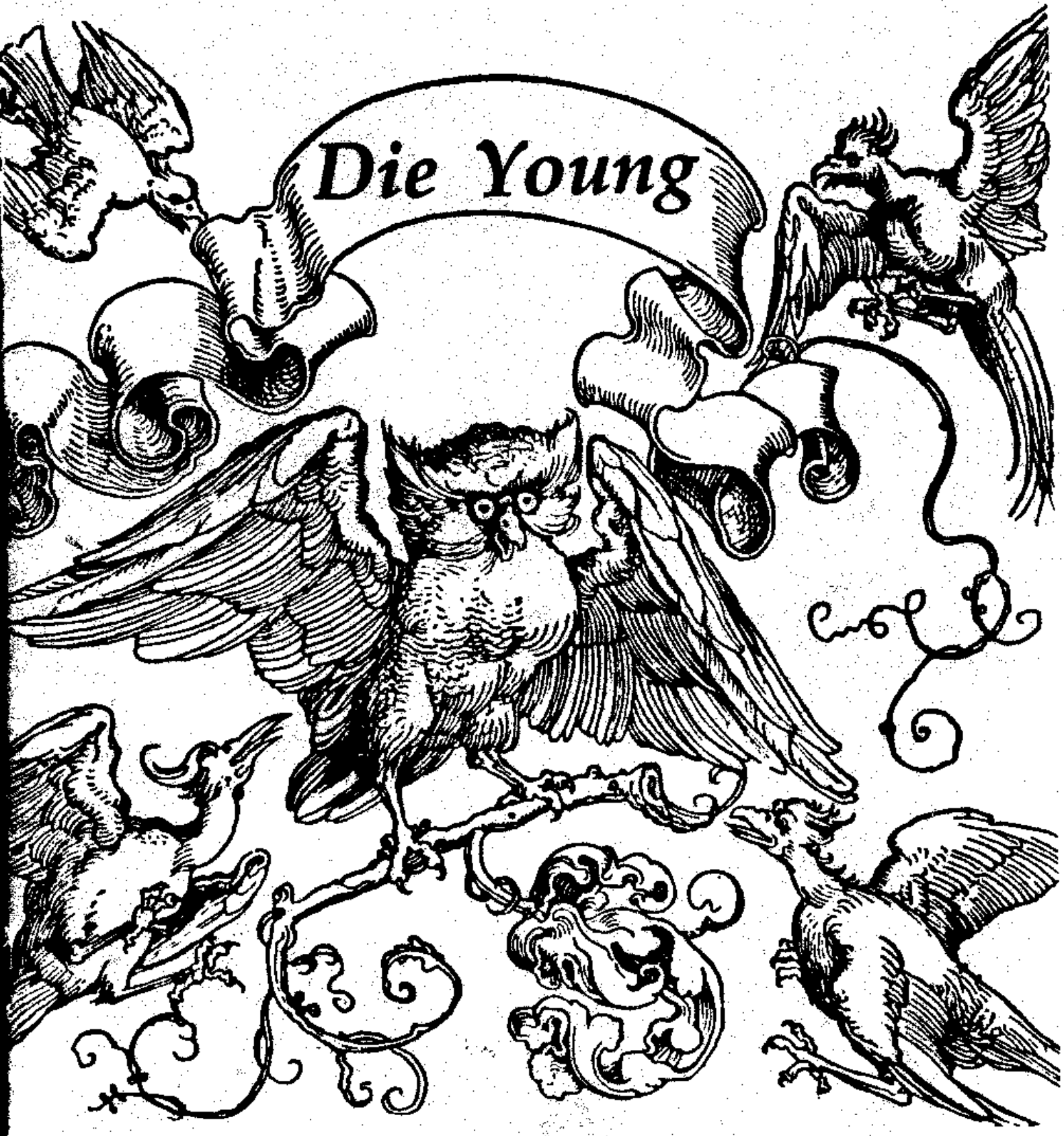
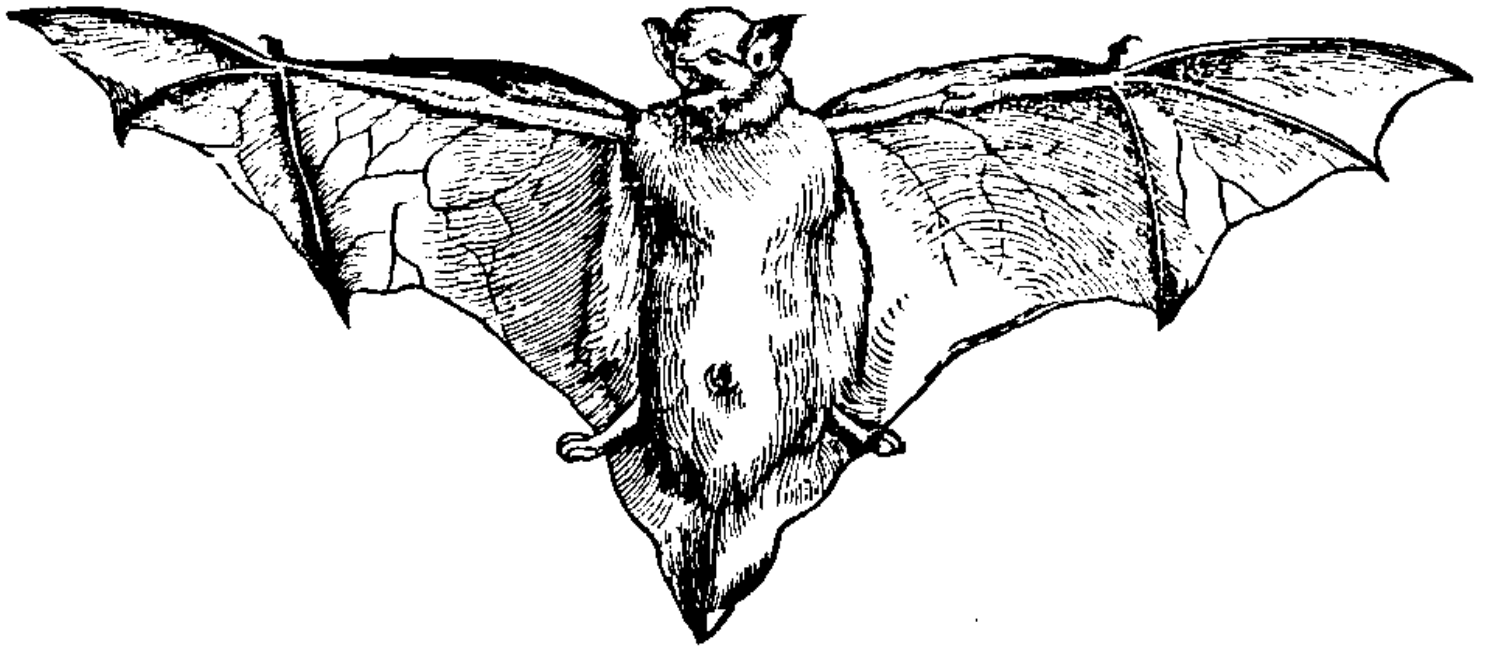


*Die Young*



# *Die Young*

Number 1



September 1990

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This issue is dedicated.

