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NUMBER FOUR

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SECESSION

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FIVE

~~SIX~~ POEMS

IN QUEST OF OLYMPUS

LAST LOOKS AT THE LILACS

POSTER

THE HOTHOUSE PLANT

A GARDEN PARTY

CORRESPONDENCE

NOTE ON "DER STURM"

BOOK REVIEWS

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Hart Crane

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Slater Brown

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A MOTOR-CYCLE, AND OFF TO THE BEACH!

The sunlight is glowing golden on the fields full of marigold; the sunlight is flaming green in the first spray of leaves that sways in the trees; the sunlight is brown and gold over the meadows and along the highroad.

“All ready, Betty?”

“All ready, Jim.”

“Then I’ll let her rip.”

And off goes the motor-cycle, chuck-chuck, clatter, bang, sput-sput, sput-sput zip down the road between the green trees and out through the hills, Jim in front in the saddle, with his cap jammed backward over his glasses; Betty hanging on behind, astraddle, throwing back her head, and laughing with all her white teeth, as the air passes over her face and snatches at her hair.

“All there, Beth?”

“All there, Jim. Let’s go!”

“Faster?”

Jim turns on more gas, and off goes the old buzzer down the road, curving between the cars that already hum over the macadam in long lines this Sunday morning.

“There’s not a thing like it for speed, girl!”

“Keep it up! I adore going fast!”

Faster the trees blurr past, as the motor trembles and swerves; faster the houses and barns. The road whitens up to meet them, and flickers away behind — into villages, out of villages, faster, faster, down and away, white-hot with the motion and life of the day — trees merging into a haze-green fence with brown poles — houses like patches of white, with dark holes — faster and faster — chuck-chuck, rattle sput-sput sputspit down and away . . .

While above

The winds play gently back and forth,

And the long lazy clouds swing leisurely

Over the blazing sky.

IN THE COPLEY BALL-ROOM

Down
 it goes
 With a
 lingering swing,
 The long glowing rhythm
 of the low violin,
 Moving with a lilt,
 with a tilt,
 with a snatch,
 Down — down — with a wriggle,
 and a twinkle,
 and a catch. . . .

While the couples move silently over the floor, gliding in an undulating, arabesque curve; their shoulders poised, as they dip and swerve, as they lift, and linger, and lift once more: an intricate pattern of dark-clothed men, that mingles and merges, in softened yellow light, with the flimsy shimmer of green and white, following, fluttering, following again, — with the rose-red shimmer, the glimmering black, that passes, and turns, and surges back

To the insinuating moan
 And the syncopated croon
 Naseling out of the saxophone
 In a metal softness
 Of ripening tones,
 In a swaying tune.

And into the free space, here by the door, swing two that skim with the motion of one: her delicate amber ruffles run over the opaque black of his coat — his feet caress her moving feet in their golden-slippered following; and the

mounting flush of her petal-soft cheek brushes
the ruddiness of his face, their half-open lips
too tense to speak:

A whirl of grace,
And a pause and a poise,
And a restrained urge,
And a balanced joy. —

Lost again in the crowd and the surge that
catches at the rhythm of the violin, the rhythm
that halts, and holds, and proceeds, that spins
up — and glows *down*
and flares
and recedes

SEARCHLIGHTS

Like five straight fingers
The searchlights move their stiff whiteness over
heaven,
Feeling into the blue-black yielding of space.
But their dim stripes cannot dull the stars,
Their slim mist cannot frost the whiteness of
fire:
And when they reach out to touch glowing
patterns,
They fail and fade into pale-green vagueness,
Blunted against infinity.

STAR — WIND

The branches shiver in the hanging night,
As if the rain were splashing in the leaves.
But it is only rhythmic-running wind:
The cloudless sky is full of distant stars.

MOON — GARDEN

What have I done to you? What have I done?

Is it my moons are too beautiful,
 You that have only one?
 My pale pink moon of peony-petals,
 My deep round crimson-dahlia moon,
 My twilight garden where the day's wind settles?
 I have moons delicately green,
 Faintly flavored with mint, like ice;
 I have moons infinitely white,
 With a silent fragrance within their light;
 Here are great marble discs hung in the sky,
 And gongs of shivering gold-grey metals;
 Here are torn clouds with their tigerlilies:
 A million beauties, blood blood-red beauties.

O you looking over my wall,
 You looking into my garden that see
 One flower — one:
 My eyes have passed your painted picture-post-
 card moon
 And seen not what you see
 But my garden, my flowers, my rose-cool
 beauties,
 My fire of paradise, winterless June.

That it is I have done to you! That have I done!

THE JILTED MOON

To me are no more than Chinese, a moon,
 Are no more than Chinese.

RICHARD ASHTON

IN QUEST OF OLYMPUS

I.

With an uncertain tide — or better, current, since I am speaking of a little lake, or an enormous spring, or some sort of underground river — I simply took all chances and allowed myself to drift. For the most part it was black; me lying in the bottom of the boat, conscious by means of some complicated mechanism of sensation, or rather, some peculiar centralization from divers termini, of a gentle motion; the boat scraping now and then against an unseen rock that jutted up, or perhaps the sides of the cavern. Once or twice I passed a little ball of pale blueish light, however. A crunching sound. The boat had grounded on pebbles. Feeling in the dark, I stepped out on a smooth bank which began to ascend immediately. I said farewell to my boat — perhaps forever! — and began climbing. It soon became rough and jagged, like a sieve for grinding nutmeg, then narrowed after the manner of an inverted funnel, and finally was almost as steep as a perpendicular cylinder. . . . I had to stop, for I had come upon a wall, a smooth, flat surface; and further, I was exhausted. I dropped where I lay, fell into a sort of stupor, and when I regained consciousness it was owing to faint irregular taps coming from far beneath me and forcing themselves upon my notice. It was my boat, broken from its moorings, starting easily on its way!

I cursed the foolhardiness that had got me into this thing. And I confess that I even wept, for the feeling of desolation and loneliness which came over me was too powerful for resistance. Then I remembered my training, and putting away all fears, confided my problems to Him who sees even the slightest move we make, and who hears even the weakest little sigh from our uttermost within. A new courage poured into me like wine, and I recommenced examining the wall. At last I came upon a place where the smoothness of it was broken by cracks large enough for me to insert my fingers, and the ascent continued.

