

GAY SUNSHINE

A JOURNAL OF GAY LIBERATION

Gerard Malanga, Spring 1968. Photo by Paul Morrissey



Gerard Malanga: An Interview

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60 Cents

I mourn the death of Eddie Rastellini, a gay brother who was stabbed to death at Bridgewater State Prison, Massachusetts, November 6, 1973.

People laugh when we tell them that Massachusetts has a law prohibiting "the abominable and detestable crime against nature" providing a punishment of up to 15 years in jail. When Eddie was killed, he was serving his sixth year of such a sentence. He had hopes to be released on parole last February, but the parole board turned him down.

I first met Eddie about a year and a half ago, when he was in the Protective Custody unit at Walpole state prison. (This is where a prisoner is kept when he can convince the authorities that his life is in danger.) Eddie had responded to an ad placed in a Boston weekly by the Rhode Island Gay Alliance requesting contact with gay prisoners. My Rhode Island friends tried to visit Eddie, but they were denied access ostensibly because their relationship with Eddie did not pre-date his sentencing. I, however, got in with press credentials; I visited Eddie about six or eight times, and we exchanged dozens of letters.

My first impression of Eddie — and it never left me — was that he was incredibly gaunt, skinny and intense. He opened up to me easily, hopefully, as he told his story.

A native of Cambridge, product of a poor white working class family, Eddie became a street hustler. He sold his body to men in New York, Washington, and other cities, but Boston's Combat Zone was home.

In 1967, when Eddie was busted, he was 24, not too young for a street hustler. Eddie knew a lot of the younger hustlers, and he befriended them frequently, introducing them to johns. One of these young men was Russell Smith, age 16, who had been on the street for a year. One day he and Eddie borrowed the apartment of an acquaintance in order to rest. They stripped, took a nap, and the acquaintance took their clothes to a laundromat. Shortly thereafter, the cops came and broke down the door. Eddie was charged with sodomy and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

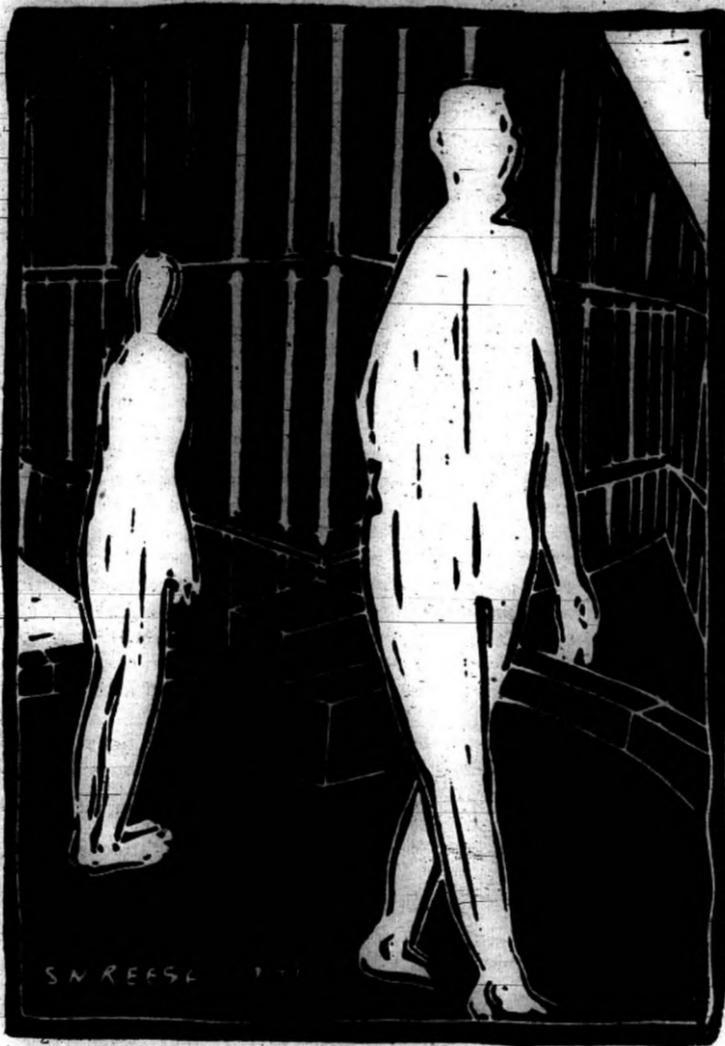
The acquaintance disappeared and Eddie never could determine how or why the cops showed up. He surmised that there may have been jealousy involved.

Throughout the trial, the prosecution won juror sympathy by referring to Smith as a "child" (this being the correct legal terminology for a minor), and accused Eddie of introducing Smith to "every pervert on Washington Street." Sodomy was the heavy charge, and this, Eddie says, was a total frame-up, involving a police officer who lied while Smith was coerced to lie. Hustlers — who usually prefer to think of themselves as "doing it only for the money" — rarely make it with each other. Eddie says he was doing so much speed (amphetamine) at the time that he couldn't have made it with Smith if he had wanted to. Yet Smith provided corroborative testimony that Eddie fucked him in the ass (with his consent). Eddie was certain that Russell lied because he was told to lie under threat of being sent to a juvenile home.

Judge James C. Roy, notoriously harsh, showed only contempt for Eddie throughout the trial, and the sentence he handed down was 5 to 15 years. Perhaps the sentence was so harsh, Eddie wondered, because of the fact that he had been bailed out of jail by Bill Baird, the birth control advocate. Baird was in a Boston jail the same time that Eddie was there; he showed birth control foam to undergraduates at Boston University and was prosecuted under a now-defunct Massachusetts law. Realizing that they were both victims of a sexually repressed society, Rastellini sought Baird's aid, and Baird responded favorably. The New England blue-noses were furious at Baird for his birth control crusade, and so Baird's and Eddie's good intentions did Eddie more harm than good.