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## Cricket

*(To the memory of my aunt Emily Kawlikowska  
and her newly born son, both killed in  
Ravensbruch, November 1944.)*

My name is Cricket  
thrown out into the cold,  
assaulted by the dogs of cold  
I don't recall when my human death occurred.  
These hands are becoming winged  
these legs will become springs  
perishing as they hop  
in the sweetness of flowers,  
in clouds of flowers.

Still a head  
is a human head  
but it will soon be hidden  
when it achieves a spherical shape,  
an insectoid shape,  
an impeccable shape.

The time for crickets has not yet come  
and so I remain a human larva.  
From a clotted belly  
A thread congeals:  
That  
which was torn from this hot body  
clangs:  
Her shout  
The frost of her voice  
Hair fastened to the wind.

Soon I'll be a cricket and I will sing  
when it grows green again  
I will sing about my mother, how  
They destroyed her human form.

I will write that she was a torn pocket—  
An eyelid  
From which eyes escaped  
Eyes—units of time, human clocks—  
And I will sing again in my green world:  
"I'm selling glass eyes, my mother's eyes, put them in, give my  
mother's  
eyes to millions of girls."

I don't want to, I don't want to die!

Joanna Bielobradek  
*Translated from the Polish by*  
Ralph Bielobradek & Jesse Glass, Jr.

## A Topic For No One

*(This poem is based on a picture of Gen.  
Smorawinski, whose body was exhumed from a mass  
grave in Katyn, Ukania, U.S.S.R., Spring 1943.)*

The eyes of General Smorawinski  
Widened by pain, enlarged by bullets,  
Distended from sockets by blood  
Which erupted in the brain,  
Pushed  
Beyond the threshold of terror  
Swimming,  
Carrying from the other side of the skull the hard goodness of sand:

Goodness which is born from enduring to the end  
A single, merciless act. He was  
Drowned in martyrdom with no way out  
And, as a necessity, better things must be unveiled to him.

And tenderness approaches, loyalty beyond death  
More than human loyalty  
The eyes hold immense distances  
And calm,  
And earth,  
But don't look long at them,  
Those dilated pupils still burn  
And your dreams may transform them  
Into fear,  
    Bullets,  
        Shouts, coughs,  
Dead bodies crowded together  
And a swift, lively decay.  
The world rushed by with indifference  
Stuffing its face with sensations: that a hockey team  
That Bardot's legs  
And no one wrote a symphony about the eyes of General Smorawinski  
Even the lowliest  
Printer didn't spare him two words:  
Impatient type crushed paper while a distant  
Someone noticed how letters jostled to construct a sentence  
Without the aid of human hands.

The eyes of General Smorawinski flowed out  
Will flow out  
Far from the harbors of his face,  
In another moment they will enter a valley  
And this Topic For No One will vanish.

Joanna Bielobradek  
*Translated from the Polish by*  
*Ralph Bielobradek & Jesse Glass, Jr.*

## Five Variations on "Elation"

*for Bill McClung*

This sudden  
uplift elation's  
pride's brought out!

Even ambiguity's  
haughtily exalted oh  
rushed, raised spirit.

Rushed unexpected my  
heart leaps up when  
I behold the sudden  
as in the common.

Curiously with pride  
above common lot to walk,

to be lifted up  
and out, exalted.

His elation was brief?  
Brought back to earth,  
still for a time  
it was otherwise.

Faded but unforgotten  
if down once  
uplifted if unsure  
once proud if  
inside once out.

### *Echo*

*Elation's ghost  
dance echoes  
little, leaves no  
traces, counts  
no number--*

*Wants from no  
one privilege. Has  
no pride by being it.  
If then recognized,  
needs no company.*

*What wind's echo,  
uplifted spirit?  
Archaic feelings  
flood the body.  
Ah! accomplished.*

Robert Creeley

Nature changes at the speed of life  
From moment to moment, so that all,  
Bird, leaf and tree seem still, seem real, until  
We glimpse the conjurer at play--  
a dandelion's evanescent sphere  
Created itself between yesterday and today,  
Came, was, and now is over, while I  
Marvel at that unseen geometer's skill  
Who builds the transience where we dwell.

### Dream

I could not say that ancient house was home  
Or the old neglected garden mine  
But was a starting-place of dream,  
A little girl walking on and on,  
At first as in a childish game  
Of hide-and-see, but then too far.  
Babes-in-the-Wood cannot return  
For the birds eat the crumbs we scatter,  
And that long way I walked alone,  
Obedient to the banisher,  
Was without end, as dream-paths are.

Kathleen Raine

## Techné

All day I'm fighting with you  
about how much oil I ought to put there.  
I like my heavy hand; you want me  
to try a lighter stroke, something finer, easier  
to take. But I put it on heavy anyway,  
and in the mornings, when I'm still asleep,  
getting over the scotch and cigarettes  
from the night before, you just scrape  
it off. I get up later, lousy in my  
afternoon, and splash the paint back on,  
putting in some orange just to get you,  
making it bright as well as thick.

## End of the Line

I was drinking coffee in a seedy part  
of an anonymous city, any  
American one will do, when you came  
up to me, sat down, and ordered coffee and

a new afternoon. I asked your name;  
Circe, you said. There was music—I was  
happy for a long time and could not think.  
And you were happy to entertain me.

I am older now, and someone else came,  
came to take me back. Sure, I was wrong,  
but that was in another country,  
where there was lots of gold and wine,

and besides, the wench is dead. Look at me,  
Circe, I'm dying. The world, an extension  
of my hunger, dissolves before my snout,  
past sunlight, past music, past you, past me.