As I climbed, it began slowly to dawn in the cavern. (The noonday sun of the countryside above, that is, was penetrating through some cavity into these depths.) I came upon the first sickly weeds, a few beetles, worms and the like. And it was not long before I was in full daylight, struggling through a thick underbrush which was so luxuriant, so impenetrable, that I almost wished for the cool desolation of my cavern. Working among the briars, especially the insistent blackberries — insistent because they seemed to be actually reaching out to catch the wool of my coat — I came upon a cluster of sumac, and then an even thicker muddle of ferns and alders. As the ground was unusually rough, my feet would slip from the rocks, and lodging in some unnoticed cavity covered with dead leaves, they would be held there by a tangle of roots, while at the same time I was kept busy dodging beneath the low crooked branches, making detours, or creeping through chance holes in the foliage. And then of a sudden I broke through to a road, and looked across broad easy meadows . . . and why! there was the house where Treep used to live!

And that stump in front of Treep's house, that was where the oak used to be which Treep had loved so much and then his master had ordered him to cut it down. Treep used to go out and pat the shaggy bark of this oak while it was still standing. But his master said finally, "Treep, cut down the oak." Since it was decided that the oak was needed for timber. Before that Treep had even felt that long after he was dead the oak would stand there; but now the oak had to be chopped down, and Treep went out with his axe to chop it.

No one was near, however, so that Treep rubbed his head against it, and explained how unhappy he would be without it, and how he would hollow out the stump and plant therein some of its own acorns. Then, after weeping, he attacked the trunk with his axe.

But as he swung his axe, it caught in a low branch which was sagging somewhat, Treep being knocked on his back by the rebound of this branch. At first he was angry; but he said that it was right

for the oak to defend itself, and it should not be rebuked. When he returned to chopping, however, a rotten branch from high up in the tree became dislodged, and cut a gash in the nape of Treep's neck. "Thou ungrateful oak!" he shouted in anger; "Thou must know that it is not my fault that I must kill thee, and thus not place the added burden of thine own disobedience upon a heart which is already weighted down by the necessity of fulfilling a loathsome command put upon it by my master!" And Treep resumed his task.

But as the axe sank into the trunk, a large chip of wood flew up, striking Treep full on the forehead, so that the blood poured down into his eyes. Treep arose at one leap, regained his axe, and began brandishing it about his head. "Oak!" he shrieked; "Oak! Thou art no longer the big friendly thing that I rubbed my ears against and hugged with my arms, but a monument of malice and spitefulness rising between me and the commands of my master. And the love I bore for thee now being completely vanished, I swear by the blood dripping from my forehead that I shall attack thee in all ferocity, not stopping until thou lyest a corpse at my feet!"

And then Treep assailed the oak with bitterness, half blinded by the blood from his forehead, his body aching and tired, but sustained with such a vengeance against his old friend that he hardly knew what he was doing. Indeed, blinded as he was by the flow of both his blood and his emotions, and although a practised woodsman, he was not felling the oak properly. And when at last it became so weakened that it began to topple, he saw that it was falling toward his master's garden. At this point he was plunged into an inordinate hate; he did not even take into account the enormous mass of his enemy, but as the oak began leaning with increasing rapidity, he hurled aside his axe, and heaved his shoulders against the falling trunk, trying in this way to change the direction of its fall!

But the oak continued on its descent, and as it stretched out along the ground it held Treep beneath it, crushing the life out of him almost instantaneously.

II.

Treep was aware of no change whatsoever, except that he was growing. Soon his hand alone was as big as his whole body had been, with the rest of him increased proportionately; and soon after this his hand was as big as his new body had been . . . and so on, indeterminately. When he had ceased increasing, he looked about, stretched his arms which were as thick as a countryside; and opening his jaws, he yawned as wide as a gulf. But he was conscious of a pain beneath the nail of his right little toe; and reaching down he pulled out a splinter, the oak which had killed him . . . This had been the magnification of Treep.

Noticing that the sky was only a few arm-lengths above him, he sprang into the air, caught hold, and hoisted himself on to the other side. The country was rough but comparatively level. Glistening in the distance there was something which looked very much like a palace. He made off in this direction.

As he came nearer he could distinguish figures moving about, all of them as big as he was himself. Then messengers came ahead to meet him, small, the way he had been before death, and they perched on his shoulders like doves. They explained that they were the former poets of the earth, and that this was Heaven, and that they were usually the only earthly existences admitted here. But Wawl had seen Treep's struggle with the oak, and had decreed that he should be magnified among the gods, and then they all fell to singing their own compositions at once. He walked ahead, not much disturbed by their twitter, until one of them climbed into the shell of his ear and explained, shouting above the others, the dilemma which Wawl had occasioned by his deification. For in magnifying Treep it was not found possible to magnify his name, and there were no more names nor offices left in Heaven. Wawl had decided, however, that if Treep dared he might attack any god he so desired, and if he defeated this god could usurp both his name and office. Treep asked the poet what gods were disliked in Heaven, and the poet mentioned both Arjk and the Blizzard God. Arjk, it went on to say, was undoubtedly

a powerful and handsome divinity, and would be a much worthier foe to unseat than the Blizzard God, who relied mostly on cunning and harassing . . . Treep decided that it was Arjk whom he would battle; and halting outside the castle, he sent word to Wawl that his faithful servant Arjk was approaching.

Soon a distant tumult was heard, and the poets in a panic scrambled down from Treep's shoulders. Then Arjk appeared, growling and cursing, and demanding to know if this was the thief and liar who was adorning himself with the name of a god. Treep answered him, "Step aside, Treep, for I am Arjk, the faithful servant of Wawl, and I have come to pay him homage." Thereupon the two of them closed in upon each other, a battle following which lasted for two years. At the end of this time Treep conquered and threw Arjk out of Heaven. Then he sent word again to Wawl that his faithful servant Arjk was approaching, and entered the palace.

III.

