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MAKING NO COMPROMISE WITH THE PUBLIC TASTE

Margaret C. Anderson
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Imaginary Letters

(Six Letters of William Bland Burn to his Wife)

Wyndham Lewis

The Code of a Herdsman

(A set of rules sent by Benjamin Richard Wing to his young friend Philip Seddon inclosed with a letter. Under the above title now edited.)

(1) Never maltreat your own intelligence with parables. It is a method of herd-hypnotism. Do not send yourself to sleep with the rhythm of the passes that you make. As an example of herd-hypnotism, German literature is so virulently allegorized that the German really never knows whether he is a Kangaroo a Scythian, or his own sweet self. You, however, are a Herdsman. That is surely Parable enough!

(2) Do not admit cleverness, in any form, into your life. Observe the accomplishment of some people’s signatures! It is the herd-touch.

(3) Exploit Stupidity. Introduce a flatness, where it is required into your commerce. Dull your eye as you fix it on a dull face. Why do you think George Borrow used such idiotic clichés as “The beams of the descending luminary—?” He was a great writer and knew what he was doing. Mock the herd perpetually with the grimance of its own garrulity or deadness. If it gets out of hand and stampedes towards you, leap on to the sea of mangy backs until the sea is still. That is: cast your mask aside, and spring above them. They cannot see or touch anything above.

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them: they have never realized that their backs—or rather their
tops—exist! They will think that you have vanished into
Heaven.

(4) As to language: eschew all clichés implying a herd person-
ality. Never allow such terms as Top-Hole, Priceless, or Doggo to
pass your lips. Go to the Dictionary if you want an epithet. If you
feel eloquent, use that moment to produce a cliché of your own.
Cherish your personal vocabulary, however small it is. Use your
own epithet as though it were used by a whole nation, if people
would have no good reason for otherwise accepting it.

Examples of personal epithets.
That man is abysmal.
That is an abysmal book.
It was prestigious!
Here comes that sinister bird! {Borrowed from the French.
He is a sinister card. (Combination of French and 1890 Slang.)
He has a great deal of sperm.
I like a fellow with as much sperm as that.

Borrow from all sides mannerisms of callings or classes to
enrich your personal bastion of language. Borrow from the
pulpit, from the clattering harangue of the auctioneer, the law-
ner’s technicality, the pomposity of politicians.=Borrow grunts
from the fisherman, solecisms from the inhabitant of Merioneth.
=“He is a preux, ah, yes-a-preux!” You can say—“ah-
yes-a-preux” as though it were one word, accent on the “yes.”

(5) In accusing yourself, stick to the Code of the Mountain.
But crime is alien to a Herdsman’s nature.

(6) Yourself must be your Caste.

(7) Cherish and develop, side by side, your six most constant
indications of different personalities. You will then acquire the
potentiality of six men. Leave your front door one day at B.:
The next march down the street as E. A variety of clothes,
hats especially, are of help in this wider dramatisation of your-
self. Never fall into the vulgarity of being or assuming yourself
to be one ego. Each trench must have another one behind it.
Each single self—that you manage to be at any given time—must
have five at least indifferent to it. You must have a power of
indifference of five to one. All the greatest actions in the world
have been five parts out of six impersonal in the impulse of their
origin. To follow this principle you need only cultivate your
memory. You will avoid being the blind man of any moment.
B will see what is hidden to D. (=Who were Turgenev's "Six Unknown"? Himself.)

(8) Never lie. You cannot be too fastidious about the truth. If you must lie, at least see that you lie so badly that it would not deceive a pea-hen.—The world is, however, full of pea-hens.

(9) Spend some of your spare time every day in hunting your weaknesses, caught from commerce with the herd, as methodically, solemnly and vindictively as a monkey his fleas. You will find yourself swarming with them while you are surrounded by humanity. But you must not bring them up on the mountain.== If you can get another man to assist you—one, that is, honest enough not to pass his own on to you—that is a good arrangement.

(10) Do not play with political notions, aristocratisms or the reverse, for that is a compromise with the herd. Do not allow yourself to imagine "a fine herd though still a herd." There is no fine herd. The cattle that call themselves "gentlemen" you will observe to be a little cleaner. It is merely cunning and produced with a product called soap. But you will find no serious difference between them and those vast dismal herds they avoid. Some of them are very dangerous and treacherous.= Be on your guard with the small herd of gentlemen!

(11) You will meet with this pitfall: at moments, surrounded by the multitude of unsatisfactory replicas, you will grow confused by a similarity bringing them so near to us.== You will reason, where, from some points of view, the difference is so slight, whether that delicate margin is of the immense importance that we hold it to be: the only thing of importance in fact.== That group of men talking by the fire in your club (you will still remain a member of your club), that party at the theatre, look good enough, you will say. Their skins are fresh, they are well-made, their manners are good. You must then consider what they really are. On closer inspection you know, from unpleasant experience, that they are nothing but limitations and vulgarities of the most irritating description. The devil Nature has painted these sepulchres pink, and covered them with a blasphemous Bond Street distinction. Matter that has not sufficient mind to permeate it grows, as you know, gangrenous and rotten. Animal high spirits, a little, but easily exhausted, goodness, is all that they can claim.
What seduced you from your severity for a moment was the same thing as a dull woman's good-looks. This is probably what you will have in front of you. On the other hand, everywhere you will find a few people, who, although not a mountain people are not herd. They may be herdsmen gone mad through contact with the herd, and strayed; or through inadequate energy for our task they may be found there; or they may be a hybrid, or they may even be herdsmen temporarily bored with the mountain. (I have a pipe below myself sometimes.)

There are numerous “other denominations.” Treat them as brothers. Employ them, as opportunity offers, as auxiliaries in your duties. Their society and help will render your task less arduous.

