ll deal with questions raised in critiques of this article, including the problem of what should replace the SAT.
A TWO-FACED BUSH

by Scott Barnwell

"The terror Saddam Hussein has imposed upon the Kuwaitis violates every principle of human decency. Listen to what Amnesty International has documented: 'Widespread abuses of human rights have been perpetrated by Iraqi forces...arbitrary arrest and detention without trial of thousands...widespread torture...imposition of the death penalty and the extra-judicial execution of hundreds of unarmed civilians, including children.' "There's no horror that could make this a more obvious conflict of good vs. evil... Daily his troops commit atrocities against Kuwaiti citizens. This brutality has reverberated throughout the entire world. If we do not follow the dictates of our inner moral compass and stand up for human life, then his lawlessness will threaten the peace and democracy of the emerging new world order." The statement above was written by none other than our fearless leader George Bush just one week before the start of the Persian Gulf War. It is obvious that he has faith in the research carried out by Amnesty International. On the surface, it appears to be great justification for a U.S. led offensive attack against Iraq. I am sure George was counting on the ignorant masses of the United States to interpret his statement in this way.

However, I am deeply troubled by Bush's condemnation of human rights abuses in Iraq while at the same time many of our so called "coalition partners" are committing equally atrocious acts. Our fearless leader has made no mention of the disgusting realities of government policy committed by every Arab member of the coalition. Following is a brief sampling of these policies, information obtained once again by the London-based Amnesty International.

Saudi Arabia - Thousands of Yemenese people living in Saudi Arabia have been forcibly deported from Saudi Arabia solely because of their nationality. Most of those interviewed reported ill-treatment and torture while being detained prior to their deportation. Some still showed marks of torture-scars, burns, welts, and bruises. Many claim they had been kicked and beaten at the time of arrest. Forms of torture mentioned include electric shock treatment, beatings on the head and body, enforced standing, deprivation of sleep, and falaga (beatings on the soles of the feet). All of these reports are consistent with Saudi Arabia's patterns of torture in recent years.

Egypt - Arbitrary arrest, detention without charge or trial, and torture are widespread practices of the Egyptian authorities. "Emergency legislation" provides the Egyptian police to carry out these practices under protection of Egyptian law. Systematic methods of torture including the use of electric shocks to the genitals and other sensitive parts of the body, and suspension by the wrists from barred windows have been reported in dozens of cases. Torture by the Egyptian officials appears to be on the rise in recent years and there has been no indication by the government that any investigations will take place.

Syria - Thousands of non-violent political prisoners have been brutally tortured in Syria, another strong ally of the U.S. in the Persian Gulf War. Like Egypt, Syria has implemented emergency powers legislation which serves to protect their horrid practices. Torture victims also include non-Syrians arrested or abducted in Lebanon. More than 35 different forms of torture have been described by victims to Amnesty International researchers. Some examples of torture committed by Syrian officials include the extraction of finger and toe nails. Also used is the Black Slave, strapping the victim onto a device which, when switched on, inserts a heated metal skewer into the anus. Officials may also torture or sexually assault the victim's relatives in his or her presence. The Syrians have even built specially equipped torture chambers to facilitate these practices.

Obviously, many of our allies are committing atrocities equal to that of Saddam Hussein. However, it is clear that George Bush has been quite selective in his mentioning of human rights abuses in the Middle East. In fact, he has done nothing more than exploit the sufferings of the innocent Kuwaiti people in an effort to further his own geopolitical and geostrategic interests. In other words, his message to the American people is nothing more than a message of hypocrisy. Until he can see murder as murder, torture as torture, and rape as rape, he is nothing more than a hypocrite. As President of this nation, George Bush has a responsibility to institute a foreign policy which is consistent worldwide.
The Integration Bug

by Phil Philpott

Integration has crippled the African American community.

The horrible process began in 1947 when Jackie Robinson abandoned his Negro Baseball League in favor of the white majors. That tragedy animated one of the saddest social pathologies in all of history.

Once the miserable fever of integration infected the Negro League baseball, it spread with a dreadful quickness. Within thirty years, integration had waylaid in every major American city vibrant business centers and the cohesive cultures that surrounded them. We today find in their stead the dysfunctional ghetto communities that some sociologists fear will last longer than the institution of slavery.