When Eddie got to jail, his fellow inmates did not know the details, but they knew it was a sex crime. One of the early rumors — perhaps spread by guards

GAY PRISON TRAGEDY



FIGURES AND BARS II

in Eddie's view — was that Eddie had fucked his own five year old son. Eddie became labeled not only as a faggot but as a child molester; he never recovered from this traditional anti-homosexual slander. In fact, after I read about Eddie's death in the papers, I called John McLean, the public relations man for the Massachusetts Department of Corrections. He told me, as if I had no right feeling sorry about Eddie's death, "He committed forcible rape on a 14-year-old boy, you know." That's what the authorities at Bridgewater told McLean about Eddie. It was another version of the same lie.

Early on, Eddie was sent to Bridgewater state hospital (for the criminally insane). According to Massachusetts law, all sex offenders must be examined there to determine if they are "sexually dangerous." A three-man panel of psychiatrists voted Eddie as not dangerous, 2-1, and off he went to Walpole, maximum security pen. The fact that one psychiatrist felt he was dangerous, however, would be used against him later in parole board hearings.

After my first visit with Eddie, I attempted in vain to interest a "movement" lawyer in his case. Despite the fact that Eddie was in a combative spirit, hoping to fight for his freedom by raising the Constitutional issues involved in his case, no lawyer associated with the left movement in the Boston area showed the slightest interest.

A good lawyer with time to devote to the case could have found many procedural questions to deal with, completely aside from the Constitutional questions. The entire transcript is permeated with anti-gay feelings on the part of judge and prosecutor, including apologies to the jury for having to listen to the testimony; it was hardly a fair trial by a jury of Eddie's peers.

Finally, Richard Rubino, the only Boston attorney who has consistently spoken for and worked in defense of the gay community, agreed to represent Eddie. Rubino, however, felt he could not devote enough time to undertake the Consti-

tutional aspects, so he concentrated on helping Eddie get parole. One reason they denied parole, ironically, was that Eddie didn't have any friends in jail.

Marked as a faggot and a "diddler" (child molester), Eddie experienced continual razzing and hostility in jail, much of it violent, and Eddie was not very good at defending himself. He sought Protective Custody, and so he ended up in the wing of the jail where stool pigeons are kept. This assured him of having very few friends, if any, as Eddie distinctly disliked the stool pigeons and inmates who had special privileges. It was no wonder that Eddie had no friends in jail; but I imagine it was too much for the parole board to find out why.

Eddie was very turned on by his contact with the gay liberation movement. He devoured the gay publications we sent him (these included *Gay Sunshine*) — though they did not always get through to him. He became so enthusiastic about the gay movement, in fact, that we became concerned lest he overestimate our strength and our ability to help him. We told him not to get too hyped up;

He wrote back: "The access to gay literature has not in the least 'hyped' me up. I must admit that having an outlet, a way to reach people has hyped me up a little bit, but it's my hatred for these insane, unhumane, unrealistic laws that are killing people in various ways that has got me hyped up... Even my own situation makes it obvious that I am more than aware of the realities of the Man and of the Pigs. I intend to proceed, one way or another. I've got nothing, nothing at all to lose, except perhaps my life, but what is life when you are so unhappy."

Eddie quickly picked up in the gay-feminist analysis he read in gay papers, and he began applying it to the people and situations he knew:

"I do not think that you are fully aware of what I have observed in my 29 years, nor what I have experienced. A fifteen-year old gay boy I knew (Ironically I met him in the Punchbowl, and he thought I was a vice cop), who was

strung out on heroin, was brutally murdered, his body being crushed, plus, he was deliberately given 100% pure heroin in deliberately killing dose. My Own Boy, who is trying to be what he is not, and not accepting himself for the man he is, is strung out on heroin; downstairs below me is a kid I knew on the Street who was and is Gay, was strung out on dope, and him and two other hustlers went out and raped a woman in front of her husband. At Concord prison, two other very young gay boys are serving 16-20 for stabbing a guy while under the influence. Another somewhat retarded kind I knew on the street is doing two life sentences, murder under the influence. The kid downstairs is doing 35-45 years; plus, to prove his manhood, he stabbed a Correctional Officer here. My brother, my friend, this is but a small iota of things I have witnessed and know about. A 13-year old boy, who was obviously effeminate and gay, was put into the worst Juvenile Institution in this lousy motherfucking Commonwealth, [Mass.] and was so abused by guards and inmates, he hanged himself."

Just as prison movement radicals were turned off to Eddie for choosing Protective Custody, so Eddie was turned off to the radicals for their loyalty to power and machismo. "Straight" cons in this prison are very uptight when it comes to their masculinity," he once wrote to me, and he expressed concern that prison radicals accepted the idea of a hierarchy, with gays at the bottom of the ladder.

"In a very real way, Allen, I am a radical, but I never thought my fight was with the prisoners who degraded and assaulted Gay inmates," he wrote. Once I proposed to Eddie that we do something about his case for the "Lock-up" program on WBCN-FM, a popular prison program produced by Boston radicals. Eddie was less than enthusiastic: "I find the program less than credible. I made this finding on the basis of experience; what is reality, and what they broadcast on that program; it's like the difference between Dragnet and the real Pigs on the street."

Eddie had a soft sentimental side which came out frequently in his correspondence with me. At the top of each letter, he liked to put a little epigram. One of his favorites was, "Isn't it a pity, isn't it a shame, how we break each other's heart and cause each other pain." Around Christmastime, he sent me a card with a drawing of the Statue of Liberty and Emma Lazarus' verse about "your huddled masses yearning to breathe free," and he wrote inside, "I think the front of the card expresses our hopes and efforts for not just me but all of our brothers and sisters everywhere." And in a letter, "I received a beautiful hand-crafted card from Jacques; it made me sentimental and melancholic, but some day I shall breathe air as a Free Man, as will we all."

