abraxas

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ABRAXAS 4 Vol.2 No.2

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LIZZARD GIZZARDS F. Keith Wahle

after six years at Clown School
you think you're ready for the big time.
you throw cigarettes at the windows
remembering those months of odd jobs--
the harmonica band, the incense factory

now the tables are turned
crows fly out of your pockets like madmen
you carry them past the shipwrecks and
the frozen cars out to the sea where they float
like strawberries in a dish of milk

so, pay the wilderness if you wish!
pride is in your favor, and diameter
means nothing. but you keep it to yourself--
the troopers disguised as an avalanche,
the spaceship to Mars, your secret pleasure

you run down the street, following
a truck full of books and timebombs
you have to get in shape for the
Festival of Basements, you have to save your
laundry, you have to keep your head

THE PRESIDENT"S LIFE Duane Ackerson

The President moves
from White House to White House,
keeping his vision pure.

The President's image
gets up an hour early
as a precaution,
gets the President out of bed,
and they eat a bowl of Golf Balls together
before the image goes to the office;
the President goes back to sleep.

The President takes time out to pray
that it won't make any inexpedient decisions;
the President reminds itself
that it has an appointment
with Arthur Godfrey at 9:15.

The President jumps out of it's skin,
thinking he's seen a ghost,
but then remembers the average image
is only two millimeters thin,
and that he's just seeing
himself through his own thin skin.

The President consults
with Kate Smith, Lawrence Welk,
Billy Graham
and the spirit of his long-gone
sainted grandmother,
who used to run a filling station in La Jolla.
(Moments like these help him to get through the day.)
The President keeps his makeup dry.

As he meets with various lobbyists,
he moves from White Horses to White Horses
and keeps his powder dry--
he's got a warm handshake,
and they usually misfire
when they shoot at his little white
lies.

COLUMNS Franklin Brainard

The Palace of Versailles is floating on blood.
When it rains in Italy,
the dead hang by their heels
and skin lamps are hiding
in Teutonic heads.
Bubbles of flesh keep boiling
up from jungles.
Let us grind bones to make white columns.

"YOU DON'T SEE MANY WILD STALLIONS ANYMORE"

Dave Hilton

They did OK untill cash flew
the villagers to alternate
sanctuaries. Then evening plunged
several points. The women
bundled themselves in heliocopters
but the men got the instructions
wrong, drove hollow reeds
deep into their eyes and suddenly
were performing the colorful
Dance of Asphyxiation. Color
film captured all
but the last: in black bunkers
the surviving birds helping
each other remove their wings,
turning to their new tasks.
The cablegram was terse."Please rush
arms, feet, faces, genitals, one
large spool of entrails.
Thank you." When we galloped away
the first cool coins began
to fall from the sky--stamped variously
on each the faces
of infants, sons, daughters,
fathers, mothers, wives, sweethearts,
sisters, brothers, friends

broken in pain.

BEING PATIENT THE WRONG WAY: AN ACCOUNTANT'S STORY

William Dickey

1.

I guess my whole problem has been that I can't compete.

2.

When there was only the one moon in your sky I was very happy.

3.

It is like me to be so careful in recording this exact goodbye.

WINTER PRIVACY POEM Robert Bly

When I woke, new snow had fallen.
I am alone, yet someone else is with me,
drinking coffee, looking out at the snow.

David Ignatow

A leaf lies shaking
at my door about to be
blown away.
If I should
bring it into the still
air of my room, it would
lie quietly on the window
sill, facing the tree
from which it fell.

I Rod Clark

Rain looks
down the incredible
staircase...
Rain looks down
the terrible stair,
Should you have opened
the green grey portal,
breaking glass with
your ancient bone?

MAUI POEM Erin Starr

many gurus, animal farm.
grey lace, fern silhouette.
folded sweater, open sandals.
white sun, tin roof.

A SILENCE James Merrill

No coffin without nails.
This one you drive into mine
At least is golden.

BALANCE OF POWER Wallace Kaufman

A car and a water buffalo weigh the same
but we know when it comes to wars
the buffalo is easily killed with a bullet.
How could they slaughter our cars?