Peter Blewett

## sidereal

blue ruin painted silence the afternoon  
walls of comfort the last frail god  
gives over to the slack-jawed  
creatures in the moat of our indifference  
how far north could we have been the hemisphere  
swung like a drunken bottle (emptied  
of spirits and grand design) off beyond the Pyrenees  
"sexton" and "sextant" I never could keep straight  
as I sighted stars from high in the belltower I saw  
the deep color of the future and aircraft  
moving through it

"the Hunchback of Nostradamus"  
and his one-eyed dog Jack count on the skies  
to behold them even beyond their own hopes  
tomorrow will come as a wolf to the fallen past  
patching the holes where anticipations  
too commonly leak through the blue-  
blackness of not knowing what  
in one great coming-true could  
relegate all our evenings and vast  
expansive nights with our own fraught  
selves by lamplight to the sweeping-pile  
of "oh yes and last Thursday the Hendersons  
dropped by" with their midget-boxer hands

selectively and with unnerving grace  
raccoons scrangle around the pastry box's  
imperfectly joined corners scattering  
powdered sugar onto the table a galaxy of sweet  
heavens gather by the window and imagine  
today's weather

Dean Taciuch

**a song for recorded voice**

"as though someone were calling  
to me" at this hour opening  
the door a wedge of light carves  
into the next room's furnished patterns

I had heard  
of the faithful reproduction of detail  
in rubbings of carved stone ghoulishly casual  
faces of 18th century cherubs carrying  
the dead off to heaven's statuary  
grace leaving us names and dates moist humus  
indistinguishable from the remains

stood in a circle and shouted  
our names and the names we'd be known by dropped  
cooling at our feet we gathered them carried these  
stones in our pockets growing colder and heavier  
and more unlike us each day we are buried  
in them they survive us

the music we played  
over and over 50's and 60's top 40 jukebox  
45s scratched and attic-worn the black plastic  
broke into spectral lines when the windowlight  
caught it edgewise evening'd come before  
the broomstick on the ceiling'd make the music  
skid then stop still running helplessly carried  
on the immense red wave of the body's resistance

Dean Taciuch

## The Visit

So much time has passed since  
I saw you last. I was afraid  
you would not invite me again  
to sit in the garden arbor  
listening to the dripping  
of the fountain.

I was afraid you would not invite me  
back to my favorite place  
in the alternating shade and sun  
of the vines. I was afraid,  
with the quaint folly of age,  
that I would be attracted  
toward the mouth  
of the cellar and I had convinced  
myself you would drag me down  
to where slugs and spiders,  
stacks of damp wood, rusty  
basins abandoned by women  
and babies, to where worm eaten  
vegetables, wrecked tables whose  
last supper trickled down  
into the ground.

I knew that all I had to do  
was descend a single step  
to glimpse another open black mouth  
leading down into another yet deeper  
cellar crammed with darker things  
that have lost their meaning,  
battered kettles, decaying leather,  
unravelling embroidery, a dead grand-  
father's clock with obscene  
weights dragging time to lower depths.

I was afraid you would hold my thin,  
aging hand in yours with the iron

vigor of folly.  
Still I am bold enough  
to walk right into your yard.  
everything is proceeding according  
to my imagining.  
The only surprise is the intensity  
of the blackness whirling deep  
into itself in the black holes  
as I step behind you  
groping down the walls  
trying to cling to brackish  
green slime.

There are recesses at each level  
that get warmer, steamier  
and unbearable as we descend into  
the endlessness of black and slime green

and then black and green and green  
as we reverse and ascend  
toward green  
air, green water, green  
unripe grapes under  
the green arbor.

Out of meaninglessness I breathe  
meaning. I quaff  
the vine's breath.  
I breathe in and out with the house  
dog at my knees, fawning.  
We talk again  
in the light,  
me with words, you with your eyes.

Maria Banus  
*Translated from the Romanian by  
Diana Der-Hovanessian & Mary Mattfield*

## Across Bucarest after the Rain

Perhaps this is the hour, this is the moment  
when all my old cells have died  
(once every seven years, they say)  
and when the new ones are newborn, buds,  
taking their first steps with me in the light  
of the chestnut trees.

This June afternoon is made of pink and grey  
strips of sky and watered silk  
asphalt under drenched sunlit leaves.

How have I deserved, how can I pay for this hour of grace?  
Perhaps with the years spent among the moths of my writing,  
perhaps with the shadow of the scaffold,  
perhaps with the ashen tint of my smile.

But how could anyone pay for this living virgin rose  
in the flamingo colored hour, in the annunciation  
of the chestnut trees?

Maria Banus

*Translated from the Romanian by  
Diana Der-Hovanessian & Mary Mattfield*

## Provincetown

i

Something, suction, wind  
broke the bird's wings or  
slamming a building, now huddled  
against the back porch of our motel  
blending it seemed in our first casual notice

like part of a stark marvelous painting  
of raw death or life or sand and wild brutality  
almost bleeding in imagination's vision, this  
big old sea gull just against our motel  
in Provincetown where grass flushes

dark blush of life faded by  
salt along sagging wire slat snow fence  
not to divide property but  
to control drifting sand.  
Here sea has ripped the underpinnings

of the whole cape as ocean  
coughed Provincetown out of wind and glacier churnup  
to form wild just liveable land mass.  
Sky and sea change every few seconds,  
colors soothe soft, pink hints barely visible

Just before wild nature comes devastating.  
Eons ago the sea came up out of the pit of itself  
to have a look at its roof the sky and  
vomited up a little spread of land to come  
and lie on its back and look at the ever

changing heavens as we do, but when it tried  
to reel this land back under water it held fast to  
its earth perch so now at Chatham  
the sea has come back with its teeth  
scooping our very homes in big bites

to chew and swallow into the lowest most  
belly bottom of its stomach. The sea  
wants this land back. See the bright sun.  
Fog can come like a threatened octopus,  
tufts of clouds low hovering just off the ground

completely disorienting you barely  
a mile out of downtown Provincetown. You  
have to think, to reason which way  
to turn, exactly where you are or must be, sand  
has wiped you out but if you just think

you are safe only a few feet out of Provincetown,  
think, just retrace... the lit streets... so  
nature can continue to dominate. The sun falls  
into the sea in Provincetown like an invisible big  
hand dipping, rinsing a plate... up the Moon!

Night's needle suddenly pricks sun's whole yellow ball  
across all wide sky so pink ocean is dark  
next to it, red sunset caused by  
minute particles of dust off some  
erupting volcano in Yucatán.

ii

Thin Commercial street in Provincetown  
crowded summers with tourists  
come to get away from crowds to crowd  
each other is empty now in this place  
where success is the cape has held fast

another day against sea trying to  
take back this which it created  
in a geological yesterday. Provincetown  
where the defeated have run come to hide  
and the near dead, the exhausted try

to bicycle, walk, get themselves  
back to have some say about where  
they die in blinding sunset like  
life splattered your blood spread across  
the sky before you sink forever and are gone.

Evil and murder were here, lights lit to  
lure ships... Home now for  
old or sick is called Cape End Manor,  
you are graveyard surrounded, fields of graves  
seen through all the windows as if beckoning you.

iii

Death sings to life here where  
life style has no code. Provincetown is open, jazz  
in restaurants like 1950's Greenwich Village,  
always a horn in your ear, so now blowing  
through Napi's, wakes your memories....