(12) As to women: wherever you can, substitute the society of men. Treat them kindly, for they suffer from the herd, although of it, and have many of the same contempts as yourself. They are a sort of bastard mountain people. There must be somewhere a female mountain, a sort of mirage-mountain. I should like to visit it. But women, and the processes for which they exist, are the arch conjuring trick; and they have the cheap mystery and a good deal of the slipperiness, of the conjuror. Sodomy should be avoided, as far as possible. It tends to add to the abominable confusion already existing.

(13) Wherever you meet a shyness that comes out of solitude, (although all solitude is not anti-herd) naiveness, and a patent absence of contamination, the sweetness of mountain water, any of the signs of goodness, you must treat that as sacred, as portions of the mountain.

However much you suffer for it, you must defend and exalt it. On the other hand, every child is not simple, and every woman is not weak. In many cases to champion a female would be like springing to the rescue of a rhinoceros when you notice that it had been attacked by a flea. Chivalrous manners, again, with many women are like tiptoeing into a shed where an ox is sleeping. Some children, too, rival in nastiness their parents. But you have your orders in this matter. Indifference where there should be nothing but the whole eagerness or compunction of your being, is the worst crime in the mountain's eyes.

(14) Conquests have usually been divided from their antitheses, and defeats from conquests, by some casual event. Had Moscow not possessed a governor ready to burn the Kremlin
and the hundreds of palaces accumulated there, peace would have been signed by the Czar at Bonaparte's entrance. Had the Llascans persevered for ten days against Cortés, the Aztecs would never have been troubled. Yét Montezuma was right to remain inactive, paralysed by prophecy. Napoleon was right when he felt that his star was at last a useless one. He had drained it of all its astonishing effulgence. The hair's breadth is only the virtuosity of Fate, guiding you along imaginary precipices. And all the detail is make-believe, anyway. Watch your star soberly and without comment. Do not trouble about the paste-board cliffs!

(15) *There are very stringent regulations* about the herd keeping off the sides of the mountain. In fact your chief function is to prevent their encroaching. Some, in moments of boredom or vindictiveness, are apt to make rushes for the higher regions. Their instinct always fortunately keeps them in crowds or bands, and their trespassing is soon noticed. Those traps and numerous devices you have seen on the edge of the plain are for use, of course, in the last resort. Do not apply them prematurely. Not very many herdsmen lose their lives in dealing with the herds.

(16) Contradict yourself. In order to live, you must remain broken up.

(17) The teacher does not have to be, although he has to know: He is the mind imagining, not the executant. The executant, the young, svelt, miraculous athelete, the strapping virtuoso, really has to give the illusion of a perfection. Do not expect *me* to keep in sufficiently good training to perform the feats I recommend. I usually remain up on the mountain.

(18) Above all this sad commerce with the herd, let something veritably remain "un peu sur la montagne." Always come down with masks and thick clothing to the valley where we work. Stagnant gasses from these Yahooesque and rotten herds are more dangerous often than the wandering cylinders that emit them. See you are not caught in them without your mask. But once returned to our adorable height, forget your sallow task: with great freedom indulge your love. The terrible processions beneath are not of our making, and are without our pity. Our sacred hill is a volcanic heaven. But the result of its violence is peace. The unfortunate surge below, even, has moments of peace.

*(Next letter will appear in August number.)*
Poems

T. S. Eliot

Le Directeur

Malheur à la malheureuse Tamise!
Qui coule si près du Spectateur.
Le directeur
Conservateur
Du Spectateur
Empeste la brise.
Les actionnaires
Réactionnaires
Du Spectateur
Conservateur
Bras dessus bras dessous
Font des tours
A pas de loup.
Dans un égout
Une petite fille
En guenilles
Camarade
Regarde
Le directeur
Du Spectateur
Conservateur
Et crève d'amour.
Mélange adultère de tout
En Amerique, professeur;
En Angleterre, journaliste;
C'est à grands pas et en sueur
Que vous suivrez à peine ma piste.
En Yorkshire, conferencier;
A Londres, un peu banquier,
Vous me paierez bien la tête.
C'est à Paris que je me coiffe
Casque noir de jemenfoutiste.
En Allemagne, philosophe
Surexcité par Emporheben
Au grand air de Bergsteigleben;
J'erre toujours de-ci de-là
A divers coups de tra la la
De Damas jusqu'à Omaha.
Je célébrai mon jour de fête
Dans une oasis d'Afrique
Vetu d'une peau de girafe.

On montrera mon cénotaphe
Aux côtes brûlantes de Mozambique.

Lune de Miel
Ils ont vu les Pays-Bas, ils rentrent à Terre Haute;
Mais une nuit d'été, les voici à Ravenne,
A l'aise entre deux draps, chez deux centaines de punaises;
La sueur aestivale, et une forte odeur de chienne.
Ils restent sur le dos écartant les genoux
De quatre jambes molles tout gonflées de morsures.
On relève le drap pour mieux égratigner.
Moins d'une lieue d'ici est Saint Apollinaire
In Classe' basilique connue des amateurs
De chapitaux d'acanthe que tournoie le vent.

Ils vont prendre le train de huit heures
Prolonger leurs misères de Padoue à Milan
Ou se trouvent le Cène, et un restaurant pas cher.
Lui pense aux pourboires, et rédige son bilan.
Ils auront vu la Suisse et traversé la France
Et Saint Apollinaire, raide et ascétique,
Vieille usine désaffectée de Dieu, tient encore
Dans ses pierres écroulantes la forme précise de Byzance.