Eddie wasn't what you'd call jovial, but there were moments when a sense of humor emerged. The times we could laugh during the visits to Walpole were a relief for both of us; often I'd felt Eddie had forgotten how to laugh or even smile. One time a fellow inmate gave Eddie a pair of lavender colored briefs. Eddie must have known that lavender is considered the gay color. The briefs, Eddie wrote, appear "to stop my distinguished guards in a state of shock, their eyes seem to become vacant, and I ask them, 'What's the matter with you?' and they make some remarks about my lavender briefs... I consider my briefs as being pretty unique, and shall continue to wear them."

Eddie appeared in court one day to support a motion to obtain certain transcripts, and I attended, feeling, as I always did when I was relating to Eddie, rather powerless to do anything. "Allen," he wrote, "you cannot possibly believe how good and happy it made me, to see you in court. Clenched fist and all; it was rather symbolic, a free gay with clenched fist, with an imprisoned gay handcuffed."

Many of Eddie's letters concerned his hopes for a full scale court challenge.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

THE GAY ACADEMIC UNION

Three hundred and twelve scholars — all homosexuals — gathered in New York City during the Thanksgiving, 1973, weekend to oppose discrimination against women and gay people.

Not so long ago, the worst epithet you could hurl at someone was "academic." No longer. Barbara Gittings, keynote speaker at the conference, has pioneered in organizing gay people around their academic workplaces.

Socialists have long held that people should be organized around their places of work — that being the most realistic way of changing capitalism, since pure altruism, moralism and reformism are dead-end paths.

Some of the speakers recognized these problems. Elizabeth Fee concluded her survey of the forms of homophobia among doctors, 1860-1920, by pointing out that the doctors had feared sexuality as much as homosexuality because of its potential challenge to the social order.

After being interrupted by a crank bomb threat, Edgar Friedberg, Professor of Education at Dalhousie University and author of *Coming of Age in America*, warned that the loosening of persecution against homosexuals was only a "repressive tolerance."

One panel presented their experiences of "coming out." Dr. Howard Brown former Health Commissioner of New York City and now Professor at New York University, had received unqualified support from the *New York Times*, the dean of his college, colleagues and students.

As you walked into the conference hall, a five-to-ten dollar fee was collected, depending on your degree. While there were many sincere, searching people present, too many just wanted to get a bigger place in the system.

-Charley Shively

EDITORIAL

Morris Kight, well known gay activist, currently involved with Los Angeles' Gay Community Services Center (and a movement organizer for over thirty years) has announced that he will be a candidate for the office of Governor of California on a Peace and Freedom Party ticket.

Gay Sunshine gives its full and wholehearted endorsement to Morris Kight, and we also urge all gay people in California to support him. This *Sunshine* endorsement is in accord with the political approach which we adopted (together with the *Gay Liberator* of Detroit) in our manifesto "New Movement Strategy," printed in *Gay Sunshine* No. 14 (page 4), following the Chicago Gay Strategy Conference of February, 1972.

We believe that Morris Kight's campaign is the kind of independent political organizing we were talking about in this manifesto. Such a campaign, even if not victorious at the polls, will raise the consciousness of gay people and will indeed build up the movement in its general action campaign.

Morris Kight's platform on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket will be issued shortly. It will be multi-issue with emphasis on, specifically gay issues. He has told *Gay Sunshine* that he will support:

- the establishment of multi-purpose Gay Community Service Centers throughout California, if necessary with state funding, but no strings attached; i.e. financial accountability but no state access to files and records [See *Gay Sunshine* No. 12 & 17 for in-depth material on such Centers.]
- the evolution of consciousness raising groups among gay people in California, leading to extensive nurture groups.
- a continued assault on institutionalized sexism.
- gay studies programs at every educational level, from primary level through high school to college level. [See article on Gay Studies in *Gay Sunshine* No. 16]
- that women themselves draw up a radical platform on Women's Rights which he, as candidate, will endorse and support fully.
- men's liberation, especially in its reaction to male chauvinism and sexism as exemplified by the treatment of women as sex objects and servants.

Gay Sunshine believes that such a platform will be truly radical and not reformist. We urge gay people to support this campaign and to vote for Morris Kight in 1974. We also urge other gay people throughout the country to support gay candidates running on independent tickets.

The text of the complete platform will be available in late January. It can be obtained by writing: Morris Kight - Campaign, P.O. Box 17669, Los Angeles, Cal. 90017.

Our regular readers have no doubt noticed an increase in the cover price of *Gay Sunshine* beginning with this issue. This price increase was necessary because of a 12% price hike in our printing costs and because of a sizeable increase in postal rates as of January, 1974.

SUNSHINE / FAG RAG ISSUE

In June, 1974 *Gay Sunshine* and Boston's gay lib paper, *Fag Rag*, will publish a special joint issue to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Christopher St. riots (1969-1974) which sparked off the gay liberation movement.

We are now soliciting material for this special issue. Articles should be typewritten double-spaced and no more than fifteen pages. Deadline for submission of material is May 1st. We especially need in-depth political and personal accounts. Material should be sent c/o *Gay Sunshine*, P.O. Box 40397, San Francisco, Calif. 94140.

GAY HISTORIANS

The American Historical Association held their eighty-eighth annual meeting in San Francisco, December 28-30, 1973 and faced the first organized gay presence in their history.

During the Conference the Committee of Gay Historians met in the Vista Room of the Hilton; they socialized and discussed ways of eliminating homophobia among historians.

The Committee presented an official resolution at the Conference. The Resolution calls for an end to all discrimination on the basis of sexual preference and for official encouragement of gay historical studies and gay courses.

For more information on the Committee of Gay Historians, write A.H.A. Committee of Gay Historians, P.O. Box 331, Boston, Mass. 02215.

GAY SUNSHINE BANNED IN SOUTH AFRICA

A gay brother in South Africa writes us that *Gay Sunshine* is among forty-four publications recently banned as objectionable or undesirable by that country's Publications Control Board.