Herring Cove inland looking back the length  
of the cape, a wide screen of the world, sky  
and ocean are all one now, almost like  
a drive-in theatre to see sun go down  
as if you were parked to watch the end of the world,

rather than walk on beach like sinking on sponges  
to see sunset. Suddenly the whole ocean  
is wild lifting itself up over highway to  
slam your windshield in sea froth and  
leave salt sand caking your car windshield, yet

at low tide the water way out, flat beaches  
people are walking on and you can hardly believe  
the sea climbed so high to hit you... it's  
so far back now... how could it ever... some  
sand dunes, scruffy, look like elongated

female lions sitting on their haunches, tips of  
others seem brushed Van Dyke brown, for  
a moment there is this great feeling that you  
want to stroke them but you'd have to be  
a giant to touch them, sand flesh flesh sand so

smooth... you lose your sense of controlling...  
... the sea takes care of me here... I'm still  
safe insect size on this little tip... Provincetown,  
forlorn, not spectacular, exotic like  
California, the Costa del Sol...

iv

Here it's struggle, trees scrub pine bent,  
twisted against sea driven winds, yet they  
grow and they hold and this land is holding too.  
Solitude, yet all around us nature is terrible  
cruel... out into the water of our motel back

window view are the so innocent looking  
stick fences of seines sunk to catch  
the fish of this place's life... A dolphin  
could be strangling in the tuna nets which  
you better not bring up to local fishermen, these

mammals like us. It's all death the fishermen  
think. People die if they don't eat. Death is  
an attitude here. Once when we arrived a great  
hugh sea gull hunched close against the back  
porch of our motel where we relish sitting

looking at the view to draw our fatigue out,  
restore us but the big sea gull's wings were  
broken yet Motel Woman who must have known  
she risked our not only checking out immediately  
but railing against her place to everyone stood

fast in her shrug, so, a big lovely  
sea gull can't fly, has caught death, she  
pushed the horror of it out of her head, it  
was, after all, us who thought this place  
Provincetown pretty and serene, not

v

violent to survive. A guest from Florida kept  
correcting me, "it's not a sea gull, too big,  
perhaps a cormorant" but it was a sea gull  
and no one would help. We were told coldly by  
Motel Woman we could feed it if we wanted to,

like, pushing it from herself, how could  
we sit and breathe in and enjoy with a  
creature of God's dying standing almost silent  
weak and not vanishing but Motel Woman,  
not wishing to lose customers, put it on us

that at least we could feed it until it  
finally gasped and rattled and fell over.  
Audubon Society members came all the way  
from Wellfleet, and, telling the lady from  
Florida where they don't have our

big sea gulls that it was a sea gull,  
remarked it probably was too late, the  
gull has been standing four days stoic and shivering  
against the motel we registered into  
in which others stayed and left and left it...

... Next to us in this motel a woman pulled her  
curtain across the window to shut out death's  
sight come hear as a bird, but by protecting  
herself during the height of the day when the  
beauty was there, she shut out the tremendous ocean

and sky she had come for as well... so this gull  
probably would die... sorrow is that it takes  
a year for those wings to mend so if the sea gull  
lives it can become somewhat tame, confused in  
the world of the wild sky and this can be death to it too.

Life is harsh here in Provincetown, only  
imagination conjures a lovely Provincetown  
in which there is special escape. While we  
can pack up and drive away within our  
furious mental picture harboring Motel Woman as

ruthless and uncaring, she lives with and loves  
a husband broken by the death extracted for  
the death of fish, scallops, oysters we chomp on  
and slide into our stomachs after the  
orgasm of taste buds, as a best part of vacations.

vi

... Way out beyond the whales  
the sea coughed up his father's leg bone  
three years after local fishermen went down  
into the deep sea... They were in an  
Eastern rig, net over the side instead

of the stern of a trawl'. They come up on a wreck  
and when the net caught they didn't  
get fast enough to the winch  
so rolled over and  
stripped of their flesh by fish

the leg bone of the FisherMotel Man's father  
come up in a net of fish catch  
brought to Provincetown and identified  
by X-ray records as FisherMotel Man's father  
.... and the horror of holding

your own father's leg bone picked clean  
by the fish you hunt, as you pick  
a chicken leg, pork chop, barbecue spare ribs clean  
but they're supposed to be things to eat, always  
human reckoning is ability to fathom fair is fair but

necessity, these people earn the food their children  
eat fishing and scream in horror that God might  
want dumb fish to have one of us every few hundred ton.  
FisherMotel Man had a funeral mass said and put  
the only thing left of his father in a coffin

into the ground here in Provincetown.  
Life where land belongs to the ocean must always  
stand off disappearing under water...

While I have no urge to drown  
the yearning to return to that ocean  
makes me willing to go if the sea wants me.

... be sure to buy a loaf of bread  
and tear it up and throw it out to feed the sea gulls  
in case I don't get back to Provincetown.

Leo Connellan

## Things You Should Know #9

### Incredible facts about telepathy

We know that the somnambulist or sleep walker in the darkness of the night with his eyes closed can walk along dangerous precipices with ease and with no prior skill or training climb the most hazardous side of Mt. Godwin Austen, 28,250 feet above Asian sea level, without climbing hooks and canisters of oxygen.

Dr. Flatus gives the following example of sympathetic telepathy: "I blindfolded a gentleman, placed my hands in contact with his, whilst my assistant, a Miss Cynthia Squint, supervised a number of surgeons, briefed beforehand in secret to perform upon my generative organs the delicate operations attendant to my wish of changing, on a permanent basis, my sexual gender.

Both the patient and myself were subjected to pain killing drugs for the duration of the operation, but we were not anaesthetized. Throughout the operations (performed only on myself), the patient's body would react in every way similar to my own, his pulse, breathing and cardiovascular patterns corresponded exactly with my read-outs on the life-support systems.

After the operations and a period of convalescence, the subject divorced his wife and married a 250 lb. wrestler from Hackensack, New York." Independent clairvoyants differ, in that they are able to get information independently of any sympathetic relation. They are able to sort out the soul from the body, and use it without licence, to travel to foreign parts.

Opal L. Nations

## poem for the ravens

this year the ravens  
are everywhere  
& big as motorcycle helmets

they stand their tree-trunk feet  
on the eaves of houses  
& yell things in raven  
across everyones yard

when i look at them  
they stare right back  
their beaks are sometimes dripping red  
w/berry juice  
& ive known these ravens since i was a kid

they used to come like this & dine in flock  
at angelo's place in sunnyvale  
used to eat up his corn  
& his plums & his cherries  
& pretty often angelo tried  
but he never could shoot one

& neither could mrs angelo  
nor donny nor bobby  
nor any angelo at all  
in fact ive never seen anyone shoot a raven

except at the pruneyard  
where jimmy feenan shot one  
w/a slingshot his father had given him  
for xmas which nearly killed it  
but not quite

we took it to the pet store  
on winchester boulevard & tried to sell it  
but the guy there sed  
they didnt buy crows

it got away one afternoon  
when we were all at school  
greg lupo sed later  
we shoulda put a tag on it  
something around its leg  
something like a yellow rubber band

& all these ravens  
make me wonder  
where jimmy feenan ever got to  
& are they having an increase  
of ravens there

& why did he want to kill that one so much  
we had to knock him down  
& take his knife

& tell him we wanted to sell it  
when all we really cared about  
was keeping the little fucker alive

Pat McKinnon

*Something is terribly wrong. When did running become jogging? Why?*

Make my deeds appear acceptable.