The Hippopotamus

The broad backed hippopotamus
Rests on his belly in the mud;
Although he seems so firm to us
Yet he is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh-and-blood is weak and frail,
Susceptible to nervous shock;
While the True Church can never fail
For it is based upon a rock.

The hippo's feeble steps may err
In compassing material ends,
While the True Church need never stir
To gather in its dividends.

The potamus can never reach
The mango on the mango-tree;
But fruits of pomegranate and peach
Refresh the Church from over sea.
At mating time the hippo's voice
Betrayed inflexions hoarse and odd,
But every week we hear rejoice
The Church, at being one with God.

The hippopotamus's day
Is past in sleep; at night he hunts;
God works in a mysterious way—
The Church can sleep and feed at once.

I saw the potamus take wing
Ascending from the damp savannas,
And quiring angels round him sing
The praise of God, in loud hosannas.

Blood of the Lamb shall wash him clean
And him shall heavenly arms enfold,
Among the saints he shall be seen
Performing on a harp of gold.

He shall be washed as white as snow,
By all the martyr'd virgins kist,
While the True Church remains below
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.
They entered between two fir trees. A path of irregular flat pentagonal stones led along between shrubbery. Halting by the central court in a sort of narrow gallery, the large tank was below them, and in it some thirty or forty blond nereids for the most part well-muscled, with smooth flaxen hair and smooth faces—a generic resemblance. A slender brown wench sat at one end listlessly dabbling her feet from the spring-board. Here the water was deeper.

The rest of them, all being clothed in white linen shifts held up by one strap over the shoulder and reaching half-way to the knees, the rest of them waded waist- and breast-deep in the shallower end of the pool, their shifts bellied up by the air, spread out like huge bobbing cauliflowers.

The whole tank was sunken beneath the level of the gardens, and paved and panelled with marble, a rather cheap marble. To the left of the little gallery, where the strangers had halted, an ample dowager sat in a perfectly circular tub formed rather like the third of an hogshead, behind her a small hemicycle of yew trees kept off any chance draught from the North. She likewise wore a shift of white linen. On a plank before her, reaching from the left to the right side of her tank-hogshead, were a salver with a large piece of raw smoked ham, a few leeks, a tankard of darkish beer, a back-scratcher, the ham-knife.

Before them, from some sheds, there arose a faint steam, the sound of grunts and squeals and an aroma of elderly bodies. From the opposite gallery a white-beared town-councillor began to throw grapes to the nereids.

Le Sieur de Maunsier: They have closed these places in Marseilles, causa flegitii, they were thought to be bad for our morals.
Poggio: And are your morals improved?
Maunsier: Nein, bin nicht verbessert.
Poggio: And are the morals of Marseilles any better?
Maunsier: Not that I know of. Assignations are equally frequent; the assignors less cleanly; their health, I presume, none
The Church has always been dead set against washing. St. Clement of Alexandria forbade all bathing by women. He made no exception. Baptism and the last oiling were enough, to his thinking. St. Augustine, more genial and human, took a bath to console himself for the death of his mother. I suspect that it was a hot one. Being clean is a pagan virtue, and no part of the light from Judaea.

Poggio: Say rather a Roman, the Greek philosophers died, for the most part, of lice. Only the system of empire, plus a dilettaentism in luxuries, could have brought mankind to the wash-tub. The christians have made dirt a matter of morals: a son of God can have no need to be cleansed; a worm begotten in sin and foredoomed to eternal damnation in a bottle of the seven great stenches, would do ill to refine his nostrils and unfit himself for his future. For the elect and the rejected alike, washing is either noxious or useless—they must be transcendent at all costs. The rest of the world must be like them; they therefore look after our morals. Yet this last term is wholly elastic. There is no system which has not been tried, wedlock or unwedlock, a breeding on one mare or on many; all with equal success, with equal flaws, crimes, and discomforts.

Maunsier: I have heard there was no adultery found in Sparta.

Poggio: There was no adultery among the Lacedaemonians because they held all women in common. A rumour of Troy had reached the ears of Lycurgus: "So Lycurgus thought also there were many foolish vain joys and fancies, in the laws and orders of other nations, touching marriage: seeing they caused their bitches and mares to be lined and covered with the fairest dogs and goodliest stallions that might be gotten, praying and paying the maisters and owners of the same: and kept their wives notwithstanding shut up safe under lock and key, for fear lest other than themselves might get them with child, although themselves were sickly, feeble-brained, extreme old." I think I quote rightly from Plutarch. The girls of Lacedaemon played naked before the young men, that their defects should be remedied rather than hidden. A man first went by stealth to his mistress, and this for a long space of time; thus learning address and silence. For better breeding Lycurgus would not have children the property of any one man, but sought only that they should be born of the lustiest women, begotten of the most vigorous seed.

Maunsier: Christianity would put an end to all that, yet I think there was some trace left in the lex Germanica, and in some of
our Provençal love customs; for under the first a woman kept whatever man she liked, so long as she fancied: the children being brought up by her brothers, being a part of the female family, cognati. The chivaleric system is smothered with mysticism, and is focussed all upon pleasure, but the habit of older folk-custom is at the base of its freedoms, its debates were on matters of modus.

These girls look very well in their shifts. They confound the precepts of temperance.

_Poggio:_ I have walked and ridden through Europe, annoting, observing. I am interested in food and the animal.

There was, before I left Rome, a black woman for sale in the market. Her breasts stuck out like great funnels, her shoulders were rounded like basins, her biceps was that of a wheel-wright; these upper portions of her, to say nothing of her flattened-in face, were disgusting and hideous but, she had a belly like Venus. from below the breasts to the crotch she was like a splendid Greek fragment. She came of a tropical meat-eating tribe. I observe that gramenivorous and fruit-eating races have shrunken arms and shoulders, narrow backs and weakly distended stomachs. Much beer enlarges the girth in old age, at a time when the form in any case, might have ceased to give pleasure. The men of this nubian tribe were not lovely; they were shaped rather like almonds: the curious roundness in the front aspect, a gradual sloping-in toward the feet, a very great muscular power, a silhouette not unlike that of an egg, or perhaps more like that of a tadpole.

