T H E F L O A T I N G B E A R

a newsletter

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HELLO, MA
I GLAD I WIN !

JOE "F. B." LOUIS

BEAR K. O.'S P. O. IN TWO

HE COULD RUN BUT HE COULDN'T HIDE!

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CHAMPION'S COLORFUL HOMILIES LIGHTEN POST-FIGHT ATMOSPHERE. BEAR WINS OBSCENITY CASE BY KNOCKOUT.

"PERCENTAGE OF HOMOSEXUALS" ON BEAR'S LIST STILL SECRET. JONES RESISTS D.A.'S QUESTIONING ON VITAL POINT.

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BURROUGH'S CURE FOR PILES ALSO UPHELD

On April 25 and 26, LeRoi Jones, editor of the Floating Bear appeared before the grand jury at his own request. The jury was meeting in order to decide whether or not to indict Mr. Jones and Miss Diane Di Prima, co-editors of the Bear, on charges of sending obscene matter (F.B. #9, which included a section of Mr. Jones' System of Dante's Hell, and a piece by William Burroughs entitled, The Routine) through the mails.

After the first day's hearing, things looked very grim, Mr. Jones having had to sit still under such questions as "What percentage of the

Bear's mailing list is homosexual?" Mr. Jones asked the federal attorney what percentage of the d.a.'s office was homosexual, and pointed out that the last big queer bust took place in the state department. Some of the jury busied themselves reading racing forms while this was going on, pausing only to hunch each other at the "dirty words".

However, the next day went extremely well. Mr. Jones was allowed to read from the many letters of encouragement the Bear had received from friends and literary people all over the world. He also read Judge Woolsey's decision on Ulysses as well as the dirtier parts of that book; and ended the defense by reading from Catullus. After a brief recess the jury voted not to indict.

Of course we'd like to thank all the people who wrote letters or checks in the Bear's behalf. It would have been an impossible situation without your help. Now, all we need is $150.00 more to finish paying the lawyer. And we won't bother you again until we need more postage money for the animal (which is always) or if we print some more "dirt".

- The Editors

[39]

Bertolt Brecht:

A LETTER TO HIS FASCIST FRIEND
ARNOLT BRONNEN IN THE SUMMER OF 1923

THE LORD OF THE SOUTH SEA TO THE LORD OF THE NORTH SEA

broken up man to hear the shit is getting too deep
after we made all the kicks we could think of we invented
some new ones real weird now they are a drag
what's happening?
your brother thankful is busting his ass with labour
like classics is one thing but bacon another
my play mahagonny is bugging the hell out of all dumb bavarians.
can you send me that little drawingroom drama?
I still like to see what you're writing these days
I'm sitting on the third play I made the thicket
in berlin I told this man engel I'd lay it on him
I would like to see your aryan mug once more maybe
as in spring long ago
how you making it?
and who with
what food
films
hitler
but where you going to get those goldmarks that kind of bread hey
but I guess the weather is changing now sun's going to shine
your hand lord of the north sea.

-- version by Anselm Hollo in 1961

THE CRONOPIOS IN AMERICA - 1.

- for Julio Cortázar

c o l l e c t i n g t h e m a i l

After having picked up his letters at General Delivery, a cronopio went across to a bar in Christopher Street to peruse them quietly. The first was a letter from the cronopio's father containing money; the second was a long, woeful communication asking for money, from an acquaintance, a heroin addict, stranded in St. Louis; the third was an holiday extra-special subscription offer from TIME magazine; and the last was a letter from a cronopio friend of his in Argentina with a funny drawing on the back.

After his second calvados, the cronopio repaired to the men's room for a natural reason, and while, with a pleased and vacant expression on his little face he was staring at the wall, he noticed a fly ambulating slowly across it, in little lurches, it being winter. After buttoning his trousers, he caught the fly in one hand and carried it leisurely back, past the bar, to the jukebox where he deposited it gently, where it could be both warm and comfortable, and also listen to Bobby Darrin singing MACK THE KNIFE.