Some time after Treep — become Arjk — had established himself in Heaven, Wawl summoned him to the palace. Arjk entered and bowed before him. About the feet of Wawl adoring women sat, their breasts dripping at his glory, indeed, their entire bodies flowing with love of their Lord. Wawl dismissed his attendants and began speaking to Arjk immediately. But the castle was so large that it had its own atmospheric conditions, and as Wawl commenced to speak a little storm descended about the august forehead, filling his hair with a silver moisture and pricking him with minute tongues of lightning. Wawl peered through the mist wavering before his eyes, and raised his voice above the small but distracting thunder.

"Arjk," Wawl addressed him, "thou art the most mighty of my warriors."

"Whatever strength I possess was granted me by Wawl."

"I trust that thou wilt remain faithful to me, for thy powers, if turned against me, could cause all manner of evil in Heaven."

And Arjk, bowing even lower, answered with emotion, "Before everything else comes my gratitude to Wawl. In the magnification of Treep there was also the magnification of Treep's devotion. And this devotion is mortgaged solely to Wawl." And then rising to his feet, Arjk gave way to his elation, and sang to Wawl of the glories which he, Arjk, had accomplished in Heaven, and of the might and splendor which belonged to him, Arjk. Saying among other things, "I, Treep become Arjk, can drink and carouse in Heaven and yet retain the most powerful arm among the gods." The elation continuing, Arjk took leave of Wawl, and went for a mad ride in his chariot, hurling bolts haphazard out of Heaven, and shouting to the rattle of his steeds' hoofs across the clouds.

Then of a sudden Arjk spied the Blizzard God riding in the distance. And looking closer, he distinguished Hyelva fleeing before him, her white robes fluttering back in confused vibrations. Arjk wrenched his steeds until they were headed toward the Blizzard God, and his chariot went swaying and rocking back and forth across the clouds. The Blizzard God was shrieking as he pursued, "Hyelva! Hyelva, open the great gate of thy body! The great gate of thy body, that I may enter in!" while the hoofs of Arjk's horses set up a reverberation through Heaven, Hell and Earth. But Hyelva sped on in silence.

It became evident that Arjk would overtake the Blizzard God and rescue Hyelva from his fingers. But Littic, who was a kindly deity, though under the domination of the Blizzard God, released his lights through Heaven, so that both Arjk and his horses were blinded. Letting his reins slacken in his stupor, Arjk watched the lights play on all sides of him, saw the thick trunks of flame with tongues protruding, or semi-circles stretching across the whole sky, with balls of a blueish jelly sliding along them, or puffs of light, waving like dust toward the zenith. And while Arjk relaxed, enchanted, the Blizzard God sent a broadside of tempest against him, blowing him out of the chariot and the bolts from his hands. Then the Blizzard God hurried again after Hyelva, falling among her

garments like a hawk among the feathers of a dove. His appetites were so ravenous that he tore away everything which covered her body . . . and the little bits, whirling about in the tempest, spilled finally out of Heaven, and falling, covered whole states and provinces of the earth, so that some houses were sunk even up to their second stories in snow.

IV.

And one of the places where this snow fell was New York City; I am speaking particularly of West Sixteenth Street. Ah, how lovely it was before being shoveled away at a cost of some hundreds of thousands of dollars! The air was almost black with snow; it was so thick that at times stray flakes, falling down the particular air-shaft, swerved and sifted through the partly open window of the particular kitchen. This kitchen was dark, with dirty dishes showing up here and there, while the other rooms to the suite were lighted. All were empty, however, except the one to the extreme front, where James Hobbes was lying on Esther MacIntyre.

The point was this: Could Hobbes, or could he not, succeed, with only one hand, in capturing the object which Miss MacIntyre held in both of hers — if she held anything at all! — but would not willingly relinquish? Hobbes had maintained that he could; Miss MacIntyre had sassed back that he couldn't; thus, a protracted struggle had begun between them. Resulting in their tussling on the couch, and Hobbes groping resolutely — but awkwardly! — after the hot fists she held against her breast. Then of a sudden he made a dive of his hand, which silenced the giggly thing. And he continued the attack, disposing of garments rapidly. When Esther's bewilderment was startled away by the realization of a still greater boldness on his part, she began to resist . . . weakly, however . . . but he no longer cared . . . slipped off the couch . . . thumped against the floor . . . like a sack of potatoes.

Some one was knocking, jerking them out of

their sloth. She went for her hat and coat, and as Hobbes returned to the front room with Harowitz, mumbled something about being in a hurry, and dashed out. Hobbes yanked a chair at Harowitz, pointed to a magazine, and went after Esther. As he came out into the blizzard, hat-less and coat-less, he could see nothing of her. Besides, he was not exceptionally interested. He returned to his apartment slowly, even stopped in the dark kitchen a few moments and leaned against the wall. Then he went to the front room where Harowitz was waiting for him.

Harowitz was moving about the room, from one island to another. Hobbes stretched out on the couch, giving a slight grunt which was a mixture of many things — such as self-comfort, the necessity of saying something, disapproval, nothing at all — but mainly composed of this: that Hobbes had planned, the next time he would see Harowitz, to look at him abruptly and say, "Harowitz, what would you think of a man who walked into your house, and when you weren't watching him went into your cupboard, and stole a drink of whiskey?" Harowitz wore a size eight shoe, carried a cane, could speak both French and German fluently. His left eye was weaker than his right, but not enough to necessitate his wearing glasses. He was not married, had graduated from a law school *magna cum laude*, and also knew some Spanish. On his mother's side he was not full Jew.

Or perhaps Hobbes would have waited until Harowitz had begun to explain something, such as "The perfection of machinery, and the consequent large-quantity production, has made war an absolute necessity for the first time in the world's history." Then Hobbes would answer, "Yes, Harowitz, quite right, but what would you think of a man who walked into your house and when you weren't watching him went into your cupboard, and stole a drink of whiskey?"

It was not the drink of whiskey that Hobbes had minded. It was the *principle* of the thing. But he said nothing to Harowitz. The statement, after all, would be too blunt, so blunt that even if Harowitz

had not taken the whiskey he would realize that he was being accused. But first of all, he must make sure that Harowitz was guilty. It did no good to mark the bottle, since a small amount could easily be replaced with water. Perhaps there was some harmless, colorless, tasteless substance which he could mix with water in a decanter beside the whiskey bottle; but if this mixture were poured into the whiskey it would make the whiskey change color. Hobbes imagined it turning a brilliant green or blood-clot red immediately before Harowitz's eyes. Then Hobbes would come in and offer him a drink, bring out the whiskey bottle, look at it, look silently at Harowitz, put the bottle back, glance at his watch, and regret that he had an engagement.