Civilized man grows more frog-like, his members become departmental.

_Mausier:_ But fixed. Man falls into a set gamut of types. His thoughts also. The informed and the uninformed, the clodhopper and the civilian are equally incapable of trusting an unwonted appearance. Last week I met an exception, and for that cause the matter is now in my mind, and I am, as they say “forming conclusions.” The exception, an Englishman, had found a parochial beauty in Savoia, in the inn of a mountain town, a “local character” as he called her. He could not describe her features with any minute precision, but she wore, he remembered, a dress tied up with innumerable small bits of ribbon in long narrow bow-knots, limp, hanging like grass-blades caught in the middle. She came in to him as a sort of exhibit. He kissed her hand.
sat by his bedside and conversed with him pleasantly. They were quite alone for some time. Nothing more happened. From something in his manner, I am inclined to believe him. He was convinced that nothing more ever did happen.

Poggio: Men have a curious desire for uniformity. Bawdry and religion are all one before it.

Maunsiers: They call it the road to salvation.

Poggio: They ruin the shape of life for a dogmatic exterior. What dignity have we over the beasts, save to be once, and to be irreplaceable!

I myself am a rag-bag, a mass of sights and citations, but I will not beat down life for the sake of a model.

Maunsier: Would you be "without an ideal?"

Poggio: Is beauty an ideal like the rest? I confess I see the need of no other. When I read that from the breast of the Princess Hellene there was cast a cup of "white gold," the sculptor finding no better model; and that this cup was long shown in the temple at Lyndos, which is in the island of Rhodes; or when I read, as I think is the textual order, first of the cup and then of its origin, there comes upon me a discontent with human imperfection. I am no longer left in the "slough of the senses," but am full of heroic life, for the instant. The sap mounts in the twigs of my being.

The visions of the mystics give them like courage, it may be.

Maunsier: My poor uncle, he will talk of the slough of the senses and the "loathsome pit of contentment." His "ideas" are with other men's conduct. He seeks to set bounds to their actions.

I cannot make out the mystics; nor how far we may trust to our senses, and how far to sudden sights that come from within us, or at least seem to spring up within us: a mirage, an elf-music; and how far we are prey to the written word.

Poggio: I have seen many women in dreams, surpassing most mortal women, but I doubt if I have on their account been stirred to more thoughts of beauty, than I have had meditating upon that passage in Latin, concerning the temple of Pallas at Lyndos and its memorial cup of white gold. I do not count myself among Plato's disciples.

Maunsier: And yet it is forced upon us that all these things breed their fanatics; that even a style might become a religion and breed bigots as many, and pestilent.

Poggio: Our blessing is to live in an age when some can hold a
fair balance. It can not last; many are half-drunk with freedom; a greed for taxes at Rome will raise up envy, a cultivated court will disappear in the ensuing reaction. We are fortunate to live in the wink, the eye of mankind is open; for an instant, hardly more than an instant. Men are prized for being unique. I do not mean merely fantastic. That is to say there are a few of us who can prize a man for thinking, in himself, rather than for a passion to make others think with him.

Perhaps you are right about style; an established style could be as much a nuisance as any other establishment. Yet there must be a reputable normal. Tacitus is too crabbed. The rhetoricians ruined the empire. Let us go on to our baths.

Finis

Three Nightpieces

John Rodker

TOWARD eight o'clock I begin to feel my pulses accelerating quietly. A little after, my heart begins to thump against its walls. I tremble all over, and leaving the room rapidly go out on the terrace of the house and look over the weald. There is a shadowiness of outline and the air is crisp. The sky in one corner is a pale nostalgic rose. The trees look like weeds and a bird flies up through them like a fish lazily rising. The hills really look like breasts: and each moment I look for the head of the Titan negress to rise with the moon in the lobe of her ear.

I think of my youth and the intolerable legacy it left me. I think of the crazy scaffolding of my youth and wonder why I should be surprised that the superstructure should be crazy too, wavering to every breeze and threatening ever to come down about my ears. I think too of wrongs done to this one and that one, and ..... "Oh, my God," I cry, "I did not know, I did not know," and my heart thumps louder in my breast and my pulses throb like a tide thundering and sucking at some crumbling jetty.

I gulp deep breaths of air to steady myself, but it is of no good. I think of her whom I love and futility overwhelms me: for this too will have its common end, and our orbits grow ever remoter.
And putting my head on my breast, faint and reminiscent—the smell from my armpits rises to my brain, and she stands before me vividly and the same smell comes from her; but it is more heady and more musky and she looks at me with intolerable humility.

And a minute after there is only the dark; a hoot-owl's terrifying call and the queer yap that comes in reply; the frogs that thud through the grass like uncertain feet; the trees that talk to each other.

And I would willingly let my life out gurgling and sticky, and sink without a bubble into its metallic opacity.

II

I had gone to bed quietly at my wife's side, kissing her casually as was my custom. I awoke about two in the morning with a start so sudden that it seemed I had been shot by a cannon out of the obscurity of sleep into the light of waking; at one moment I had been, as it were, gagged and bound by sleep; and the next I was wide awake and could distinctly sense the demarking line between sleep and waking. And this demarking line was like a rope made of human hair such as one sees in exhibitions of indigenous Japanese products.