His glass was located between two esperanzas who had conducted a loud and uninteresting argument over his head on the respective merits of a plain calendar adorned by a picture of a naked lady in any of several interesting poses, as against a more colorful calendar with all the holidays and anniversaries marked, when Benjamin Franklin flew the kite, Ground-Hog Day, the birthday of Robert E. Lee, etc.,but with no picture at all.

Wishing to remove himself from the aural center of this argument which was not only loud, but in lamentably bad taste, the cronopio removed his glass to a point as far down the bar as possible, and also directly in front of an exemplar of the kind of calendar with a naked lady on it, which he gazed at happily while ordering his third calvados. But the discussion continued so repetitively, with frequent crude and indecent references to the lady's photograph , in full color, that the dismayed cronopio who had begun to feel a certain sympathy for the lady and her generous beauties, left without ordering a fourth calvados, and entered the dark, cold world where the snow was falling into the headlights of trucks stopped at the intersection, and where he could, in the silence of the thick snowflakes and idling motors, consider hopefully a whole harem of calendar ladies who would not be waiting for him when he returned to his room.

--Paul Blackburn

BEST READING LIST (An Analysis Based on Reports from Leading Readers in Macon County, North Carolina, during February, 1962.)

City of Discontent, Mark Harris, an interpretive biography of Vachel Lindsay and Springfield, Illinois. I found this book in the Savile Bookshop, Georgetown, back of a row of Henry James criticism. It is excellent, and I have never heard it mentioned. It leads one to Lindsay's A Handy Guide for Beggars Especially Those of the Poetic Fraternity and Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty. The Lindsay of the prose vignette -- he was very good at it. Sherwood Anderson and Masters knew it, so it might behoove one to see. Then see Anderson's Mid-American Chants, o megapolites. The winnowed heart of them is superb.

Another tangent: Memories of My Brother: Frederick Delius, by Clare Delius. Amiable, but only to be read after Beecham's, Fenby's, Heseltine's books... The Hill of Dreams, Arthur Machen (a Henry Miller favorite); Mistress of Mistresses, E. R. Eddison -- two small parts of the pantomime for lovers of Tolkien and Peake.

Norman Brown's Life Against Death, second reading. Next time may begin to do it, it seems worth it. Also Huizinga's Homo Ludens, a bible for those like myself who only work at play. Also, very tough, Elizabeth Sewell's The Orphic Voice, diffuse but full of insights and leads to writers like Emerson I never expected. Her book led me again to Denis Saurat's Gods of the People. And to D'Arcy Thompson's On Growth & Form. And the need to ask the question: who can tell me the best editions to read Novalis and Boehme in?

New books: Lorine Niedecker's lovely wee book, My Friend Tree (mail 75¢ to The Wild Hawthorn Press, 24 Fettes Row (2nd floor), Edinburgh, Scotland)... The Collected Poems (at last!) of Hugh MacDiarmid... Paul Goodman's Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals... A new book to crave: Shakespeare's Ovid, the complete translation by Arthur Golding, being published by Southern Illinois University Press @ $19.50... Jargon's cravings, in the works: Walter Lowenfels, Peyton Houston, Buckminster Fuller, Sherwood Anderson, and Homer -- all in press. Oramus!

Leading Readers of Macon County, North Carolina would like to know what other caitiffs are reading in Floating Bear Land, and suggest a regular feature. You name it, poet.

J. Williams, Minion to Jargon

A wild blue, yonder

Let me say
we had a canary
who rode to Idaho
with Bob Creeley
swinging in a cage
on the seat beside him

Sadly in the last of March
I opened our door
and the bird flew out before me
but that was hours ago

Was a very nice bird
liked Syeeda's song flute
and returned always to the cage
to roost, and had taken
to a picture of that man
on our shelf, which we then put
in the window facing out

Helene saw out the window
a bright blue
bird in the sage
and felt better so
finally we gave it up.

Time blonde

She was a figurine moving
among the hills of seattle
experimentally clothed
she drove an experimental car
to the stores.

What was life then?

It was wandering between
the planted trees of a climate
of light red rain, it was
just the going to and fro
in a light cold climate
hoping to meet, but nothing said,
to bed, if she had the time.