Until he had something as definite as this, however . . . so he had grunted merely, as he lay down on the couch. Harowitz explained to him how war was inevitable at this point in the world's history, and while he was talking Hobbes brought out the whiskey . . . After a time they were not clear-headed; the mixture of whiskey, gas fumes and old breath had taken the freshness out of them. They watched each other now and then with tired eyes, trying to become interested in some assertion. Harowitz left within an hour, while Hobbes continued to lie on the couch.

Hobbes listened to the soft pads of snow flattening against the windows. Rising, he switched off the lights and opened a window in the next room. The cold air began circulating . . . His mind was completely lax. So that the form of this procedure began to impress itself upon him. That is, he revolved it that he had been hot, and that now a cold current was blowing across him. Later on that evening he wrote the following poem, which, after he had finished it, sent him out for a long walk in the storm:

Here are the facts, given as I have known them:

Last night I slept with my shame bared to the ceiling;
The bed was hot against my back and buttocks;
My arms were swollen with the bites of black-flies.

And now the thunder-caps quit dropping below the
horizon;

The thunder-caps are beginning to march above me;
I watch, with the salt stinging the rim of my eye-balls.

A breeze starts up, making the lake look blue-black;
The blue-black swallows fly even more click-jaggy;
The green trees in the distance become also blue-black.

I close the windows fronting on the southwest;
The thunder falls immediately on the lightning;
And the rush of rain in the trees upon the thunder.

The black-flies of Massachusetts are blown into New
Hampshire;

And the black-flies of New Hampshire are blown into
Maine, while

Those of Maine are blown, some into Canada and some
into the ocean.

Water hits in bucket loads against the wood shed;
Water hurries beneath the dried-up shingles;
Water drips mysteriously in the pantry.

The rain settles now to a steady business;
It lays itself without violence over the pastures;
Night falls, with the rain now gently piddling.

A new wind falls upon us from the northwest;
Veering, it whips the fog along the hillsides;
And shoves the entire storm out of my knowledge.

A haze of light spreads in the north horizon;
Pale shafts of light waver on the north horizon;
And puffs of light like dust wave toward the zenith.

A calm lies on the face of the earth and waters;
It sits among the trees and in the valleys;
A frost is nosing against the wild cherry blossoms.

The sun comes up as clean as a brand-new dollar;
The pink sun edges flatly above the skyline;
As rash as a blast of unexpected music.

Praise to the Three-God, Father, Son and Spirit;
 Who, as He found Himself at the beginning;
 So is He now, and so shall be forever!

V.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost, so comfortable in Heaven. (Oh merely that I might live in one of the back allies of Heaven, though my house fronted on some dump heap of empty bottles and rusty tomato cans! Indeed, I conceive of Their comfort as that of a royal family that never was. A family, composed of king, and queen, and princes, and princesses, living in a suite of rooms borne upon the shoulders of their subjects. The palace marches across the country, through rivers, up and over mountains, with the populace squirming beneath, supporting it with poles. Ten thousand, say, labor simultaneously at these supports, while others rest, others follow to take their places, others have been relieved from duty and return to their families. The palace moves in a straight line, and in the course of this line there is a lake. The subjects disappear beneath the water; others take a long breath, dive down, and replace them at the supports. Some are lost; many are content to suck the water into their lungs, thus ending their unhappiness; but the palace moves on. At times music is heard from above, or a platform is let down for food, or filth is thrown out, falling on the populace. But otherwise, it travels like a silent cloud above them. So comfortable in Heaven, and yet Jesus must go out into the night again, leaving the warm fire of this sanctity.

* * *

Some people were sitting in a prominent cafe in the theatre district, when lo! Christ was discovered sitting among them. I can pay no greater tribute to my countrymen than to recite the tact and affability with which he was received. A committee was organized on the spot to show Mr. Jesus the more prominent sights of the town, such as Riverside Drive, the Woolworth Building (from where he could get a

good bird's-eye view of the city) and the Brooklyn Navy Yards. At this last named place he was to be given a private demonstration of a new gas which our chemists had invented and which promised to put us far and away in advance of all other fighting units of the world. (The intention of this demonstration being to show that so long as Christianity possessed such weapons there need be no fear of the spreading of Asiatic paganism.)

It was suggested taking Him to one of our larger churches, but this was quickly hushed up, as it was realized that the situation would surely result in ill-feeling, since, even if the Catholics could be persuaded to sacrifice this honor to the Protestants — which was, of course, out of the question — at least twenty Protestant sects would have arisen to dispute the honor amongst themselves. So it was thought wisest of all to take Him to a theatre.

The play was by a very prominent American dramatist, and had been reviewed by the New York critics with such really gratifying and penetrating comments as "Every man, woman and child should see this play (Times) . . . Really scrumptious (World) . . . Grips you from start to finish (American) . . . One of the best plays of this season and far better than anything of last season (Tribune) . . . An all around good play (Sun)." There was some skating on thin ice, but no one could fail to catch the moral tenor behind it all, and it was hoped that this moral tenor especially would appeal to Jesus. In one detail, however, the play had been amended, a short passage having been omitted from the first act which ran, "Why am I so crucified with poverty!" It had been unanimously decided that nothing unpleasant should be suggested to Him.

Jesus was interviewed between the second and third acts, but declared that he had nothing to say, refusing especially to compare conditions here and in Heaven. But in spite of his reticence, favorable comments appeared in all the evening papers, although one anti-Church labor organ queried mildly whether it would be the Star of Bethlehem this time, or the Star of Bethlehem, Steel.

During the play — which was a matinee — the city administration had been anything but idle, and it was decided to give Christ the freedom of the city regardless of what might happen to the Jewish vote. So He came out of the theatre and walked down Broadway to City Hall, and behind Him followed a long procession of scenario-writers, burlesque Amazons, fairies, lounge-lizzards, Jew and Irish comedians, jazz-hounds, pimps, promoters, whores, traveling salesmen, confidence men, bookers, gamblers, kept women, millionaires' sons, publicity agents, sporting experts, dopes, land-sharks, connoisseurs, rum-sellers, holders of boxes at the opera, ammunition makers, specialists in men's diseases, whatever of the general populace, in short, happened to be passing through Times Square . . . and also angels. Not those Angels that sit at the feet of Jesus in Heaven, however. I mean those more immediate angels, angels from Wall Street, the backers for plays and movies . . . bald-headed angels, angels whose intentions are juicy in proportion as their groins are parched, angels who will dribble as much as twenty thousand, say, against some coozy's leg. Yes, there were a number of these sweaty, red-faced angels in the procession.