In my ears still rang the after-waves of the shriek which had awakened me. The nerves governing my skin were still out of control as a result of the sudden fright, and portions of it continued twitching for a long time after; my scalp grew cold in patches and my hair stood on end. . . . In the dark I found myself trembling all over and bathed in a cold sweat. . . . And it was impossible to collect myself. My wife, I felt, was sitting up in bed and a minute afterward she began to weep quietly.

I was still trembling and her quiet weeping made me more afraid. I was angry with her too, but could not talk to her, I was so afraid. My voice, I knew, would have issued thin and quavering, and I was afraid of its hollow reverberations losing themselves uncertainly in the darkness. By the little light I saw her put her hands up to her head in despair. . . . as though still half asleep; and before I could stop her again the same piercing, incredibly terrifying shriek burst from her. Again I trembled all over, involuntarily gnashing my teeth and feeling my skin ripple like loathsome worms.
“Stop,” I cried, seizing her by the arms, “Stop,” afraid to wake her, yet more afraid to hear again that appalling shriek—and in a moment she was awake....looking wildly round her, and the quiet weeping gave way to a wild and tempestuous sobbing.

I was afraid of her, afraid to go on sleeping with her, lest she should again shriek in that wild and unearthly fashion; afraid to fall asleep again lest I should be awakened by that appalling shriek dinning in my ears and my body quivering vilely under the impossible sound. I clung to her: “What is it, tell me at least what it is,” I said.

For a time she would not tell me. Trembling all over with anguish and fear of I knew not what, I insisted. When at last she did tell me it was as though the world had suddenly been cut away from under my feet. Helplessly and weeping I clung to her, with cold at my heart. That any human being could accuse another of devilry so sinister, so cold, so incredible even in dream, I had not conceived of. Loathing her, I clung the closer in my anguish and despair.

III

ONE night at supper I had eaten cucumber. Soon after I went to bed and on the first strokes of ten fell asleep.

After sleeping for a long time I awoke into a dimly lit room. I still lay on the bed and after a moment a figure entered, and after a few moments more, another, until in this fashion there were half a dozen people in the room. I could not distinguish who they were, and quietly and obscurely they moved round my bed. Now and then there was a hiss out of the corners of the room, or a chuckle in reply to some unheard obscenity. 

A heavy weight oppressed me as though I knew they menaced me in some obscure and dreadful way. I could not move. I could not move, and always the same obscure and dreadful procession encircled me and shadowy bodies pressed a little closer, then drew back again to join the sinister group.

And though I saw nothing save their shadowy forms, I knew their eyes gleamed down at me: their faces were lecherous: their hands clawed; and forever and through long ages they went round me in sinister procession.

Suddenly....and how I do not know, I had broken the bonds of of sleep and lay trembling in a cold sweat. Through my protecting blankets the last strokes of ten were fading.
Improvisations

Louis Gilmore

I
My thoughts are fish
That dwell in a twilight
Of green waters:

They are silver fish
That dart here and there
Streaking the still water
Of a pond.

My thoughts are birds
That have hung their nests
Near the sun:

They are yellow birds
That drift on stretched wings
Over a sea untroubled
By a sail.

My thoughts are beasts
That crouch and wait
In a black forest.

My thoughts are apes
That clamber through the tree-tops
Towards the moon.

II.
In winter
People intensify
Their individuality
In houses.

In spring
By the side of lakes
Beneath trees
People walk
Vaguely sentimental.

In summer
Lying upon the warm earth
They hear the grass grow;
Or they become impersonal
In a contemplation
Of stars.

In autumn
People dispel
The characteristic
Melancholy of the season
With a cup of tea.

III

Rare delight,
That of hanging
By one's tail
Over a pond.

Rare delight,
That of seeing
A green monkey
In the sky.

Rare delight,
That of reaching up
With one's paw
To touch it.

Rare delight,
That of finding
The strange one
In the water.

Rare delight.
That of clasping
The beloved
In death.
Poet's Heart
Maxwell Bodenheim

The Mad Shepherd
The Narcissus Peddler
The Slender Nun
The Wine Jar Maiden
The Poet

A great window of palest purple light. The lower corner of the window is visible. A dark purple wall frames the window, and narrow rectangles of the wall, below and to the left of the window-corner, are visible. Before the window corner is the portion of a pale pink floor. One tall thin white candle stands against the dark purple rectangle of wall to the left of the window-corner. It bears a narrow flame which remains stationary. Soft and clear light, pours in from the window-corner and dim shapes stand behind it. The Mad Shepherd appears from the left. He holds a reed to his lips but does not blow into it. A long brown cloak drapes him: black sandals are on his feet. His black hair caresses his shoulders; his face is young. He pauses, three-fourths of his body framed by the palest purple window-corner.

The Mad Shepherd (addressing the palest purple window-corner):

I've lost a tune. It's a spirit-rose, and a reed-limbed boy ran before me and whisked it past my ears before I could seize him. Have you seen him, window clearer than the clashing light bubbles in a woman's eyes? (A pause). I sat on a rock in the midst of my sheep and smiled at the piping of my young soul, as it climbed a spirit-tree. Soon it would whirl joyously on the tip of the tree, and my heart would turn with it. Then the song brushed past me and made my head a burning feather dropping down. I stumbled after it, over the sun-dazed hills, and the reed-limbed boy would often stop, touch both of my eyes with the song-flower, and spring away. I saw him dance into this black palace. I followed, through high corridors, to you, palest purple window, towering over me like a silent mass of breath-clear souls. He has gone. Palest purple window, tell me where he is?

(There is a short silence. The Mad Shepherd stands despairingly fingering his reed. The Narcissus Peddler appears from the right. He is an old man, a huge basket of cut narcissus strapped
to his back. His body is tall and slender; his face a bit yellow, with a long silver-brown beard. His head is bare. He wears a black velvet coat, pale yellow shirt, soft grey, loose trousers, and black sandals. He rests his basket upon the floor. The Mad Shepherd takes a step toward him, wearily).