According to our South Africa correspondent "censorship continues to become ever more strict. The newspaper from which these reports come, the *Rand Daily Mail*, is the best of the South Africa newspapers but is under pressure at the moment. The government intends introducing legislation next year to curb it specifically.

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Winston Leyland, Editor

CONTRIBUTORS

LEE ATWELL is film critic for *Gay Sunshine*. He lives in West Hollywood. Artist EDWARD AULERICH illustrated Robert Gluck's book of poetry, *Andy*. He lives in San Francisco.

JOE BRAINARD, artist and poet, lives in New York City. His most recent book, *New York*, was published by Black Sparrow Press (1973).

IRA COHEN lives in Kathmandu, Nepal. DENNIS COOPER is a 20 year old Los Angeles poet.

DANIEL CURZON teaches in the Far East. His novel, *Something You Do In The Dark*, was published by G.P. Putnam (1971), and he has just finished another novel, *The Y*.

WALTER CURTIS lives in Portland, Ore. N.A. DIAMAN is involved in San Francisco gay media group, *Queer Blue Light*. DANIEL EVANS is co-editor of Philadelphia's *Painted Bride Quarterly*. His poems have appeared in numerous mags.

JOHN GIORNO's most recent book is *Cancer In My Left Ball*. KENNETH LEE lives in San Francisco. MICHAEL MASON is news editor of *Gay News*, London, England.

RICHARD MCCANN lives in Washington.

ROBERT PETERS teaches at U. Cal. Irvine. His poetry appears in *Male Muse*.

SAMUEL REESE is currently serving a life sentence in Missouri. His graphics appeared in *Gay Sunshine* Nos. 17 & 18. STEVE SCHUTZMAN lives in San Francisco.

W.I. SCOBIE is a British journalist and poet, currently living in Southern Calif.

CHARLEY SHIVELY teaches American history in Boston and is involved in that city's gay liberation paper, *Fag Rag*.

JOHN WIENERS' most recent book is *Selected Poems* (1972). An interview with him appeared in *Gay Sunshine* No. 17. ALLEN YOUNG currently lives on a rural commune in Mass. He has written extensively for the gay movement and is co-editor of the anthology, *Out of the Closet*.

IAN YOUNG lives in Ontario, Canada. He edited the recent gay poetry anthology, *The Male Muse*.

[Interviewees and Interviewees in this issue: Winston Leyland/Gerard Malanga; Steve Abbot, John Mitzel/Edward And rose]

Also involved in this issue (typesetting, layout, etc.) were Michael Ault, James Giancarlo, John Beuparlant, Jim Reed

Deadline for submission of material for the next issue (No. 21) is March 1.

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GAY PRISON MARCH & RALLY

About 100 gay men and women participated in a march and rally held in San Francisco on December 9, 1973 and sponsored by Join Hands and Inside/Out, two Bay Area gay groups working with gay prisoners.

Carrying banners and chanting gay slogans, the marchers made their way through the gay Castro Street area to Douglas School on 19th and Douglas where an outside rally was held. The march passed by a number of gay bars on Castro St., but most of the patrons (sad to say) remained inside, themselves prisoners of a ghetto mentality.

At the rally speakers talked about the various kinds of oppression which gay people in prison suffer. One speaker from Inside/Out spoke about the special wings in California prisons where gay prisoners are segregated, about the confiscation of gay publications (including *Gay Sunshine*) in many prisons and about discrimination against gays in the setting of parole dates.

The march and rally were endorsed by many Bay Area groups; among the endorsers were: Golden Gate Liberation House, *Gay Sunshine*, *Brother*, *Femedia* 111, Lesbian Mothers Union, Manicure, Los Angeles Gay Community Services Center, Queer Blue Light, the Black Panthers, Prison Law Collective and Connections.

During the past few months Inside/Out has been circulating a petition demanding basic rights for gay prisoners (printed in *Gay Sunshine* No. 19, p. 18). Almost 15,000 signatures have been collected to



Gay Prison Demonstration, S.F. Dec. 1973

On Tuesday, December 11th, representatives from various California gay activist groups met in the state capital of Sacramento, a meeting coordinated by Inside/Out.

The Department of Corrections' statistics and our own investigations reveal that in California gay inmates spend an average of two years longer in prison than other inmates. Inside/Out announced, at a Sacramento press conference, At the State Capitol, Ferd Eggen of Inside/Out presented evidence of anti-gay discrimination in the state's prisons and publicly announced the existence of 15,000 signatures on the Petition for Gay Rights of Men in California Prisons. Addressed to the California Adult Authority and the California Department

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Continued from Page 1

of the Massachusetts sodomy laws. He'd become familiar with the relevant cases in Florida, Texas and Washington D.C., and I think nothing would have made Eddie happier than to obtain his own freedom with a court ruling on the Constitutionality of such laws.

As for the stabbing that took Eddie's life on November 6, 1973, prison authorities would reveal nothing about the circumstances that might have led to the incident. They said he was stabbed in the recreational area used by the more than 100 inmates held in protective custody. Investigation by State Police and the Plymouth County District Attorney led to murder charges being filed against three Bridgewater inmates a week after the stabbing. All three pleaded not guilty and the case was continued.

District Attorney Stanley Littlefield said that he expected no further arrests in the case. "We've done what we're going to do right now," he said. Littlefield noted that Rastellini had been stabbed "seven or eight times," but he would say nothing more about the case.

Eddie's father called the prison the day after the stabbing to obtain some information. The switchboard operator who answered the phone didn't seem to understand. "The man who was stabbed," Mr. Rastellini explained, "Oh, that..." said the operator. "What do you mean, that?" Mr. Rastellini retorted, hurt and angry, "I'm his father!" The Rastellini family hopes to take legal action against the state for the death of Eddie.