Christ suffered these honors, and many others, ultimately slinking away from His followers, down side-streets with warnings, "Commit no nuisance," through the smoke and slobber of the men's saloon of a Jersey ferry, and then, quite alone, as the sun was going down, He stood in a graveyard, on a hill, looking out over the Jersey swamps, kneeling — I know my readers will pardon the theatricality of the gesture — with His arms outstretched to Heaven, He prayed and wept. Then, growing calmer, He read the tombstone of Johann Bauer, geboren 1827, gestorben 1903, at present Mit Jesu. Weakened by a peculiar lassitude, He sat on one of the iron railings surrounding the grave . . . Crickets began climbing upon His sandals, and Christ, noting their hunger, took a boo from His nose and dropped it for them to eat on. When this boo was consumed, he put another in its place . . . and so on, until all the crickets had been sated. As Christ heard a faint noise now, He

bent His ear to the ground, discovering that the noise came from one unusually minute cricket which was rubbing its wings across its back to produce a little whirr of gratitude for the Divine Food it had received. A second later the entire swarm joined in, the graveyard trembling with their praise. Then, with a blare of Hosannahs, an Angelic Horde flew toward Him out of the sunset. Other battalions answered from the West, as they likewise advanced steadily upon Jesus. And still others, from all corners of the compass. The sky was churned with song and Seraphic Manoeuvres. For these great fleets of God's Elect, multiplying egregiously, began winding in among one another, melting together, separating, deploying in the shape of V's like wild geese, or banked up like pyramids, or upside down, or advancing in columns . . . while miracles were scattered upon the earth like seed. The sun, the moon, the stars, the planets and all the wandering bodies shone together. Fountains burst forth; wild beasts lolled among the clouds.

All song and motion stopped . . . some thunder was climbing across the sky. Then, as it disappeared in the distance, things began revolving, a Sublime Vortex sucked up into Heaven. In the very centre, unmistakably wide open, stood the Gate, with squadron after squadron of Angels already hurrying within. Christ, too, began rising, while God called out to Him smiling, AHRLOM AHRLOMMA MINNOR. And Christ answered, MAHN PAUNDA OLAMMETH. Thus had one spoken and the other answered. Then He entered Heaven, the rear armies of the Angels following Him rapidly.

Olammeth! . . . the seed
 . . . This sudden certainty!
 Fulfillment, bursting through the mists
 Olammeth, His Breasts!
 Across night
 Projected . . . (latent) . . .
 when lo! the *Sun!*
 The Gate of Heaven swung shut.

KENNETH BURKE

LAST LOOKS AT THE LILACS

To what good, in the alleys of the lilacs,
O caliper, do you scratch your buttocks
And tell the divine ingenue, your companion,
That this bloom is the bloom of soap
And this fragrance the fragrance of vegetal?

Do you suppose that she cares a tick,
In this hymeneal air, what it is
That marries her innocence thus,
So that her nakedness is near,
Or that she will pause at scurrilous words?

Poor buffo! Look at the lavender
And look your last and look still steadily,
And say how it comes that you see
Nothing but trash and that you no longer feel
Her body quivering in the Floreal

Toward the cool night and its fantastic star,
Prime paramour and belted paragon,
Well-booted, rugged, arrogantly male,
Patron and imager of the gold Don Juan,
Who will embrace her before summer comes.

WALLACE STEVENS

POSTER

Above the fresh ruffles of the surf
bright striped urchins flay each other with sand.
They have contrived a conquest for shell
shucks,
and their fingers crumble fragments of baked
weed
gaily digging and scattering.

And in answer to their treble interjections
the sun beats lightening on the waves,
the waves fold thunder on the sand;
and could they hear me I would tell them:

O brilliant kids, frisk with your dog,
fondle your shells and sticks, bleached
with time and the elements; but there is a line
you must not cross nor ever trust beyond it
spry cordage of your bodies to caresses
too lichen-faithful from too wide a breast.
The bottom of the sea is cruel.

HART CRANE

THE HOTHOUSE PLANT

(Dedicated to Charles Demuth)

Pink confused with white
 flowers and flowers reversed
 take and spill the shaded flame
 darting it back
 into the lamp's horn

petal's aslant darkened with mauve

red where in whorls
 petal lays its glow upon petal
 round flamegreen throats

petals radiant with transpiercing light

contending

above

the leaves

reaching up their modest green
 from the pot's rim

and there, wholly dark, the pot
 gay with rough moss.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

A GARDEN PARTY

Inside Millie's house (and in passing may we remark that except for that eyesore of a three-decker across the way the Smith's house not only for its view, which was absolutely superb, but as a stunning piece of architecture elicited approval and admiration from every quarter?). Up and down the backstairs throngs of breathless servants panted, hunting for the icecream spoons that had been mislaid or, as Mr. Smith observed from behind a newspaper, were non-existent anyway while Millie in a horrid pet because she had been crossed three times even on her birthday, but once in particular when her mother had refused point blank to let her consume the rest of that ten-pound box of yumyum caramels Uncle Ben had presented at breakfast. Millie was wriggling and making wry faces at herself in the pier glass mirror because the maid would tie that big babyblue sash too tight around her middle.

— You're *squeezing* me to PIECES!

Only the veribest families in Woodster were coming to this party. Mrs. Smith had despatched engraved R. S. V. P. invitations to the meticulously chosen guests who had, with one exception, returned formal responses.

Florence Ashley was invited, and the two darling Grover boys with a frightfully goodlooking chum from prep school, and Frank Sweeney because his father had made oodles of money out of the Great War, and the minister's daughter who poor thing had the kolly wobbles, and Helen Range even though Millie hated her like fury, and Dr. Tripp's three offspring because their mother was related to someone or other, and Billy Blodgett of course, and Mary Bruce because even if her mother was a Catholic and her father did drink like a fish she was an awfully good sport, and the two Frimp sisters who were always dressed exactly alike and ever so cute. But all children from the very tiptop of the social ladder; and no mistake.