The Narcissus Peddler:
A Voice walked into me, one day. How he found me, sleeping between two huge purple hills, I do not know. He said with a laugh that had ghosts of weeping in it that he knew a garden where narcissus flowers grew taller than myself. What was there to do?—my soul and I, we had to walk with him. He lead us to this palace, spinning the thread of a laugh behind him so that we could follow. But now he has gone, and there is no window—only a palest purple window.

The Mad Shepherd:
We can leap through this window, but it may be a trap.

The Narcissus Peddler:
Or a dream?

The Mad Shepherd:
Perhaps this is a dream that is true—an endless dream.

The Narcissus Peddler:
Can that be death?

Mad Shepherd (pointing to the other's basket):
With death, you would have left your narcissus behind you, for fragrance itself.

Peddler:
If my life has melted to an endless dream, my chase is over. I shall sit here and my soul will become an endless thought of narcissus.

(He seats himself beside his basket; Shepherd stands despairingly; the Slender Nun appears from the right: She is small and her body like a thin drooping stem; she wears the black dress of a nun but her child face is uncovered. Her feet are bare. She stops, standing a step away from the Peddler)

The Slender Nun:
I see a candle that is like an arm stiffened in prayer. (She pauses) Palest purple window, is my soul standing behind you and spreading to light that gently thrusts me down? A flamed-losed angel lifted it from me. I ran after him. He seemed to touch you, window, like a vapor kiss dying upon pale purple silk. (a pause) Must I stand here always waiting for my soul like a flower petal pressed deep into the earth by passing feet?
The Shepherd:
You have lost a soul and I a tune. Let me make you the tune
and you make me your soul. You could sit with me on my
rock in the hills and make a soul of my reed—rippling and pip­
ing of you, I might weave a new tune.

The Nun:
Can you give me a soul that will be Christ floating out in clear
music? Only then I would go with you.

Shepherd (sadly):
My music is like the wet, quick kiss of rain. It knows nothing
of Christ.

(A short silence)

(The Wine jar maiden appears from the right. She is tall and
pale brown; upon her head is a long pale green jar; her hair is
black and spurts down. Her face is wide but delicately twisted.
She wears a thin simple pale green gown, with a black girdle about
her waist, one tasseled end hanging down. She stops a little behind
the Slender Nun, and lowers her wine-jar to the floor. The Nun
turns and partly faces her. The Narcissus Peddler looks up from
where he has sat, in a reverie, beside his basket.)

The Wine Jar Maiden:
My heart was a wine jar stained with the roses of frail dreams
and filled with wine that had turned to shaking mist. One day
I felt it wrenched from me, and mist drops that flew from it,
as it left, sank into my breast and made me shrink. I could
not see the thief, but I followed the scent of my heart trailing
behind him. It brought me here, but at this palest purple win­
dow it died. Scent of my heart, have you spread over this huge
window, and must I stand forever looking upon you?

(The Narcissus slowly rises and takes a stride toward the palest
purple window)

The Narcissus Peddler:
That dim shape behind the window—I believe it is a huge nar­
cissus. I am a rainbow-smeared knave to stand here juggling
the little golden balls of dreams. I shall spring through the
window.

The Slender Nun:
Take my hand when you spring. Perhaps this is God's forehead,
and we shall melt into it, like billows of rain washing into a
criff.

The Wine Jar Maiden:
If I leap through this window, a cloak of my heart-scent may
hang to me. I shall touch the cloak, now and then, and that
shall be my life.
The Mad Shepherd:
I must sit here, and whirl with my young spirit. If I cannot
knit together strands of music better than the tune I ran after,
then I should not have chased it.

(After a short silence the Narcissus Peddler and the Slender
Nun, hand in hand, leap through the window-corner and vanish.
The Wine Jar Maiden leaps after them, a moment later, and also
disappears. The Mad Shepherd sits down and blows little frag­
ments of piping into his reed, long pauses separating them. As
he does this, he looks up at the window, his head motionless. The
Narcissus Peddler, the Slender Nun and the Wine Jar Maiden
appear from the left walking slowly, in single file, as though in a
trance. The Narcissus Peddler stands beside his basket, which he
left behind him; the Wine Jar Maiden beside her jar, and the
Slender Nun between them)
The Mad Shepherd (looking up, astonished):
You return, like sleep-drooping poplar trees that have been
given wings and after long journeyings fly back to their little
blue-green hills.
The Narcissus Peddler:
After we sprang we found ourselves in a high corridor, whose
air was like the breath of a dying maiden—the corridor we
first walked down, before we came to this palest purple window.
The Mad Shepherd (wonderingly):
A dream with a strange, buried, quivering palace whose doors
are closed.
(The poet quietly appears from the right. He is dressed in a
deep crimson robe, pale brown turban and black sandals; his head
is bare. He surveys the others a moment, then touches the shoul­
der of the Wine Jar Maiden. She turns and stares at him. The
others turn also)
The Poet:
You are all in my heart—a wide space with many buried, black
palaces, huge pale-purple windows; hills with rocks for mad
shepherds, strolling flower venders, wine jar maidens dancing
in high courtyards hushed with quilted star-light and sometimes
a slender nun walking alone through the aisles of old reveries.
I have woven you into a poem, and you were drawn on by me.
But when my poems are made I take my people to a far-off
garden in my heart. There we sit beneath one of the shining
trees and talk. There I shall give you your soul, your heart,
your song—and your huge narcissus flower. And out of them
make other poems, perhaps? Come.
(He leads them away)
Spectrum
Emanuel Morgan
Opus 96

You are the Japan
Where cherries always blossom.
With you there is no meantime.