Eddie's family turned out in full force at the funeral, and there were murmurs of anger at the government not only for failing to protect Eddie's life, but for putting him in jail in the first place. "The boy was sick and he should have been helped," his father told me. I couldn't very well get into an argument with Mr. Rastellini about who is or is not sick in American society, but I felt that he was glad that some of us had communicated with Eddie in recent months.

A sister and brother-in-law told the parole board earlier this year that they'd provide housing and work for Eddie, but aside from this, there'd been little contact

between Eddie and his family. Eddie's relatives did not visit him in jail.

Then there was Richard (I have changed the name), who Eddie spoke of as a lover and who he called "my boy." Richard came to visit Eddie sometime last year at Walpole, but I think Eddie was disappointed. He suspected that Richard was using heroin, and while Eddie was basking in new-found gay pride, Richard was still defining himself as "straight."

Eddie was unhappy and alone in prison, but in the past 18 months he had carried on an active and enthusiastic correspondence with dozens of gay liberation activists, with sympathizers in such groups as the American Civil Liberties Union, and with gay prisoners like himself.

His concern was always for gay people as a collective. I wrote to him about our hassles, disunity and disillusionment; and this was a typical response: "My gay brothers and sisters must unite in this struggle, regardless of our own personal feelings, or disenchantment we suffer because of our established and powerful oppressors. In the end we shall overcome."

-Allen Young

GAY MEDIA TASK FORCE

At a November meeting held at the Gay Community Services Center in Los Angeles between Ron Gold, media director of the National Gay Task Force (a recently founded 1950-ish civil rights group in New York) and representative members of the Los Angeles gay community, an important document was drawn up, over rather heated discussion, that offers a strong position for dealing "officially" with the media.

associated with the group in an advisory capacity.

So far, negotiations with ABC and CBS have been cordial, while NBC proved initially cool. Very frank and positive dialogue has already taken place with the Screen Writers Guild.

The heated discussion referred to above centered largely around attempts by Gold to foist the bourgeois reformist views of his New York group on the entire gathering. This was totally unacceptable to the liberationist voices of most of the people present who were unwilling to compromise their more radical political goals. Morris Kight and Don Kilhefner of the L.A. Gay Community Services Center were among those who objected to many of Gold's proposals.

The text of the adopted paper reads:

1. Homosexuality isn't funny. Sometimes, of course, anything can be a source of humor. But the lives of 20 million Americans are not a joke.
2. Fag, faggot, dyke, queer, lezzie, homo, fairy, Mary, pansy, sissy etc. are terms of abuse. If you don't want to insult, the words are gay, lesbian and homosexual. This doesn't mean nobody on film can't use a dirty word; but if you have general words about the use of kike, wop, spic and nigger, apply them to the ones above.

3. In other words, apply the same rules you have for other minorities. If bigots don't usually get away with it if they hate Catholics, they can't get away with it if they hate Gays. To put it another way, the rights and dignity of homosexuals are not a "controversial" issue.

4. Stereotypical people do exist, but if such a minority of any group receives exclusive media exposure, that's bigotry. Until a broad spectrum of the gay community has been stressed on film, and the stereotypes are put into perspective, the use of stereotypes is damaging.

5. Homosexuality is a natural variant of human sexuality. It is not an illness, nor is it a "problem" for the vast majority of Gays who are pleased and happy to be what they are. If all Blacks (or Jews, Irish, Chicanos etc) were presented as anguished, oddball or insane, they would be angry. Gays are angry.

6. If you are doing a drama, comedy, talk show or whatever about homosexuality or gay characters, you have an obligation to do your homework and free yourself of the myths.

7. There is a wide variety of available themes concerning the place of homosexuality in contemporary society, and the range of gay relationships and life styles, and many of these can provide entertainment. Gay people do not want to return to media invisibility.

8. A permanent board of consultants, consisting of gay women and men (including knowledgeable professionals in a variety of fields) is now available to the industry. But there are gay people all around you in your job. It's up to you to provide the climate in which they feel free to speak out.

[*Gay Sunshine* endorses the above paper]

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GERARD MALANGA was born of Neapolitan heritage in 1943 in New York City. In addition to making a number of underground films and appearing in many others he was a member of Andy Warhol's "The Exploding Plastic Inevitable" when the troupe performed during 1965-67. He was associated with Warhol in art and film during the 60's. He currently lives in Cambridge, Mass.

Gerard Malanga's poetry won him the Dylan Thomas Memorial Poetry Prize in 1962. His books include *3 Poems for Benedetta Barzini* (Angel Hair, 1967), *Prelude to International Velvet Debutante* (Great Lakes Books, 1967) and a more recent volume of poetry published by Black Sparrow Press, *Intransit the Andy Warhol-Gerard Malanga Monster Issue* was published by Toad Press, Eugene, Oregon in 1968 and included work by over 100 poets.

This interview was taped in San Francisco in 1973 by Winston Leyland, editor of *Gay Sunshine* for the past three years.

GERARD MALANGA

Interviewed by WINSTON LEYLAND

W.L. I understand you've recently returned to the United States from India. Do you have vivid memories of your stay there?

G.M. My trip was an experiment. I was attempting to "stop the world" in the don Juan sense of that teaching, and "stopping the world" meant cutting oneself off from everything and everyone I had grown familiar with, too familiar with, in fact. Now, of course, one doesn't have to go all the way to India to become enlightened or to change one's reality or to stop the world. But if I was to learn anything, I had to unlearn what I already knew, or thought I already knew, and going to India and points east were as good a place as any to do what had to be done in order to know. don Juan has stated so aptly that "the predilection of a man of knowledge is something he does in order to know", and I would say this has been the bent of my nature. It's like having breakfast and then cleaning up after yourself. You know to do something, like washing the dishes, in order to know that that's what has to be done. I suppose, in the Zen sense, that's what enlightenment is all about. It's quite simple. But learning is not a gift. It is a limited thing. It is never complete. Learning is a new task, for learning completes nothing; it merely hinges onto something else that would allow you to proceed in whatever activity it is you're involved with. Learning and the will (or love) to learn is being harnessed to the bent of my nature, and the bent of my nature is whatever activity I'm involved with at any given moment, whether it be writing a poem or building a bookcase or mowing the lawn.