HONK! HONK!

Millie flew to the window. The Tripps of course. In their rickety old flivver they always descended on

you years before a party began and there they were now; swarming out at the porte cochère. Millie stamping her foot with irritation exclaimed that she supposed she would have to scamper right down and entertain them till the rest arrived. So she told the butterfingers of a nurse to get a move on and tie that blooming sash.

Ambling affably across the grass Millie told the Tripps how glad she was they could come to her party and the Tripps said they were awfully glad they could come too. So Millie showed them the new-doubleactionguaranteed18jeweldiamondswisspatented-radioliteplatinumcasewristwatch her father had given her. And she even let Freddy Tripp listen to it tick. Then excusing herself gracefully she ambled off to confer with her mother in regard to the two specially imported negroes in swallowtails and scarlet vests who were busily at work preparing the long table which they had with great difficulty lugged out of the cellar and placed in the shadow of apple trees.

It was not long however before other glistening thigh-fruit of millionaires began floating down the gravel driveway in purling limousines. And the crisp little girls clustered around Millie and the shining little boys gathered around Mr. Smith. And Mr. Smith, in fun, snapped open his fancy cigarette case to jocularly offer the boys a 'coffin nail,' but was quite shocked when Frank Sweeney took one. And then all at once Uncle Ben was discovered hiding behind a tree, he might have been peeking there for hours, but Millie immediately dragged him out by the hand and everybody fell to playing drop-the-handkerchief except Frank Sweeney and Rusty Grover who sprawled on the lawn chewing grass blades and laughing at funny things.

2.

The note the little boy brought was this:

Woodster, Mass.

Dear Mrs. Smith,

Please excuse my son intruding on your party. But seeing all the little tots going to it I just couldn't

keep him away. He living right opposite so as he could view everything from the parlor window.

Hoping Amos behaves as well as I told him I am,

Your Neighbor,
(Mrs) Phoebe Haggerty.

Trimly clad in a swaggering little wash sailorsuit of sky blue, bright orange shoes, a jet black tie, and a jaunty sailer-hat tipped way back on his head and labelled with flashing gilt letters, "*U.S.S. Reliance*" it was evident that Amos had neglected nothing in the performance of his toilet. His stockings were immaculate, not a hair on his head was misplaced, his suit was absolutely beyond the slightest suspicion or reproach, while his pink face fairly glistened with cleanliness. Though perhaps not exactly garbed in silks and satins Amos as the spotless product of a bathroom could well rival the wealthiest of the little folk who gamboled so merrily on the lawn before him.

Mrs. Smith, having completed her perusal of the note, passed it to Mr. Smith with a meaning glance.

But even so impeccably fortified against criticism of any nature confusion while he waited o'erspread the features of the tiny tar and he seemed on the point of setting all sails to beat a hasty retreat when Mrs. Smith bade him pause.

— I suppose we better, said Mr. Smith.

— I suppose we must, said Mrs. Smith, Millie! Here's another guest.

Millie, who at that moment was racing heedlessly around the circle of children with the handkerchief, stopped in her tracks and looked up.

— O, she said, Him?

— Come and get him, Mr. Smith sharply commanded, His name's Amos.

— But papa!

— Will you, or will you not? replied Mr. Smith.

— Do as your father says, added Mrs. Smith.

Pouting Millie flounced over.

— Well, come along then, she said dragging the little tar behind her. This is Amos everyone. I don't know his last name.

— Pleased to meet you, said Uncle Ben flashing a number of gold teeth in an expansive smile. Come on in mate, the water's splendiferous. Make a berth for him Freddie. That's the lad. Know how to play this game. Yes? No? Millie start again, you're it arn't you. One. Two. Three. *Fire!*

And thus did Amos whose underthings silhouetted on an evening clothesline were often a superfluous, if not annoying, addition to the Smiths' vista of a lovely sunset, horn into society. But Amos either through embarrassment obstinacy or inherent slowness seemed incapable of mastering the mystic laws of drop-the-handkerchief, and when somebody finally did drop it behind him, Amos started off in the wrong direction and queered everything. Even Uncle Ben seemed irritated, so Mrs. Smith thought it best to lead Amos away under an apple tree where he could suck his thumb quietly to himself and permit the game to continue without further interruption.

A large negro suddenly rising from behind a lilac bush announced tea.

— Hurray! Hurrah! shouted Uncle Ben, Come boys, let's pitch in! And off across the lawn Uncle Ben galloped, but had hardly traversed half the distance to the table than he tripped over a croquet wicket and pitched violently onto his face.

— O, screamed Mrs. Smith, Are you hurt Ben?

— Not a bit Sal, cried Uncle Ben from the sod, and in the shake of a lamb's tail he was up again with a big green smudge on his flannel trousers, but laughing just as heartily at his tumble as nearly everyone else was, although it was quite evident he had been badly shaken up.

Then everyone found their proper places at the table, except Amos who somehow got into Lillian Frimp's and had to be extracted but Mr. Smith boosted him up on a red silk cushion so he could reach his food, and right beside Millie too for some reason although it must be admitted, entirely without her consent. And the negroes fell busily to work serving the icecream which they produced in various fantastic shapes, such as cows trees bicycles soldiers

kangaroos etc., to the intense excitement of Amos who attracted no little attention by laughing out loud when the taller of the two negroes presented him what Amos thought was a hook-and-ladder, although it was really only a trumpet. And everyone chattered and gobbled or were convulsed by Uncle Ben's excruciating jokes, while Millie queening it at the head of the table carried on a flashy conversation with the Grover boys' frightfully goodlooking chum who had seen a wild show in New York three days before.

But just as Amos was earnestly shovelling into his face the last delicious spoke of his hook-and-ladder, (or if you will have it) the last sweet note of his trumpet, Uncle Ben rapped on the table for silence and raising his glass of lemonade recited the following toast:

Here's to the maiden of youthful fourteen,
And here's to her father and mother,
And if there is more of this *splendid* icecream
We are all of us primed for another!