*And my lips, arms, legs, genitals. Accept them. Accept them. Finally, accept them.*

Joel Lipman

## **Bad Address**

### *Introduction*

The phone neither rings nor jingles,  
but melts archaeologically, a tar pit  
in my pants' cuff.  
Monday orders the week's courtroom,  
insurance police digging up the front lawn,  
Sunday's halo gone.

### *Body*

The Cliquettes, fiftyish and immensely fat,  
suffered the hook back on Ted Mack.  
They still bicker over that.  
Each gross day I truck home and wait  
my arrest. I sit on the step  
speaking ju-ju poems to my feet.

### *Résumé*

Sketchy,  
but I've delivered my message.

Joel Lipman

in memoriam, h.h.

NPR Loudmouth says kids in Utah  
shoot themselves out of  
Robo DM depression.

Is it the times or the titanium wings of Moroni  
that makes dextromethorphan enough  
to drop them over

the edge? It was thumbs  
down on that shit when we were  
ad-ohs: if AC wasn't at hand

there were plenty of other  
numbing agents to keep us off  
the list.

You could always thumb  
to a coast or get drafted or  
sit in the union 'til

our friends got back  
from the drugstore with something  
to pass out.

Waiting to get otherwise got  
old but not scary as our art  
got better and the right

drugs showed up. After a while  
we had done more than  
we could expect

to yet do. Heart stopt at 44,  
surviving the army & the car  
& the painter's colic,

cheating the cancer  
of the asshole & the bankers  
who die of it. I know

you would have as well  
kept going, drugs or no,  
with your art

and the world it wouldn't plumb;  
but, then, so many left  
with less.

Brian Richards

## **Outside Hitter**

*for the Long Man*

I was born to it:  
sail & pound, claws out

of the net. Set  
only me. If it's

ripe, I'll find it.  
If it floats, I'll strike

it down. Pop it  
up one more

time. Victory  
is in the ball that doesn't spin.

Brian Richards

## Bill Williams

It's the woman in me that writes poetry, said Bill,  
Who was not even homosexual (we think)  
But was gay in the time-honored sense,  
O happy paradox, a happy poet,  
Hard-working slum doc and fulltime poet  
Whose poems were prescriptions,  
Who tried to get the monkey Ezra off his back  
And never quite kicked the habit,  
Who hated the Possum with a hate that was more than hate,  
Archbishop Possum who flicked him away like a bug  
And went on butlering English verse.

Talk about the pure products of America  
Going round the bend --  
Doc Williams was crazy with sanity.

Karl Shapiro

## Tikkun

Down a long flight of stairs descending into the sidewalk off Hudson Street they found Anghelakis's store, a small, dimly lit shop set into the basement of a blackened tenement. As they entered they could see, hanging from above on all sides, an array of pots and pans and kettles, their worn metal skins patched and burnished. Along the walls ran long clothespoles on which hung trenchcoats and suits, dresses and shirts, trousers, skirts, knickers, ties. Beneath the clothes rested piles of shoes, each strung to its mate; over them, on a long shelf, tottered stacks of hats. Everywhere else throughout the shop stood row upon row of bookshelves cluttered with odds and ends of all kinds—eyeglasses and rag dolls, egg cups and old maps, radios, knives, mirrors, shoes, funnels, hammers, dishes, pillows, briefcases, can openers, typewriters, pencil sharpeners, toothbrush holders, outmoded wooden telephone cabinets, countless clocks. It was an immense inventory of discarded goods collected, it seemed, from all corners of the earth. And all of it, from the smallest porcelain thimble to the largest radio console, had been sewn, glued, mended, taped, pasted, spliced or repaired in one way or another.

From the back came the sound of hammering. John and Itzik followed it until they came to a small room behind the shop. There sat the Greek, clad in a tattered undershirt and overalls and wearing on one hand a long yellow engineer's glove that swelled to his elbows. All around him the walls were covered with shelves filled with refuse in various stages of repair. Before him, on a thick plank table, stood an upside-down boot on which he hammered patiently.

"Do you have a minute?" John said, approaching.

The Greek hammered away as if he'd heard nothing. John looked at Itzik, then at the Greek.

"Maybe you speak Yiddish?" he asked.

The Greek, pounding on, gave no answer.

"Polish?" John tried. "I can do a little Polish."

Still the Greek worked on, bent over his boot.

"Maybe he knows some Hebrew," Itzik told John.

The Greek stopped hammering. He looked up, regarding Itzik with one aged, iron-grey eye. The other, made of glass, looked off into the distance as if toward something only it could see.

"I know all languages," said the Greek.

John stepped forward.

"You're Anghelakis?"

The Greek now turned his iron eye on John; the other, occupied elsewhere, remained still.

"Anghelakis? Yes. Anghelakis. I am Anghelakis."

"Did you ever know a Zimmerman?" John asked.

"Many, many Zimmermans," said the Greek.

"This was twelve years ago," John said.

The Greek paused. Without a word he placed his hammer on the floor and picked up from between the spindly legs of his chair a small bottle and brush. As he leaned over Itzik could see, in the well of his glove, a long blue shadow darker than the darkness surrounding it.

"I see," said the Greek at last. He pulled out the brush, letting trail its long heavy tail of gold glue.

"A big man," John said. "Black hair. Black eyes. Black beard."

"No beard," said the Greek.

He let his brush slide slowly around the lip of the bottle.

"Then you knew him?" John whispered.

"No beards. No one have beards."

At that, the Greek tipped the boot over on its last and squinted into the broken line of stitches over the sole. John waited a few moments. He let his breath out sharply and said:

"*Aryeh* Zimmerman. His name was *Aryeh* Zimmerman."

"No names."

"What?"

"Not names, no, either."

"How can that be?"

"No names," said the Greek again.

"John."

"What?"

Itzik leaned over toward John's ear. The Greek held the brush over the stitchwork, letting the glue fall drop by heavy drop as he turned it around.

John nodded and turned to the Greek.

"129741," he said.

Now the Greek nodded.

"Him, yes."

"You saw him?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Here. There."

"Where first?"

"First, on train from *umschlagplatz*, the Warsaw train."

"That's him!"

"What was he doing?"

"He was with old man. There was snow. He took off his coat and put it around him."

"You remember all this?"

"Yes. Of course. He came with the Thirteen."

"The Raczikers," Itzik whispered.

"Where did the thirteen go?" John said.

"Most to the left. Two to the right. This Zimmerman and the other."

"And Zimmerman?--what did they do with him?"

"Him? They send to Canada."

"Canada?" Itzik said.

"Canada. A *kommando*, a work detail. The Land of Plenty."

"Why did they call it that?"

"Through Canada was all things belonged come."

"What things?"

"To eat, things. Or to trade to eat."