W.L. How did you go about relearning, or unlearning, as you call it?

G.M. The past for me, my past and public image of what I was to become, has become a matter of unlearning all that was taught to me through a structured society at the same time and same rate of speed with balance by learning to see. It's a matter of loosening the structure without losing a grip on your vision.

My trip's purpose was not to get away from it all, but to return to whatever I was unlearning myself from with a new vision. I've always believed and perceived of my life continuing, and I continuing to live it as a viable way of allowing what poems that derive from the flow I am given to write to come through as being as interesting as that life. But not that the life was art, or that the poems should make it so. In fact, I wrote very little during my travels and at the most two poems during the entire time I was living and traveling in India. Even so, I've always found the intellectual approach to one's life as art as highly pretentious, if not somewhat cerebral and weighty. I realized that when my life became public in the way that my legend or aura or whatever it was preceded me into any given area I chose to get into—I had no reality! But even that was illusion. It's just that I couldn't see my reality—the reality that is me now, through all the media debris that blurred my vision, that hindered my path, that, in fact, I littered the path with.

W.L. Would you say what had actually happened to you might in some way have been connected to your direct involvement with Andy Warhol and the name he was making for himself? In the Andy Warhol circle in which you were deeply



Gerard Malanga, 1973 Photo by Irene Harris

GERARD MALANGA: AN INTERVIEW

involved in the '60's a number of the people were basically gay. Perhaps, we could cover this period and the films and paintings that you made with Warhol.

G.M. I literally changed the flow in the technique Andy would eventually utilize for his paintings because I was already a professional silk screen technician. I learned my trade from a man named Charles Singer whom I assisted in a textile design silk-screening plant in the SoHo district in New York, back in the summer of 1960. Because I took my work for granted, not envisioning silk-screening as a livelihood, Andy made use of the informality of the occasion by making it appear as if he was doing all the work and I merely around to clean the screens; in fact, I was very much into silk-screening many of these paintings on my own except in instances when the paintings required more than one person operating the silk screen because of the size of the canvas. If I hadn't been around to help Andy, the paintings he would eventually have made would have been far from what they actually look like. He might have even abandoned the silk-screening process, as Rauschenberg did before him, and move on to another way of expressing what had to be the image finally reached.

W.L. I think it's public knowledge anyhow that Andy Warhol doesn't do himself many of the paintings that are ascribed to him, or the recent films.

G.M. It's public knowledge in a very small circle, though. In 1970 Time published a blurb in their "People" section that Andy had announced to the world that Brigid Polk, a sometimes Warhol superstar, signed all his paintings. This was really only half truth, in the sense that Andy didn't sign many of his own paintings; it was Brigid who was doing the signing, it was me. That's like saying that his mother actually signed his paintings. Curiously

enough, his mother did actually render many of the sketches and final drawings and lettering for many of the free-lance illustrations he was commissioned to do. But, anyway, Andy merely used Brigid as a convenient cover-up to detract from any attention that would, inevitably, come to me as the mastermind behind some of the paintings; otherwise people would take seriously what was already public knowledge about Andy not executing the paintings nor even signing many of them. This worried Andy because the myth that did evolve from the truth would eventually, if gotten out of hand, cause a drop in sales and a devaluation of a market for the paintings.

W.L. Did Andy Warhol ever make public a reference that you, in fact, did make and sign many of the paintings?

G.M. Aside from some fugitive photographs of Andy and I silk-screening which are merely circumstantial and a few feet of film footage shot by Marie Menken, I'd say no. But in a fleeting remark printed in a 1967 Random House picture book about the Warhol Factory, he did say that I made and signed all his paintings. This was still another exaggeration, because I didn't make or sign all the paintings, only some of the major ones during the time that I was assisting him from 1963 to the Fall of 1970. I was the brains behind the Flower series, although the inspiration did come from Naomi Levine's flower paintings of an earlier period and Andy never gave Naomi one of the Flower paintings because he was afraid she'd sell it. That goes to show you how paranoid Andy was about his work. He did, however, get used by a woman whose photograph Andy lifted from a flower catalogue from which the silk screen was made. The photo was copyrighted and Andy never even asked permission if he could use it. Andy's whole trip was that he wanted something for nothing.

W.L. How would he qualify as an artist if his attitude was anything but art?

G.M. Andy didn't invent an aesthetics, or a way to proceed in and for his art. The only way he did proceed, in any final analysis, was to use something someone else made, and have his name put to it. If there was an aesthetics, it was already there to be used. He knew, from my telling him, that 16-frames per second designated silent speed projection and that 24-frames per second designated sound speed projection. He merely applied this formula—common film knowledge—without even investigating its possibilities, to his films. This is why his films without sound could in no way work if projected at sound speed. If a person is sleeping for 8-hours real/real time and not moving and obviously not talking, it would seem perfectly logical to film the event in silent speed and to project the event in silent speed as well. Andy used what was available simply because he had no intellectual power or capacity with which to embrace art; not that one has to be an intellectual to be an artist, but there was nothing intellectual about the art except what some intellectual-turned-art critic or vice versa wanted to read into it merely to sound intelligent through what was deduced.

W.L. If Warhol's concerns were not so much art, then what were they?