All the guests cheered Uncle Ben's felicitous quatrain as it really expressed a general sentiment, but when he shouted, Speech! Speech! Millie shook her head frantically and cried, please Papa! when Mr. Smith noisily reiterated the demand from the sidelines.

— Let Amos speak then, Frank Sweeney suggested.

— Yes, let AMOS speak: Rusty Grover cries and banging on the table with his spoon chants;

Silence in the courtroom,
The monkey's going to speak!

3.

In the sickening silence which followed this picturesque, though perhaps inhibiting proclamation, the person so unexpectedly honored squirmed uneasily in his chair. With a mournful expression of resentment he paused chewing a macaroon which at that moment occupied his mouth, lowered his icecream spoon dismally to his plate, and peeked ruefully up out of the corner of his eye at the clamorous multitude.

— SPEECH! SPEECH! everyone yelled.

His face which nature had endowed with a pigment none too uninflamable, rapidly galloped through a gamut of reds until it finally terminated in a flaming scarlet. His eyes spun horribly in their sockets, and then all of a sudden at once . . .

4.

Millie hopped off her chair. Setting a firm though mortified jaw she ran to her mother. With an expression of embarrassed surprise Uncle Ben slowly rose to his feet to offer his services, if needed. The little guests also jumped up and stared at one another or stood on chairs. Rusty Grover to be fresh (because Uncle Ben had spoken first) cried, Uncle Ben's the monkey. Some of the children snickered, the minister's daughter who thought the confusion was all about her went into hysterics, and little Amos overcome by shame and desolation lowered his head gradually to the table and abandoned himself to a series of doleful noises.

— There, there, Mrs. Smith comforted reaching under his arm pits and lifting him off the cushion, But I should say so! Quick, one of you take this.

Negro hands spirited away the cushion.

I *knew* it would happen exclaimed Millie, the little *pig!* and I *told* you here Ben said Mrs. Smith you better take him home right here Sal.

Uncle Ben nudged into the crowd.

I *told* you mamma keep quiet Millie a moment that's right put him on his feet where does he live? across the street stand back children he's all wet please I *told* you mamma Millie will you keep still? where's his hat? O on the tree yes I've will you? yes, I'll get it then.

— I didn't wanna, Amos blubbered.

— That's all right mistakes in the best I'll put on his hat I *told* you Millie will you go and sit down? O but I've got it right here O then you put it O well I will O I can.

— Know where he lives? Mrs. Smith asked.

— Across the way, Uncle Ben said.

Yes dear but never mind about his *hat* the *important* thing just leave me be Sal dear I'll get it on *important* thing is get him *home* to his *mother* whadeedo? innocently Freddie Tripp whispered and was told hush!

So Uncle Ben took Amos's snivelled paw in his and the little tar waddling across Mr. Smith's expansive lawns on something like sea legs continued to smudge his eyesockets with his fist and plaintively protest, but looking not at all shipshape with his jaunty sailor-hat sliding down over his eyes because Mr. Smith was hurried and had caught the elastic band under the child's nose instead of his chin. But Uncle Ben leaned over ever so patiently telling Amos it happened to everybody even to Uncle Ben himself when he was not on the lookout.

Hardly was there time to watch them disappear beyond the hedge than cries of Look! Look! were raised for across the lawn were the two negroes staggering under a glistening and enormous birthday cake that must have measured seven feet across if it measured an inch. The cake was of ecclesiastical design with sugar spires in which real little bells were hung that tinkled gently as the negroes bore it toward the table. And there were stained glass windows cleverly built of colored candy and little sugar people going in and out of the cake and wearing frock coats. Surrounding it were fourteen flickering candles, one for each of Millie's fourteen years. And upon the front of it emblazoned with vari-colored pellets, were the words "Happiness and Joy" under which in even larger letters was written the word, "*Millie*". And the tallest spire of the cake must have been five feet high and was surmounted by a large prune.

Everyone licking their lips said what a shame it was to eat the cake because it was really a wonderful work of art, but Millie knew in her mind what they really thought. So she carefully raised a large cleaver and with the most disengaging and innocent smile in the world divided it into fifteen equal portions.

SLATER BROWN

CORRESPONDENCE

Sirs: *Interstice Between Scylla and Charybdis* would seem to be addressed, not to sea-farers, but to the monsters themselves, for surely the faults of the *Little Review* and *Broom* are already widely current as bits of useless information. Less waste of time were these opinions formulated not to remind editors of their failings, but to serve as a *sine hoc non* for the selection of a group who would make comment on arty and forward looking journalism superfluous. The editorial is itself a very pat instance of "combative recognition of stupidity." To discern the faults of others is not always to avoid them one's self. Neither is it necessary to depart from a policy in order to defend it.

What, o *Secession*, is there left to secede from? Incurable Romantic, what a name is yours! The task confronting modern artists is sustained work, not revolt. The attitude that Mencken has brought his criticism of Puritanism to the point where further triumph would entail silence, that Brooks can be trusted to carry the task he has set himself to complete expression, implies not ungracious revolt, but humble, if tacit, acquiescence. Else there will come from dispersal and frustration a premature reaction, and all will seem still born. Yet were not prophecy rash for the unelect, I should predict that *Secession*, despite its name, is to combine the virtues of the *Little Review* with those virtues which it has not, and if only by talking less, to accomplish for America what one is asked to believe the *Dial* is accomplishing, and finally to surpass, because of a primary interest in literature, the philosophical and critical standards of the *New Republic*. It surprises me to see these stalwart adjectives used to typify that pink blanket. Only one adjective seems appropriate to me, *ephemeral*. The horrid plague of what Miss Lowell calls the intentionally minor has struck letters. To this, haply, the group now forming is immune, for most decidedly their aims are otherwise.

John Brooks Wheelwright

The intent of my editorial, however, was merely to use the *Little Review* and the *Broom* as Horrible Examples of perils between which *Secession* is to steer. Had I wished to *attack* them as previously I wished to attack the *Dial*, I should certainly have tried to penetrate deeper in my analysis. But for my purpose in *Interstice Between Scylla and Charybdis* all that I felt necessary was summary descriptions of the two "monsters" — descriptions which may be, as Mr. Wheelwright claims, widely current as bits of useless information. The full clause was "a combative recognition of stupidities it is better to ignore than to waste energy upon." I differ in opinion from Mr. Wheelwright. I do not believe either the *Little Review* or the *Broom* is that kind of stupidity.