Your are the nightingale's twenty-four hours of song,
The unbroken Parthenon,
The everlasting purring of the sphynx.

At the first footfall of an uncouth season,
You migrate with one wing-sweep
To beauty.

The Reader Critic

Indiscriminate Illusions

E. L. R., Bear Creek, Pa.: After reading your article "Push Face" in your June number I have torn the magazine to pieces and burned it in the fire. You may discontinue my subscription.

[We have noticed with much amusement that whenever there is an article in the body of the magazine or a comment in the Reader Critic, no matter by whom signed, which seems "disgusting, ridiculous or immoral" to some struggling soul, in comes a letter addressed to Margaret Anderson, saying: "Your article, your comment." . . . . The only hope the editor can have out of so much generous accrediting is that some one sometime will write in giving her credit for Yeats's poems.—JH.]

Critical Epilepsy

I. E. P., White Plains, New York: Your magazine is rubbish, disappointingly insipid, heavily stupid. I fear it has gas on the stomach. Retract! Give us the unperverted, the natural, the "sincere." Our eyesight and pocket-books will not
The Little Review

endure *The Emperor's Cloak* (see H. C. Anderson). This vapid trance pose, this vaporizing makes us wonder why you are attempting to loop the loop. And again the "atmosphere" of your paper seems as well compassed as a spider's journey on the ceiling. We have the same feeling of wanting to help you both by poking you off with an umbrella.

M. H., La Grange, Illinois:

Some of your stories and criticisms I am glad to have read. I remember the interesting (and instructive) criticism on our four pianists and a wonderful short story by Sherwood Anderson,—those two things and a Harold Bauer eulogy are about the only two things I can recall favorably. A story written to protest against the hanging of one of our worst criminals (as in the very first *Little Review* I received—I remember because it disgusted me), another story ridiculing our part in the war (as in the last number), and other queer Emma Goldman sort of stories (in between these first and last copies) are way beyond me.

Why should one be a Democrat or a Christian or a Militarist or a Mrs. Potter-Palmer or a push-face policeman to believe in our cause for entering the war. I wish every paper and magazine might help inspire the right sort of war enthusiasm. Many, a few years ago, believed in peace at any price; but many minds have changed, including my own. If the real business of life is to live, we'll fight for the privilege so long as we can't rely on any other means of gaining that right. And we want at least a few more generations to live as well as our own. If there are various ideas of what "living" means I'm glad there are those who can never understand Emma Goldman's theories.

German women can't realize what "living" means if they feel obliged to get off the sidewalk to let pass a German officer. Do these men who are afraid to fight for their country know what living means —men who drink and smoke? Would they believe they stand less chance of recovery from sickness, less chance of resisting sickness, less chance of *living* very long, than the men who never touch alcohol or tobacco? (But this is not the point either, and men are reforming).

Anyway I would rather give a dollar and a half to the Red Cross than subscribe for *The Little Review*. And also I'm not intellectual enough to enjoy it.

[There is really nothing to be said to the above two letters: explanation up against what must be a matter of evolution. It would be necessary to give out sample copies for a year or so to prospective subscribers, to insure satisfaction before we take their money. Since there are Hearst publications to give the public what it wants in literature and art, the cinematagraph to give it what it wants in drama, why should that public bother at all with *The Little Review*? Especially when we state fairly that we are a magazine of the Arts, making no compromise with the public taste?—jh.]
Interest Begins at Home

F. E. R., Chicago:

I have just read your June issue. Won't you ask Ezra Pound if he should mind making an effort to be interesting?

[I ask you to make an effort to discover why he is so interesting.]

"The World's Immense Wound"

Why does Ezra Pound regard America with contempt? America is beneath it.

I have just read Muriel Ciolkowska's review in The Egoist of Le Feu by Henri Barbusse. In that book M. Barbusse has a character say: "One figure has risen above the war and will shine for the beauty and importance of his courage: Liebknecht."

How this book ever passed the censor is beyond me. To quote further:

The future! The future! The future's duty will be to efface the present, to efface it even more than you think, to efface it as something abominable and shameful. And yet this present was necessary! Shame to military glory, shame to armies, shame to the soldier's trade which tranforms men in turn from stupid victims to ignoble executioners.

A Feldwebel seated, leaning on the ripped-up planks of what was, there where we stand, a sentry-box. A little hole under one eye; a bayonet thrust has nailed him by his face to the boards. In front of him, also seated, with his elbows on his knees, his fists in his neck, a man shows a skull opened like a boiled egg.

Near them, appalling sentinel, half a man is standing: a man cut, sliced in two from skull to loins, leaning upright against the bank of earth. The other half is missing of this species of human peg, whose eye hangs out, whose bluish entrails twist in spirals round his leg.

"The whole book, from beginning to end," says Mme. Ciolkowska, "is a fearless revelation, be the theme drowning in swamps, the storming-parties, the dressing-stations, starvation and thirst which drives men to drink their own urine:"

Of the greatness and wealth of a country they make a devouring disease, a kind of cancer absorbing living forces, taking the whole place and crushing life and which, being contagious, ends either in the crisis of war or in the exhaustion and asphyxia of armed peace. Of how many crimes have they not made virtues by calling them national—with one word! They even deform truth. For eternal truth is substituted the national truth of each. So many peoples, so many truths, which twist and turn the truth. All those who keep up these children's disputes, so odiously ridiculous, scold each other, with: "It wasn't I who began, it was you," "No it wasn't I, it was you." "Begin if you dare."
"Begin, you." Puerilities which keep the world's immense wound sore because those really interested do not take part in the discussion and the desire to make an end of it does not exist; all those who cannot or will not make peace on earth; all those who clutch, for some reason or other, to the old state of things, finding or inventing reasons for it, those are your enemies!