Integration is indeed an infectious disease, and its terrible symptoms—as well as an unlikely antidote—reveal themselves if we examine the story of the Negro Baseball League.

Organized professional baseball began for African America in 1885. Local black-owned teams barnstormed the country, playing each other for money in black-owned stadiums packed with cheering families on summer evenings and Sunday afternoons. As baseball became an integral part of the African American experience, those stadium owners borrowed from black banks to upgrade and expand their facilities several times over. By the 1930s, Negro League team owners rented out and filled to capacity for their bigger games major league venues such as Chicago’s Comisky Park and New York’s Yankee Stadium.

As this industry thrived, so did the Black community. The Negro Baseball League was big business, and all its attendant beneficiaries were black: the team owners, concessioners, lawyers, accountants, insurers, managers, coaches, and stadium proprietors.

Families before and after the game would nosh snacks and sip beer at fashionable black-owned bars and restaurants (not just corner kitchens and rib joints, mind you, but restaurants, with waiters and chefs and table cloths and tipping). The traffic through the black business districts attracted consumers past an array of black enterprises: grocery stores and movie houses, banks, shops stuffed with clothes, furniture, and appliances, drug stores with their quaint soda fountains, and filling stations. They passed boutique law firms, well-appointed doctors’ offices, and real estate agencies whose livelihood depended exclusively on the amelioration of African Americans and the homes they lived in. They also passed black-owned newsstands dispensing African America’s primary information source: the black-owned newspaper. They even passed black-owned record shops that sold LPs pressed by black-owned labels, performed by artists managed by black administrators who booked them exclusively in black-owned concert halls and who jawboned their songs onto the playlists of black-owned AM radio stations.

The Negro Baseball League prospered in a bustling, self-sufficient African-American business cycle that now seems like a fairy tale.

Its owners leveraged their collective future against an ambitious platform of growth that rested on two assumptions. One, that the Negro League and the white majors would each make more money if their two camps merged, and two, that their black teams could beat the white teams. They negotiated exhibition games against the white franchises to prove their assumptions. Indeed, those games did generate sell-out crowds and demonstrate the supremacy of the black teams.

The Negro Baseball League proposed a graduated integration. Teams from each camp would play each other regularly during the season and in the playoffs. Black banks would provide capital to upgrade the Negro League’s stadiums that would soon fill with white fans and broadcast crews. Return on investment and player salaries would soar to major league levels, and the governing bodies of each camp would merge. Owners from each camp would trade for each others’ players, and their managers, coaches, and administrators would shuffle around the integrated league as they do now in search of promotion from club to club.
Eventually, there would be only one camp, the truly integrated major league.

The existing Negro League teams were to have grown into enormous franchises on the order of the Chicago White Sox or the New York Yankees. Judging by the large number of subsequent major league expansion franchises, there was indeed room for such growth.

But it was not to be. The white teams constructed a heinous counter scheme, terrible in dimension, but simple in structure.

White owners plucked the best ballplayers from the black teams. Starting with Jackie Robinson, they offered more money than the black teams could then afford. Within a dozen years, the country’s most exciting players had abandoned the institutions that had nurtured them in favor guaranteed affluence and national recognition. They were not permitted to bring with them the coaches and managers who developed them, the owners who risked their fortunes on them, or the business community that interdepended on them.

Thus today, while Africans fill-up the line-up, only a smattering of them coach or manage, much less own the teams and the stadiums, or the concession, accounting, and legal contracts.

This never would have happened had the players of the old Negro Baseball League stood by their owners. Instead, the league folded, as did the original notion of integration.

After taking-down the Negro Baseball League, this mutated strain of integration thereafter infected and killed every previously mentioned institution, from black-owned butcher shops and book stores, to black-owned hotels and shoe shops. Ironically, African American liberators inadvertently excited the spread of integration when they finally vanquished Jim Crow and the northern Black Codes. Black consumers and professionals were then as free as Jackie Robinson to abandon the institutions that segregation had once bound them to. As a result, more blacks now than ever shop at Macey’s and work for IBM, but there is no black-owned Macey’s or IBM.

All the old black profit centers are gone, long-since co-opted or crushed by white competitors. From record labels like Motown and Solar, which are now owned by white companies, to the old arenas and movie theaters, which are now abandoned hulks targeted by white gentrifiers.