There is emphatically something from which to secede: the American literary *milieu* of the past decade, a *milieu* which believed that literature was social dynamics and that its social significances were paramount. There are, in addition, bitter necessities inherent in this *milieu* which demand secession. One of them is precisely the lack of opportunity for development by others which the valuable work of Brooks and Mencken exemplifies. And there is, at least, a small group of writers able by reason of the different direction of their work to organize a secession.

For secession is not revolt. It is rather a resignation from a *milieu* whose objects are other than ours. It is an unemotional sloughing-off by writers who profit by the gains of that *milieu*, but have never been bound to it. It is, in essence, a prompt deviation into immediate esthetic concerns. Our warfare is not denying, but tangential.

G. B. M.

CONGRATULATIONS,
AND MORE "ILL-MANNERED REFERENCES"

The *Dial* announces that its 1922 Award goes to Mr. T. S. Eliot. *Secession* feels that the *Dial* has honored itself by this choice and is glad to join in the applause for so very excellent a poet and critic as Mr. Eliot has proved himself.

Gilbert Seldes to Gorham B. Munson:

"The terms are exceedingly definite." — Letter No. 1. "Possibly the conditions are not definite. One way of defining them is by making the award." — Letter No. 2.

The next paragraphs are a purely personal statement . . . Believing the *Dial* award to be a public concern, I believe it should be discussed as frankly as *The Waste Land* itself. Therefore, I objected to its first recipient on the ground that he did not fulfil, as I understood them, the conditions of the award. In this, — although I have since discovered that the reports on Mr. Sherwood Anderson current in Europe were incorrect in detail, though fairly accurate in purport, — I still maintain I was justified. Mr. Eliot comes much closer to the conditions as they seemed to import when first announced.

But since these conditions are admittedly vague in the light of later qualifications, are they not a little unfair both to the recipient and the interested public? Also, as the award is being gradually defined by the process of making it, is not the distinction between an award and a prize (which the editors of the *Dial* so often assure us they are not giving) rapidly evaporating? It does seem as though the award is used to crown whatever creative achievement in the current year seems the most distinguished to the *Dial* editors, irrespective of all things else but American citizenship and publication in the *Dial*. Until the next award then clarifies the conditions still more, I shall speak of the *Dial* Prize.

None of this is at all directed against Mr. Eliot, who deserves all the prizes in Christendom not only because he is a distinguished man of letters, but because he is besides a gentleman of letters. I hope that the award of the *Dial* Prize to him will clearly impress journalism everywhere with his superiority. I cannot, however, hope that Mr. Eliot, being devoted to artistic excellences, will profit by the prize so well financially as did his predecessor, Mr. Sherwood Anderson, whose fiction now appears in *Harpers* and the *Pictorial Review* (at fabulous rates per word sent on request) as well as in the *Dial*! No, Mr. Eliot is hardly likely to reproduce that embarrassing trinity.

Gorham B. Munson

NOTE ON DER STURM

On reading Herwarth Walden's *Kunstdämmerung* in *Der Sturm* (13th year, No. 7—8) one asks himself with distress whether two parties of reaction are fighting for dictatorship of the arts. There is the *retour* element, pleading for an art which will have a more fundamental relationship with life; and over against it, there is the struggle to preserve the exclusively esthetic point of view. Says Herr Walden, defending the latter, "The man who requires the representation of water in order to see a blue completely lacks the artistic eye. If, when placed before a colour, one must think something before he can experience it, he is without any colour sense whatever. A colour is not received in the soul, but in the eye. Everything else is simply the association of the subject." Walden's message is strenuous and accurate throughout, but the reader is not compelled to accept it. The choice lies between retaining a method found within the last twenty years, or so, and recovering a method which has sat upon Europe for whole centuries . . . In this same issue, and the one preceding, there is a remarkable article by Jörg Mager on the quarter-tone scale, containing documents on

its history, the nature of quarter-tone instruments, music written for the quarter-tone scale, and taking up various points of harmonization. Analysis and synthesis; modern efforts seem to be moving in both directions simultaneously; and to those who object "Why the quarter-tone scale?" the answer is, obviously, "To prepare the way for the eighth-tone scale" . . . In the ninth number Lothar Schreyer begins an article on The Word. The drawing of fine lines seems pointless enough up to date; one gets exhaustively what one already knew without exhaustion. "Logokratie" does not appear in this first installment; yet, surely, that is the essential matter, the exact fixing of those regions wherein the word is man's servant and where it is his master. Man's business is primarily that of the slayer; is not the word his best weapon for the slaying of emotions, by transferring them into adequate ideas? Or, conversely, the word cuts through a great complexity of ideas, by creating an emotion. If our prognostics are correct, Herr Schreyer is going to discuss an equally promising aspect, however: the function of the word to staticize a transition; at least, the article ends on that note. In any case, here is a subject which has, up to this time, been in the exclusive possession of philosophical dictionaries; we expect *Der Sturm* to give it a new twist, and await number 10.

K. B.

BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

Peter Whiffle. By Carl Van Vechten. Knopf. \$ 2.—. The opening chapters titillate one's memories of Paris: later chapters on Mabel Dodge's studio parties titillate one's interest in the peripheral activities of artists. The sum total return from writing whose tedious "being bright" is broken only by awkward sags and whose attempt at satire is impotent because the essential properties — a solid and a rapier — are lacking. Mr. Knopf, taking heed of German publishers, outshines his author by his book covers. The chief interest of *Peter Whiffle* is the sorry commentary the enthusiastic reception accorded to it makes on American "critics."

Indelible. By Elliot H. Paul. Houghton Mifflin. \$ 1.75. Mr. Paul is a promising recruit to that field of American fiction bounded by Dreiser, Lewis, Floyd Dell, and Zona Gale whom he resembles most. To those who have already surveyed the esthetic possibilities of this field, he offers nothing beyond a pleasant variation. And to those still interested in it, I leave his closer assessment. Burton Rascoe believes *Indelible* is the first instance of a literary use of the American language. Mr. Rascoe, however, is famously grateful for small accomplishments.

G. B. M.

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