"And the Greeks, we hear," Itzik said, "were the traders."

The Greek turned slowly to him, one eye following the other.

"Yes," he said.

"And you traded with Zimmerman?" John said.

"No, not him. The *elter goilem*, the old man."

"What did you trade?"

"All things, all things."

"Traded for what?"

"For food. For shirt. For medicine. For cigarettes."

"What did the old man bring you?"

"Old man bring gold. Stones. Many times tins."

"Of food?"

"Of food."

"Why didn't he just eat them?"

"Why? *Trayfe* is why."

"You mean he was keeping kosher even in the camp?"

"Yes."

"Was that possible?"

The Greek gave no answer; neither did he continue his work. His hands remained still, and he simply looked gravely at the boot.

"I said, was that possible?"

John reached forward to prod him. Suddenly the Greek lunged forward, holding the top of the boot with one hand. Then he turned his iron gaze on John, both eyes burning. His left hand gripped the top of the boot, squeezing down.

"*Neh*, even there, in gehenna its fires, while is crumbling the earth, above and below, even there this *elter goilem* he is keeping kosher, yes. You figure. Once, he bring me seven tins eel. He asks is there books. For student. He has student now, he says. Student! All day arriving are the trains, all day the chimneys they are smoking. Where are we is he thinking, *cheder*? I tell him, I say, you see this tin?—I am holding tin—do you know what's worth? Two days your life, at least. You understand, *geron*? You want to trade maybe two weeks your life for book? He say to me, yes, it is for *kiddush ha-shem*, it is to sanctify the Name."

"You gave them to him?"

"I give him books, yes. I give him *tenach*, I give him *gemara*, I give him *Shulkhan Arukh*. No, he does not want those. He wants the other, the secret books. I give them. I give him *Sefer Yetsira*, I give him *Pirkei Heikhalot*, I give him *Sefer Ha-Zohar*. In days come I give him all: Vital, Luria, Gikatila, Fano, Frank, Baer, ben Yochai, ben Azriel, ibn Zimra. Many, many more I give. Why keep them? Their owners long ago are disappeared in the five throats of Birch Lane."

The Greek let go of the boot. He ran his forefinger lightly over the stitching, checking for flaws.

"I give him books, yes, and tins too. I give them back. The old man, he push them back to me. *Nu*, he tells me, you have maybe some *tefillin*, too?"

The Greek stopped and looked to his last. Taking the boot in both hands, he began to blow over the glamework, his grey moustache stirring.

Itzik took hold of John's arm to leave, but John pulled it back.

"Why didn't Zimmerman see you himself?" John said.

"Enough, boy," the Greek said.

"Tell me."

"What, your ears no working? Go away."  
 "Tell me," John said. And then: "Please. We've come a long way."  
 "I have said, he was of the Thirteen."  
 "We heard: the thirteen Racziker Hasidim."  
 For the first time Anghelakis showed surprise.  
 "Hasid? This man? No. I say the Thirteen: of 13 Leszno Street.  
 What, you no hear?"  
 "No. Who were they?"  
 "You hear of Mafia?"  
 "Yes."  
 "These men Warsaw's Mafia. Jewish Mafia. They everybody shun."  
 "For what?"  
 "For what they sell."  
 "What did they sell?"  
 The Greek leaned forward.  
 "Names."  
 John's eyes widened. Itzik, confused at first, suddenly remembered what Zeyda had said about Zimmerman's gift. He felt his blood freeze.  
 "They were informers?"  
 "Informers? Ah, *mosrim*? Yes, boy."  
 "And you're sure Zimmerman was one of them?"  
 The Greek shrugged.  
 "He came with them."  
 "But you don't *know*."  
 Again the Greek shrugged.  
 "This Zimmerman," Itzik said, "he's a *ben-torah*, a scholar."  
 "Now, yes. What, you no hear what I tell you about the books?"  
 "What, you mean to say he learned everything he knows in the camp?"  
 "This man," John said, "is also a workman. A bricklayer."  
 The Greek nodded.  
 "Yes, many bricklayers, many masons, many carpenters. All of them come when the wall is finished. On the train from the *umschlagplatz*.  
 "Not the ghetto wall!" John said.  
 "Ghetto wall, yes. Buildded by Jews, yes, like this big man, yes."

Good work. Every day, eight zlotys and a loaf of bread. Gancwajch's men get the best jobs, too."

"It's not true!" said John.

"Is true."

"No!" said John, shouting now.

"Boy, I am here, and it is true."

"But Zimmerman fought in the revolt! He was with Anielewicz!"

"No," said the Greek, shaking his head. "That was after."

John, his face reddened, doubled his fists. The Greek, bemused, rolled his eyes one by one at him.

"John," Itzik said suddenly. "Didn't he say it was snowing?"

"What of it?"

"The revolt was in *April*."

John stopped, drew in his breath. Itzik saw his eyes begin to fill, saw John turn and see him watching. Suddenly he grabbed the boot, lifted it up off its last, and hurled it by its tongue at the Greek. It sailed up over Anghelakis's head, landing against the topmost of three plank shelves bracketed to the wall. One by one they plunged down, crashing into each other and scattering wreckage across the floor.

The Greek studied the carnage all around him, sighed and said only:

"More work. More work."

John grabbed Itzik by the arm and pulled him outside. The Greek made no move to stop them. But just before they reached the top of the stairs Itzik threw a glance over his shoulder and saw him standing, arms akimbo, by the entrance of his shop, watching them. In his left hand he held his long yellow glove, and Itzik could see clearly now, across the forearm, what he had taken for a long blue shadow.

Itzik pulled to a stop and turned to face Anghelakis. His eyes felt like coals; his cheeks were wet and dripping. He knew he was crying shamelessly. He opened his mouth to speak, but found his tongue rooted to his mouth.

The Greek looked away uneasily; but one eye still stared.

Carl Schaffer

*"Tikkun" is from Inside the Wall, a novel in progress.*

## Chisum

The sheep are giddy & hobbled  
& gaze wistfully  
at the paganism of the goats

& at the quilted suits of mud  
on the cattle  
on ascending ranges of grass . 1598

the loins of sheep  
sheared & oiled  
& the ewes are crones

beyond their years  
in gross lots of mutton  
for the tables of Indians & Spaniards

the goats are dedicated only  
to fleshpots  
& domestic violence

the cattle, altho often in a family way,  
avoid the stewpot, & the range grass  
bears sweet tassels for their numbers

altho after the Civil War  
they, too, go to market  
the Anglos preferring beef

thick with salt & bloody  
after the Salt War in Texas  
in which many of them fought

the herds  
are *a wine dark sea*  
to Kansas

swelling the pens of forts  
& injun concentration camps  
60,000 head of Chisum cattle

in the Spanish Borderlands  
from Texas  
the hospitality state

looked kindly from the statehouse  
on the likes of John Selman  
& Jessie Evans

his hat tilted  
down over his eyes,  
*ooeehah!*

a feather in his hatband,  
transporting the beef for John Chisum  
a brace of pistols & a jump

ahead of the Texas Rangers  
but not a sway of climate behind  
the herds brought to railheads

by hooves, fins, & wings  
to build John Chisum's  
cowery on earth

even Kosher, out of the South Spring Ranch  
along the Pecos River  
200 square miles staked in 1876

his brand lies shallow on a rippling haunch

the stock of those silkhat ranges  
burned over, the brands  
on Chisum's herds over-ironed

dark branchings  
the castoffs he hired  
ringed his herds

against the small ranches  
& the Mescalero,  
the rain withheld

& the rise  
in the wholesale  
price of beef

A cow's face  
gone blank  
—terrible

the star  
on his forehead  
dims

& his eyes  
bland to begin with  
go listless

his nostrils  
widen  
smelling for water

& mirthless  
his lips  
fold scaly

down  
to slack  
corners

riders strung out along the flanks of the herd must be careful,  
& back their belief in their control over the herd, if need be,  
forcefully