It should not surprise us that the dismantling of the black economic cycle has coincided with the ascention of Patrick Moynihan’s “cycle of poverty.”

Only one component of the old black business community endures: the black college. Most black business districts had one. From Atlanta’s prestigious Morehouse/Spellman complex, to Houston’s Texas Southern University, to New Orleans’ Dillard. Years ago students at those schools walking to morning classes nodded hello to familiar alumni: lawyers, accountants, managers, and entrepreneurs on their way to work. Today students at those same campuses race to their cars after an evening’s library study, hounded by crack heads, teenaged gangsters, and idle adult males.

They may not suffer such menace much longer, as those colleges one by one begin to close their doors. Black students and faculty increasingly snub the black colleges that nurture scholarship and instead join white research facilities that posture as universities. As the percentage of black students and professors who choose white “universities” increases, so does the percentage of black colleges that are pressed into desperate financial straits. All over the country, these colleges — many of them over a hundred years old — choose between shutting down and being co-opted by nearby white schools.

As black sports fans visiting the colored section of their first white ball park began to wonder if the Negro Baseball League was any longer necessary, blacks on white campuses now openly question the relevance of black colleges.

The history of the Negro Baseball League suggests that the survival of those schools is crucial to any hope of ever reanimating the black economic cycle. If true, today’s African American scholars and professors confront an exciting if not inconvenient challenge. They can stand by the black schools—not by cheering out from the dorms and faculty lounges on some white campus—but by enrolling and teaching there full-time; in that case, the African American colleges will grow into universities offering the same lucrative and highly-visible positions that now only the white research facilities can. On the other hand, African American students and professors can instead follow as they have the tragic lead of Jackie Robinson; in that case, however, their personal success may be overcompensated for by a larger loss.
Recurring Nightmares

by Ashley Raiteri

I have been having these dreams lately. It's always the same concepts, maybe different details but the same concepts. When I was a student in high school, we wanted to give our lives to the causes of the Great Communicator. I formed a Young Republicans club for my town, and we started to work on keeping the Reagan influence pervasive in society by campaigning for the election of George Bush. We stuffed envelopes, compiled mailing lists, called people (mostly Democrats who had voted Republican in the last election,) and anything else we could do to spread the pro-Bush pro-establishment propaganda. Bush won. And then I grew older.

I sometimes feel like Paul the apostle, from the Bible. Like the way Paul was persecuting Christians, I was helping to oppress people of color, women, poor whites, and anybody the establishment oppresses. So then God blinds Saul and Saul changes his ways and becomes Paul. So I grew older and now, one of the things I like to do is persecute the Christian Church. But I didn’t change my name along with my political philosophies. So I must be a little worried my past will catch up to me.

On with the dreams. The former actor, Reagan, and the current New World Order Leader, Bush, keep showing up. Dream one: Bush invites me to the White House to celebrate the opening of his new environmental proposal for the nation. I travel to the White house on this mega-huge highway complex that recurs in all the dreams of Bush and Reagan. There are forty or fifty lanes. Everyone is moving at a few hundred mph, and the smog is so thick we have to track our position by radar. What you can see is that where fields of grain should be there are only oceans of cement, and plastic trees. When I arriving representing the Left, I discover the package is a sham that doubles the number of McDonalds sites and puts Exxon in charge of the world’s natural resources. So of course I’m enraged to discover I was being used to give credibility to this atrocity. But instead of just punching George in the nose like I wanted to, I got a little league baseball team to clobber him with their aluminum bats.

Dream Two: Reagan and Bush come to my parents’ house for dinner. I attempt to argue with the two about what is necessary to save the inner cities and help fight patriarchy and care about a nation of individuals. They respond with comments like, “If we could get it through Congress, we’d like to require applicants for welfare consent to be fixed so they can no longer reproduce.”

After a few of these, the battle gets intense and George calls me a communist, homosexual, ignorant, snotty, bleeding heart, pre-pubescent, 19-yr-old kid who barely knows how to wipe his ass. At this point, my parents apologize for my behavior and begin to tell me that “you just don’t know what it’s all about. You don’t understand how the world works.”

I understand enough.
Bush said

"I feel rather calm about it. We have a game plan, and we..."