G.M. Painting was for Andy not art at all but a way of gaining as much capital as possible. The least thing ever on Andy's mind was art, or a very twisted or distorted sense of it. Nor would I say he's changed his attitude even now. What was merely passed off as art only took a few minutes to execute, for me to silk-screen, while he reaped in the financial take without so much as to spread the wealth to anyone who helped him to become wealthy and famous. Even if he was generous at times, like on Christmas, he was motivated because of tax-deductible reasons. Anyway, I've never equated art as something that has to make money to justify its being art. Deriving money from something doesn't make it art. But money is art to Andy. He even celebrated the dollar bill in one of his early serigraph paintings. It was those seven years of trial and error that now comes to mind; in trying to make each painting I worked on right to the end. And I had almost forgotten all those years, to the forced life-style of working for \$40.00 a week, and prior to that at \$1.25 per hour even, and being trapped in the Hotel Albert, because it was the only place I could afford; and believe you me, every hour I put in was accounted for: my work was tax-deductible even though he wasn't taking out for unemployment insurance. I didn't know this, so when I wasn't working for Andy it dawned on me that maybe I should file for unemployment insurance. I telephoned Andy to ask him about it and he nearly fainted on the other end of the line. He said I couldn't receive unemployment benefits because he never took out for unemployment insurance for me, and here it is seven years later and I'm only finding this out now. This world of Warhol demanded time of me, and demanded to be in it, physically actual. That certain of the paintings were conceived and created by Andy is an invention, pre-fabricated, in fact. They are not actual, although for many people indeed who bought them, they may be real. I made these paintings because they were there to be made, as I saw it in my imagination, which has always been active.

W.L. Will the homosexual aspect of Warhol's work come into the book?

G.M. Yes, in the sense that it would show for the first time how and why Andy and Paul Morrissey, but mostly Paul, were afraid of their own sexual identity, exploiting homosexuality in their films in such a way as to make the homosexual degrading and thus using it as a cover-up for their own homosexuality.

W.L. What were your relations with Andy like at that time, and what was Andy's general attitudes in interpersonal contact? Was he very difficult to get along with?

G.M. Maybe I can lead into your question from what John Rechy enlightened me about Andy in our taped colloquies for the book. John has written that "what was not known is that Warhol at that time was a celibate; he cringed from physical contact. It was that celibacy that gave him enormous manipulative power over the magnificently beautiful people he brought together." In this sense also, he was very much in control of everyone connected with the corporate structure of the Factory, because of his passive and silent, almost deadening, nature. Now, I already knew Andy was celibate for quite some time and told this to John, and it was John who made the intellectual leaps in connecting the two elements: power and celibacy, and so the book is actually a progression of leaps that would make everything very visual. If, in fact, he weren't having sex, then, too, there would be no outward aggression. The way Andy controlled any situation within the Factory was very much similar to the innate structure of a bee hive. Andy was, in a sense, the Queen, as vibrantly charismatic as a queen bee can be; but then I've always identified the internal power trips that went down between Andy and me, or me and Paul or Fred, for that matter, in very much the same way that fascism would be kept alive. Andy on many occasions literally created and set up people against one another just to keep them in line. It was like a very primitive but effective monitoring system. If anyone stepped out of line that person's enemy would report back to Andy of any wrongdoings.

W.L. Do you still have basically good feelings in regard to that period of working with Warhol?

G.M. The years that I spent assisting were formative. Andy and I exchanged ideas with each other, although his ideas were more of an agreeing nature and mine were merely expressed through him at times without his adding anything to them, except, on occasions, when the possibility of chance came into play. What has taken place with those paintings is a separate reality, in the sense that I am no longer the same mind or the same person who created them. The body is the same, but the mind has changed because the past is a fiction. It is my experience that what I feel to be creative in a Warhol painting has location in the place and time as memory of my own personal identity, for when I look at a Warhol painting that hangs in a museum I find it all very amusing, because I was the creative force behind getting it there in the first place.

W.L. What was your involvement with the Velvet Underground at this time?

G.M. I choreographed all the Velvet's songs, some of which have become near-classics such as "Heroin," "Waiting for the Man," "Venus in Furs," "I'll be your Mirror" and many, many others, and I danced to them on stage with the Velvets

while they were performing the music. The film-maker Barbara Rubin first brought the Velvets to my attention back in the Fall of 1965, and I, in turn, brought them to Andy's attention; but Barbara later had a falling out with Paul Morrissey as to the show's possibilities, purpose and function, and finally she split from the group. Andy also proved to be more of a hindrance than a possibility for the Velvets and the group for him was merely another milestone/stepping stone in an artistic expression he would take credit for without doing any of the work. He wanted his name to ride on the Velvets' publicity and fame and eventual success. His only concern was that the Velvets make money but for the wrong reason. If he was going to lend his name to the Velvets he had to be there with them when the show was on, but eventually he decided that his physical presence wasn't needed and felt his name could carry them. If the Velvets weren't making money, then they weren't making money for Andy in his estimate. Both Andy and Paul got bored with caring after the needs of the show and trying to improve upon it, and caring for the individual needs of the people that made up the show, and bored company, frankly, is always boring company. It was a signal for the Velvets to strike out on their own. They did and proved they were a rock group to contend with.

W.L. You're currently working with John Rechy, author of *City of Night and Numbers*, on a project based on your experiences in the Warhol circle. What is the general approach you and Rechy will be taking thematically?

G.M. The book is a re-creation, through my recollections of some of the highlights of the 7-odd years Andy and I spent working together. The book is called *Narcissism Madness Suicide*. Filtering my direct perception of it through John's own knowledge of his world of narcissism and promiscuity. John will re-create what he refers to as "the sequined, manufactured people—their insane actions, gestures, even the frenetic thoughts, intonations," and consistent with the fact that Andy's world deals totally with appearance. It is essentially an in-depth study of a period in art without making any moral judgments and is not meant to be an exposé. Andy and Paul are fine at that themselves.

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I call it, is very much a fascist dictatorship on a miniature scale.

W.L. Can you cite a specific example of this element of behavior in the Warhol Factory?