Billy claimed  
Chisum owed him  
\$500

& hazarded  
taking it out  
in trade

a Tunstall man, John Middleton, wrote  
during the Lincoln Co War: Old John  
has gone against us

& Chisum's pals in Santa Fe  
signed the nation  
into decay

Horseman, plunder  
& pass on.

Carl Thayler

## Ode for the Dancing Khlysty

Stamp, roar like our Russian poets, like Derzhavin,  
like Petrov, like Bobrov – crash like thunder,  
like Igor's great Poem,  
like all Time to come.

My sea-horn bellows,  
open like the lips of a cannon.  
Singing descendants of descendants of descendants?  
No: my horn sings Freedom, not Fate.

lambs howled, rumbled, roared,  
laughing and crying: hey! hey!  
Like a rose-warm dawn  
I'd burst -- and then?

Go, go, see the kerchiefs waving,  
and scream, and tell the future, and dance  
with silver Khlysty doves, dance in  
the soul's wide blue meadow.

All of them, dancing, dancing,  
camels and mountains and lions and Orpheus  
too, knee-bent, stamping,  
none of them casting a shadow.

Praise them with waves, with words?  
How: I don't know -- but  
howl with these hearty monsters,  
rip out their music on your harp!

Like lightning, like a bull-headed ram,  
and me, like a donkey,  
and angels shine, shine  
and roosters crowing out loud,

And Mexico, a fire-bird, yes,  
in bed with Ivan, Prince Ivan,  
and Cinderella, my sister, a bluebird  
flitting in and out of eternity.

And the Evil ones are no longer evil,  
they're dancing, they're playing with the Good,  
and ringing, and all wound round  
the gold rope of happiness,

Hissing and humming and singing  
like summer-lightning from Heaven -- tra-la, tra-la,  
oh you're off to Hell, down to Hell,  
unless you beat time, yes, and promise

salvation, and bliss . . . . .

George Ivask  
*Translated from the Russian*  
by Burton Raffel & Alla Burago

## Isaac

Just before morning, and the sun strolled through the forest  
With me, and with my father,  
And my right hand was in his left.

And like lightning a knife flashed between the trees –  
And I'm afraid of my fear and the blood on the leaves.

Papa! Papa! Come quick and save Isaac  
So everyone will be home for lunch.

But I'm the one being butchered, my son,  
That's my blood on the leaves.  
My father's voice choked,  
His face went pale.

And I wanted to scream, struggling not to believe,  
And I was scratching at my eyes,  
And I woke up,

My right hand limp, bloodless.

Amir Gilboa  
*Translated from the Hebrew*  
by Burton Raffel

## Woodtime

This woman light screened through  
these scattered sibyl's leaves  
out of which green fancy weaves lawn  
sleeves for providential time filters

to cover Mr. Marvel's dainty arms  
into human time a time from elsewhere moves  
light filtered through inevitable greens  
in the violence of Mr. Marvel's woodtime

where he threw his symbolic lamp  
over the book of nature entirely  
unseen forms emerge from the shade  
of forms that are seen but forgotten

## Human Life

Always behind my back I hear  
The spastic clicking of jerked knees  
And other automatic reactions  
Tracking me through the years to where  
Time's winged chariot is double  
Parked near the eternity frontier  
And in such moments I want to participate  
In human life less and less  
But when I do the obligatory double take  
And glance behind me into the dark green future  
All I see stretching out are vast  
Arizona republics of more

Tom Clark

## The Volsi Story

King Olaf found out once again that the land was still little Christian in its farthest reaches, and he had a great mind to turn all the people to a common faith throughout his kingdom, even in the islands and far off headlands. In an old poem it's said that on the northern headland in Norway above a good harbor, far from the main settlement and thus the main road, lived an aged couple, a farmer and his wife. They had two children, a son and a daughter, and so it says in the beginning of the poem:

An old man  
And woman, too  
Lived together  
On a headland.  
A son they had,  
Manly and brave,  
A daughter, too,  
Very clever.

With them also lived a slave and bondwoman. The farmer was a quiet man, not meddlesome, but the old woman was a shrew and ruled the daily life of the home. The farmer's son was happy and cheerful, but full of jokes and rowdy. The daughter was older, quick to learn and knew a lot, though she had grown up in the country. The farmer had a large deer hound named Lari. None of them had looked into the holy faith.

It so happened in the late fall that the farmer's cart horse died. He was very fat, and since it was the custom of heathen men to eat horseflesh, the horse was dressed to be eaten. As soon as the animal was skinned, the slave tore off all in one piece the part beasts of that kind use for begetting and which the old skald poems call the horse's cock.

When the slave had cut it off and was about to throw it down on the ground beside him, the farmer's son began to laugh and he grabbed it and went into the sitting room. In there were his mother, sister, and the bondwoman. With much joking he shook the horse's cock at them and made this verse:

Here you see  
Quite boldly  
A cock, cut  
From father's horse.  
You, bondwoman  
Will learn how great  
A friend this Volsi  
Can be, inside!

The bondwoman burst out laughing, but the farmer's daughter bade him take this awful thing outside. The old woman then stood up, crossed the room, and grabbed it from him. She said they shouldn't waste this or anything else. Such may be of use. Then she went out and dried it very carefully. She wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid it in her chest along with garlic and other herbs so it wouldn't rot.

As the autumn passed, the old woman began to pick up the Volsi each night and chant over it and worship it, and it soon got so that she put all her trust in the Volsi and held it for her god, leading into this same mistake her husband, children, and all the household. Then, with the power of the devil, this Volsi would grow and stiffen so that it would stand tall in her presence if the old woman wanted it to. She then took up the custom of carrying it, standing tall, into the sitting room each evening.

There she first spoke a verse over it, then brought it to the farmer, and it passed on to each in turn, until it ended up with the bondwoman. Everyone had to speak a verse over it, and each saw by their words how devout the other was.