By which I mean didn't we
wait much of the time staring out
at the various parts of the city
and during those nights
of waiting
the little red lights
in the water of the bays
did they not say no use?

In my youth I was a tireless dancer

But now I pass
graveyards in a car.
The dead lie,
unsuperstitiously,
with their feet toward me --
please forgive me for
saying the tombstones would not
fancy their faces turned from the highway.

Oh perish the thought
I was thinking in that moment
Newman Illinois
the saturday night dance --
what a life! Would I like it again?
No. Once I returned late summer
from California thin from journeying
and the girls were not the same.
You'll say that's natural
they had been dancing all the time.

The song is ended
for Nellie L.

Lingers on
but the
melody when everyone goes
the moon
we sang, to say
too soon
and found that everyone
too soon
had gone
but the moon

Do you
love
me baby
like you used to now
I'd like to know
Oh I'd like to know

The poet lectures famous potatoes

He visited:
He said no, no emotion
said the poet
is not sentimental
(however didn't say what that means)
said he does not spill what he has
in him. He makes like a carpenter
makes his cabinet to hold things
objects, which were carved
and are placeable
and do not tip.

Uh be not so artlessly baleful
toward society. Be well dressed
but not too well dressed
(Of course everybody knows that)
Yes, he's just so,
neither a scholar nor not a scholar.

Schools he said, are those benches
of learning for the man of sensibility
or ought to be, uh
he said something else
meaning -- we're liberals, hyphen hip
the cats who argue all that business
they been talking about, but
let's hush it around, don't
praise Allen Ginsberg.

--Ed Dorn

Nose from Newswhere

Early in May I returned from the middle west, back to the mountains. I had been abroad only 2 weeks, yet it seemed much longer than that; nights spent in strange places, still trying to get it all sorted and placed on some scale of impression. Several hours after I got off the train someone said, "Ammon is here". I said, oh, yes, and smiled. He hadn't been around here since last winter, had it been in January or December, just before Christmas?

Back then I had written a letter to him asking if he would come up for a few days, chew the fat, fast, anything. He said yes, so Ray and I drove down to Salt Lake to pick him up. That was a good visit. He talked everything from Carlo Tresca to curing (some process that seemed a hybrid of Christian Science and Buddha). In Salt Lake, before we started back, we had a bowl of soup at his refuge for derelicts and transients - one rule: no drunks and no cops - actually, I don't think he has all that much against drunks - it's just that like cops, they break things and are hard to handle and Ammon is slight of build, getting on in years. But the soup - great fat turnips and spuds, almost whole carrots floating around in rich hot broth. Very good. Gets plenty cold in Salt Lake. Ammon, I understand, does not eat of his own soup, being a vegetarian, but it is typical of the man that he knows fat warms, however it may chill the moral fiber of some thinkers.

If you ever find yourself in Salt Lake, I mean I doubt that you'd ever find yourself there, nevertheless if you're hungry, that hunger could be satisfied by what The St. Joseph's Refuge & Joe Hill House of Hospitality, at Post Office Place, has to offer - a lot of the food he uses is got f from the Mormons, but you can hardly tell it by the taste.

Which gets me to what I had in mind - that Ammon has a way of transforming everything. He says he is a one man revolution, something about personal goodness, etc. To a man of my generation, bred on no sense of revolution save that literary talk, this seems quaint - all revolution does, here and now - i.e., ultimately one has to wonder who it would be would get the train for what station. (to the Salt Lake station? to the Grand Central station? I thought all those people had wives and kids in the garage, or I mean have to stop by the dry cleaners to pick up their beards.)

I saw Hennacy for just about a half hour this last time, here in Pocatello. Talked very fast...he mentioned he'd been in Seattle to picket the fair. I said, oh yes, how was that? And he told me. And I said, well, but what was there to picket? And he said well, the fair, the 21st Century. I said, yea, oh, the 21st Century. He said, sure. I said, you mean... He said, yea, you know, science, space, bombs, etc. I said wow! a whole goddamn century, imagine, picketing that! He smiled, pleased. I was pleased too, that I finally got it. That I finally broke through all that crap I've read for the past few months, stuck somewhere on one little fix over the ravages of television or the national narcissistic murdering in Algeria.