WORK Toby Olson

The work depends on
things utterly simple:

the way cheap nails
bend
driving them in.

a man is only
as good as his tools or
a man is better
or worse)than the tools he has purchased.

But the work gets done, the tools
need to be cared for.

maybe the tools rust)
The man goes into the finished structure.

The tools do
or don't.

THE BURDEN Russel Edson

Thieves stole a man out of his bed.
When the bed woke up it felt in its sheets
for the burden of its ministry...
The bed buried its face in its pillow and began to weep.

FARM David Ray

We walked down the road together,
the way it should be, and you had
Trouble with your boots, and held hands
And caught the sun.
Creek, and the rust was right
For the bridge, and we loved
W.T. and Eulys, Willa Mae, Beatrice
and Edris, Orville, Dowell and
Catherine, the rubber in the drawer,
the wagon piled high with tomatoes
we had all picked, the gun
they fought over, the rodline
you dripped oil on till you screamed
and ever since I've been trying to vanish
in some specific suffering,
in some ditch or cornbin, rather than
be the scribe of the family,
suffering through it all again and
again, trying to recover
the Chevrolet
of past years, so black
beside the washing machine
stacked with Eulys' Popular Mechanics
and there was one wrinkled peach
tree on the way out there--
many a time we peed there in the Tulsa
night, when it was too cold
or we were too damn lazy
to walk the planks
to the outhouse
where spiders might bite us
on our balls that were not very pigbig yet.
And now we have the tragedy that we cannot all
love one another and share
(painters speak and paint of this) and it
goes back to the farm. Your scream explodes
and I am back there, in that grief.

THE DISEMBODIED James Bertolino

The disembodied think
of us.

They feel our pressure
on this space,
our yellow glow pulsing waves
through misted green.

Now my tongue pumps
the slim pink stamen
between her thighs.
They hear our flutes entwine.

In a yellow rush
our liquid flesh petals
flood
this room.

They gather here
to drown.

FINAL COUNT Richard Le Mon

You do not understand, why
each Spring I go to the pool,
wade through the silt
til I have washed away
every trace of mud.
What is it I find
when I pump away the tears?
The stems of lonely flowers at the grate
whose petals have strayed
to the distant corners.
A broken shovel
buried face up in the mud.
A bloated fish
asking no question
with its sad milky eyes.
Footprints that nothing
will wash away.
Pennies

for a drowned girl's thoughts.

It is not a question "why."
That it is Spring is enough
and that pools are born in Spring
and that all the final counts
and made in the low ground.

SELCTED NOTES:

W. S. Merwin's new book, The Carrier of Ladders will be published by Atheneum in September.

Poems: 1934-1969 by David Ignatow has been published by Wesleyan (262 pages). It's all there, and then some. There are selections from all of his books, plus new poems. $7.95.

Richard Le Mon's first book, I Am The Spider, has been published as a Westigan Review chapbook (Dept. of Chem.,W. Mich. U., Kalamazoo, Mich.,$1.00). This is the best first book by a young poet that I have read this year.

James Bertolino's latest book, Becoming Human, has been published by Road Runner Press.

Robert Bly's WINTER PRIVACY POEM is one part of SIX WINTER PRIVACY POEMS, first published by Field.

Duff Bigger lives in Spain, has recently had poems in Epoch and Greenfield Review. His pamphlet Soleares is available from Abraxas Press for 25¢

David Ray, author of Dragging the Main (Cornell U. Press, 1968), has two new books forthcoming: The Blue Duck, and Corruptions from the Urdu.

The short poem anthology is still in search of a publisher. It may eventually appear as a special issue of Abraxas.

Abraxas 5 will be edited and published by James Bertolino at 1811 Oshkosh Ave., Oshkosh, Wis. 54901. Abraxas 6 will be edited by Warren Woessner, & etc.

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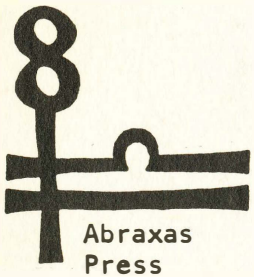

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