One time before Olaf was driven from the land by King Knut, he sailed his ship north along the coast. He had heard of this headland and of the idol worship that went on there, and because he wanted to turn the folk there, as in other places, to the true faith, he told his pilot to turn off course and towards that harbor which lies under that headland, for the wind was now fair.

Late in the day they came to this harbor. The king had a tent pitched on the ship and said his men should spend the night on board. He, however, wanted to go to the farm, and he told Finn Arnason and Thormod Coal-Brow's skald to go with him. These three then put on gray cloaks over their clothes, and so dressed, they went to the farm in the evening. They went into the sitting room and sat down on the

bench. They sat so that Finn was innermost, Thormod in the middle, and the king on the outside. They waited there until darkness fell, and no man came into the room.

Later, a woman came in with a torch. This was the farmer's daughter. She greeted the men and asked their names. Each one called himself Grim. She then lit the lights in the sitting room. She kept on looking at the guests, and she looked longest at the one seated furthest out. As she made ready to leave, a verse came to her lips and she said:

Gold I see on guests,  
Cloaks of velvet too.  
To rings turn my thoughts  
A ring I'd have and lie.  
My king I know you,  
Olaf, You have come.

The guest who sat furthest out answered, "You are a clever woman, but you be quiet about this!"

They said no more to each other. The farmer's daughter went on about her business. A little later the farmer came in with his son and the slave. He sat in the high seat, his son up beside him, and the slave beside him, but further away. They cheerfully tried to get the guests to talk. Later, the tables were set up and food laid out. The farmer's daughter sat beside her brother and the bondwoman beside the slave. As was said before, the three Grimms sat all together.

After a while the old woman came in, carrying the Volsi in her arms, and she went before the farmer in the high seat. It is not said that she greeted the guests. She took the cloth off the Volsi, set it on the farmer's knee, and spoke this verse:

Grown are you Volsi,  
When you're touched by hand;  
Clad you are in linen,  
Stuffed you are with leeks.  
Take Morni,  
This idol,  
Farmer, hold fast  
This Volsi!

The farmer didn't much care for this, but he took it and spoke this verse:

Had I got rid of it,  
Would I not  
This evening  
Be carrying it!  
Take Morni,  
This idol,  
Farmer's son, you be with  
This Volsi!

The farmer's son took it, raised up the Volsi, turned to his sister and spoke this verse:

You take this thing  
Before the bridesmaids.  
There at night they  
Shall wet this cock!  
Take Morni,  
This idol,  
You, farmer's daughter,  
Pull the Volsi to you!

She wasn't too happy about this, but kept the family custom, took it from him, carefully, and spoke this verse:

By Gefjon and other gods,  
This I flatly swear,  
Unwilling must I  
This red cock take!  
Take Morni,  
This idol,  
House slave--  
You grab the Volsi!

The slave took it and said:

On workdays  
Would a loaf  
Thick, lumpy, broad,  
Twice as useful  
Be to me,  
As the Volsi here!  
Take Morni,  
This idol,  
Bondwoman, thrust  
To you the Volsi!

The bondwoman took it very happily, held it close, stroked it and spoke this verse:

For sure I'm not able  
To keep from  
Thrusting it in me.  
If with it we lay--  
Fun for both!  
Take Morni,  
This idol,  
You, Grim our guest,  
Grab the Volsi!

Finn took it and held it. He spoke this verse:

Sailed have I widely,  
Before the headlands.  
With bold hands,  
Raised a sail.  
Take Morni,  
This idol,  
Grim, my mate,  
Grab this Volsi!

He handed it to Thormod. He took it and saw very clearly how the thing was made. He smiled then and spoke this verse:

Ere this I've not seen,  
Though I've widely fared,  
A naked cock  
At drinking table!  
Take Morni,  
This idol,  
Head Grim, you  
Take this Volsi!

The king took the Volsi and spoke this verse:

A captain I've been,  
And a forecastle man,  
A leader too,  
Of all the folk.  
Take Morni,  
This idol,  
And you, house-hound,  
Tear this monster up!

He threw it down on the floor, and the hound seized it at once. When the old woman saw that, she began to panic, and in such a state she spoke a verse:

Who is that man,  
Unknown to me,  
Who gives the hound  
The holy idol?  
Bring down the roof  
I would, at least--  
To see if I could save  
The holy idol!  
Lie down, Lari,  
This I can't bear to see,  
Don't swallow it down,  
You nasty bitch!

The king then cast off his disguise, and they saw who he was. He talked to them of the true faith. The old woman was unwilling in this, but the farmer was somewhat more ready. And through the power of God and the stubbornness of Olaf, it ended with them all taking the faith. They were baptized by the king's priest. They kept well the faith ever after, once they learned what they should believe. They accepted their maker and saw what evil and ignorance they had lived in, not at all like other good men.

It may be seen in this that King Olaf took great pains to rid everyone of the wicked life of heathen witchcraft, and to bring to the true way the farthest reaches of Norway as well as the main lands. He had in this the greatest need to bring the most he could to the true faith, and it is clear he has so done this thing, as all others, to please God.

Translated by W. Bryant Bachman

## *The Volsi Story*

*Well-known to most modern Icelanders, this story has never made it to the English speaking world. In fact, rare indeed is the occasional reference to it in the literary histories of Icelandic literature. No doubt this suppression is largely due to the indelicacies of the story which may have mightily offended the sensibilities of the 19th century editors and translators of Icelandic literature. One indication of this attitude is provided by the best Old Icelandic-English dictionary, a 19th century effort produced by Cleasby and Vigfusson, which insists on translating all the indelicate words of The Volsi Story into Latin!*

*The story was probably originally written in the 13th century, although the poems in it suggest an oral tradition that considerably pre-dates that time. This surviving version is found in The Saga of St. Olaf where it seems to have the ostensible purpose of demonstrating Olaf's great zeal in ridding the land of heathen witchcraft. It succeeds, however, in providing posterity with a rare and quite graphic example of just that witchcraft.*

WBB



## Antiphon from the Cylinder of Nebuchadnezzar

Tremblingly, I was obedient to Marduk, my lord.

*Who is Marduk? What do I care?*

I completed the great walls of Babylon.

*My back aches. The bricks are unwieldy. I'm weak.*

At the entrance of the grand gate

*politicians, linen merchants, butchers, a line of thieves  
to lose their hands, rapists to lose their heads.*

I erected strong bulls of bronze

*and yesterday built a flimsy shed for chickens. It's enough.*

And terrible serpents standing upright.

*Crazy! What crazy superstition I'm awed by.*

With fear and without rest, I accomplished.

*Now my love guards my life. She makes my dreams good.*

Words, favor forever upon your lips.

*America, this America. What if the slaves of petroleum  
unroll prayer rugs behind the television?*

Give peace to my soul.

*Unplug the airports, lock misleaders in the bathroom  
like children escaping a furious father's strap.*

Make my body strong.