And that's the nose from newswhere. That this smiling man had just come through from Seattle where he'd picketed the entire 21st Century - one thinks of all those fat businessmen up there who are already raking it in with their trade fair, already gloating, so far ahead, they think, cashing in on the next century. Hmmmm.

--Ed Dorn

[40]

From WHALE HONEY

Act I - Scene 2 [41]

SHELLEY

In Brooklyn the masts of the ships lean in toward the land. There are chairs, pulled close to the curb, the sound of seals. No one takes orders from the younger men. The old spend their evenings catching caterpillars. Occasionally green fire shoots out of the mandolins. The churches are taller than the buildings around them. The spires, lean in, with the masts, toward some central point. Where all the japanese beetles perhaps are born. A catcher's mitt lies on a door post. A window is open a crack, whose angle of vision? Weeds grown sky high make trees and underneath them on the crabgrass the maidens sit. Crocheting blue lace on white handkerchiefs. In the sacristies the altar boys bend over. To be whipped or buggered, as the priests may choose. There are sunsets, the streets are wide enough for that. Old women in empty lots pick dandelion leaves. For salad or soup, they sing, they wear black dresses. Small undernourished ants run from their fingers. The men, the fathers of families are clipping hedges. Which serve as walls. Behind which plaster flamingoes, pink and golden, guard the false fountains. Sun flowers grow over the hedges, lean in with the spires. At the ends of some streets there is a drop, to the water.

BYRON

Down disappearing drops, delinquent joys of dissolute emblems. Your cock flutters like a bird in my mouth. It sings in all the skies of Italy. Oh, how your children rumble in my gut.

SHELLEY

The linoleum was brown, with red flowers. They called it oilcloth. damp under my skin, and gritty, the soot from the city streets, and dampness from the bay. Where little boats were moored. The children catching catfish from the bridges, the new moon, old women, our incontinent joy. We even ran, all the way to the esplanade. Flowers were in your hair, stolen from the hedges. your pointed shoes dislodged not even moss. We clambered over the rocks and chilled the seagulls. Eating pickles and cokes and speaking of Ezra Pound.

MARY

I dressed in a leopard skin and opened cages.

SHELLEY

That was before. The light around brownstone buildings. The sense of lying down to sleep in puddles of blood. Don't wipe your hands on your apron. Forks and umbrellas are falling out of your hair.

BYRON

Before a hurricane, the light is formidable. there are no shadows. pieces of rope lie rotting along the beach. the hair on my head stirs & stands upright like snakes. all i can think about is that pastry shop, the polished blue tile outside, the smell of coffee. how long a walk it was, in the winter. the curved glass, polished cases, the sticky floors. that had been washed too often in rainy weather. Suppose we're all mistaken, there is a way, to redeem all this, or that we've done no wrong. Suppose the thin ghosts don't stand in this angry air, changing the light & meriting our reproach? Oh, I'd drag you by your hair to the heart of the woods & offer your blood to the sacred lionness, I'd crush your bones in my fists & suck out your eyeballs, if that would help propitiate your gods, fatten these ghosts, bring light back to this air.

MARY

As usual. The angle of vision affects the taste of the butter. There is a fly on your neck, when you brush it off I will notice your hand is dirty. And too plump. Where has Shelley gone, I wonder.

BYRON

Unbutton your blouse. An angel sits on your pimple. Your flaws and blemishes are things to be chewed with gusto. Salt wind blows from yr eyeballs, jellyfish float in the pools of yr flesh. There are figs on the lemon trees.

SHELLEY

Gigantic vision, angle of my armpit. The wind strikes a leaf. The wind. Strikes two leaves. The undersides are silver. So are the bellies of fish, in the deeper waters. The light there wavers & plays. Much like electric light on stale bath water. Take a shower & drink some espresso, is what I shd do. Prepare myself. Athanatos.

-- Diane Di Prima