In a word, the enemy is the past. The perpetrators of war are the traditionalists, steeped in the past . . . for whom an abuse has the power of law because it has been allowed to take root, who aspire to be guided by the dead and who insist on submitting the passionate, throbbing future and progress to the rule of ghosts and nursery fables.

"Verily the criminals are those who echo, 'because it was, it must be.'"

Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman have just been given a sentence of two years in prison, fines of ten-thousand dollars each, and deportation, for believing these same things!—M. C. A.

**Argument**

*Louis Putkelis, Cambridge, Mass.:*

I am thinking seriously on the subject of Art and I would like to have a clear exposition of your views and the reasons why they do not agree with mine.

Having the relation of art to life and to society, as a question, seriously to heart, I would prefer a serious reply to a serious article rather than a flippant reply to chance remarks. I had hoped that discussions would arise among the Reader Critic that would interest a larger circle of readers and that would sift the question thoroughly.

It seems to me that the last few numbers of *The Little Review* have been below your earlier standard—almost below zero. What sympathy can the majority of readers feel for the foreign editor, Ezra Pound, with his contemptuous invective against the "vulgus"? The last letter of Wyndham Lewis, to be sure, has more food for thought, though it seems that the author's acquaintance with Russian literature is rather limited. I could say more about that but I await the psychological moment.

[To be very serious I had no idea that this department was ever flippant. I thought we had said so much about art values that we couldn't go on boring our audience forever with the same discussions. And discussing Art isn't very profitable anyway. We're trying to show what it is. When you asked questions which seemed to me quite obvious, or at least seemed to show quite obviously that you didn't understand what we had said in clearing up those values, I knew no better way to point up our disagreement than by using what is known as "epithet" instead of going off into long serious discussions of matters that had already been "got across."
A contempt for the “vulgus” is the inevitable reaction of any man or woman who observes the antics of the “flies in the marketplace.” There’s nothing supercilious about it. It’s a fact that humanity is the most stupid and degraded thing on the planet—whether through its own fault or not is beside the point when you're weighing values. You're not blaming humanity when you say that; it isn't interesting to blame: the interesting thing is to put the truth of it into a form that will endure.—M. C. A.]

Note

Banish
Anne Knish,
Set the dog on
Emanuel Morgan.

Quotation

M. W., New York:

Here are two extracts from Jean Laher’s Le Breviare d’un Pantheist: their appearance in The Little Review should give a healthy jolt to many of your disdainful readers,—and many others will thank you silently from their innermost hearts for printing two of the most beautiful thoughts in any language.

“Nous sommes evant la Nature comme Hamlet devant sa mère: nous la jugeons et nous la condammons, et pourtant nous lui pardonnons aussi, comme Hamlet à un moment pardonne, saisi de pitié filiale ou seulement d’immense pitié humaine devant la vision, qui lui est ou dainement apparue, de tout le chaos des choses. Et nous, qui voulons ce qu'elle n'a pas voulu, et qui voulons plus et mieux que ce qu'elle a voulu, nous aussi nous réconcilierons avec elle, pour tenter de réparer son mal, autant qu’il se peut réparer. Et quoiqu'elle fasse ou qu'elle ait fait, nous nous rappellerons qu’après tout nous lui devons la vie, si nous lui devons la mort, la vie avec ses souffrances, ses angoisses, avec ses misères et ses crimes, avec tous ses mensonges, avec tout son néant, mais aussi avec quelques splendeurs, quelques illuminations fugitives, et quelques tendresses caressantes, et le vague amour d'Ophélie, et ces sentiments de miséricorde et de justice, qu'elle, inconsciente, ne connaı\'t pas, ou qu'elle ne connaı\'t que par nous, et qui en nous sont nés de notre rébellion contre elle.”

“En tout, je vois un rythme qui tend vers la beauté, mais quit trop rarement la prout; et la perception de ce rythme, plus ou moins apparent dans les choses, par instants, rassure et donne une jouissance infinie, à laquelle se vient mêler cependant une certaine souffrance ou mélancolie, celle du besoin insatisfait de la beauté parfaite en toutes choses.”
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People to whom the May, June and July numbers have been sent at Mr. Pound’s request will not receive August unless they subscribe.
THE LITTLE REVIEW

MARGARET C. ANDERSON, Editor

EZRA POUND, London Editor

THE LITTLE REVIEW ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTIONS TO APPEAR DURING THE NEXT FOUR MONTHS:

POEMS by WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS in August
LETTERS by WYNDHAM LEWIS
POEMS and DIALOGUES by T. S. ELIOT
EDITORIALS and DIALOGUES by EZRA POUND

MR. JAMES JOYCE will contribute to The Little Review as soon as circumstances permit. Editorials in The Little Review will respect no vested interests, no publishers’ interests, no aged magazines and reviews, nor staffs of the same.

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Today when you read "Huckleberry Finn" you will not laugh so much. You will chuckle often, but you will also want to weep. The deep humanity of it—the pathos, that you never saw, as a boy, will appeal to you now. You were too busy laughing to notice the limpid purity of the master's style.

MARK TWAIN

When Mark Twain first wrote "Huckleberry Finn" this land was swept with a gale of laughter. When he wrote "The Innocents Abroad" even Europe laughed at it itself. But one day there appeared a new book from his pen, so spiritual, so true, so lofty that those who did not know him well were amazed. "Joan of Arc" was the work of a poet—a historian—a seer. Mark Twain was all of these. His was not the light laughter of a moment's fun, but the whimsical humor that made the tragedy of life more bearable.

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