G.M. Yes. For instance, I discovered Paul Morrissey and first brought him to Andy. I already knew Paul even before Andy was introduced to me. Paul is clever because of his talent for deception. He'd pretend to be your friend while at the same time conceiving ways of how to go about liquidating you. A knife in the back while pretending to be your friend. That's how he's managed to maintain the position of power he now has. Being aloof, inaccessible, when the trap finally worked; but that was part of Andy's power, too. Their power, though, was really of a cowardly nature. Paul lives in a constant state of worry and fear. Also, Fred Hughes, Andy's social secretary at the time, since he wasn't capable of doing much else, is another example. He was always secretly envious of my long term standing with Andy, as if it were a mystery he could not penetrate, no matter how hard he tried, but the mystery was only in Fred's head. It didn't exist for Andy, and if it did, I certainly wasn't aware of it, and even if I were, I tried to discourage such illusions from grabbing hold. But Fred was always doing something uncouth just to annoy me, undermining my strength which was my patience, in some way, in order to make me look silly in Andy's eyes.

W.L. Andy Warhol is very traditional. In a recent interview he admits being very bourgeois in his values, or he flaunts this, and one feels this is a put-on, too; that this is part of the mask.

G.M. Andy would like us to believe that he's embarrassed by his background. He was not born into the middle class, but God knows why anyone would want to be born into the middle class! He came from a coal-mining Pittsburgh working-class family, very Catholic, in fact, I think knowing this element in his character as it has developed over the years would help throw some light on what he so intensely tries to keep hidden. That's why he's lied so many times as to his birthplace or how old he really is, although I seem to recall that the birthdate on his passport was in July of 1928; that would make him about 45, but this, too, was a convenient cover-up to create mystery about him. One of his favorite movie stars is Greta Garbo. The dilemma is a simple one. Andy hasn't reconciled himself to the fact that he hasn't realized the American Dream. What he has aspired to all along would mean giving up certain things he's found himself in possession of that even the middle class don't have. The American Dream is a dream that refuses to die. Andy has died so many times already, and very nearly did die once. I believe Andy just finished making a Dracula movie in Rome with Paul. Funny thing, though, Andy is continually transcending himself, but he doesn't know that. If he did, he would cease to do what he's doing, because to transcend would be

a frightening experience, frightening because it is mysterious.

One never knows when one is transcending when in the act of it, which is will. I read somewhere in *Vogue* a year ago that Andy had been attending parties with his Polystyrene not because he desired to take pictures so much as he wanted to make an art out of party photography. If Andy would just stop for a moment and remove himself from ego-ulterior motives and be reminded, in this instance, of such party photographers as Lee Friedlander, or Lee Childers, or Anton Perich, he would then come to terms with the real and hidden motive that whatever he involves himself with he enjoys; but Andy can't enjoy himself in any given context unless he has an exploitative motive for doing so.

W.L. Perhaps we can talk about the films that you made on your own and the photography you're presently involved with. I know you were involved with some of the early Warhol films. When did you begin to get into making your own films and taking your own photographs?

G.M. Although the visual was always there to any sense I could relate, photography and film-making were actual outgrowths of being so intensely involved with the actual working in these mediums on an anonymous level, more or less. Photography for me is practicing the eloquence of language without language. But photography and language as printed words are very similar because they are silent in nature. I don't know what the observer might hear with his inner ear much in the same way when you look at a page of printed text. What you see is language on a white page, but it, too, is silent. I read somewhere where Jean-Luc Godard said that "the most fantastic thing you could film is people reading. The movie you'd make would be a lot more interesting than most of them are."

I see myself as an amateur photographer basically because I am uncorrupted by technique, taking a picture in terms of my lack of knowledge or the experience of working in a dark room. I'm always taking pictures of what I am, because that is all I can see. I see me when I see you because I see you. For example, I am constantly striving to show the human qualities in a person I like in the photo of that person. This kind of photograph may express nothing but my love for the person whom I photograph. I do not want to be in possession of what I photograph or write, but rather in relation to those modes of expression I work with. I haven't shot any film in nearly three years, my last being a half-hour film diary of my travels and encounters in various parts of Massachusetts where I happened to be at the time with friends. The film is called *April Diary*, and John Wieners appears as a major figure in a major portion of the film as I was with him during a good part of the time that I was carrying my camera around with me. The structure of the film is very much the same way that a day book is kept. All the sequences follow in chronological order, although it doesn't matter, except that

W.L. You mentioned that you've known Charles-Henri Ford for some time and that he's always been a great source of information for both Warhol and yourself.

G.M. Charles taught me to perceive photographically as such in terms of composition. So I was learning about photography from a poet whose methods were those of a painter's. In fact, Charles has been all three at one time or another in his career as a multi-media artist. A renaissance man of sorts. America's answer to Jean Cocteau whom, by the way, Charles was intimate with when he lived in Paris. Cocteau even wrote a catalogue introduction to an exhibit of paintings Charles was having in Paris in, I believe, the early '50's. Charles insisted I start taking photographs the way the human eye registers the periphery of what is being perceived within that invisible outline, and he encouraged me to work more with the horizontal frame where it was directly called for in context with the subject or object I was perceiving and thus framing in my camera vision, because he told me that he discovered long ago when he was into photography in a heavy way that the horizontal frame more closely assimilated the width of human vision, and he also made me very conscious of backgrounds in relation and balance to foreground subject matter. Of course, drawing a fine line on aesthetics is of a very personal nature with any artist attempting to express the best way he knows how. I'm not saying this is the only way to make a good photo, I'm only saying this way works for me. It might not work for another artist.

W.L. So Charles-Henri Ford was, in fact, a major influence on your photography as well as being a determining factor in your life flow when he introduced Andy to you?

G.M. The latter is quite true; but Charles, both in poetry and photography, has been more a visual and aesthetics reinforcement to the vision I already had, in terms of method. He began to be a visual information influence only after I took up photography and that was at least five years after he brought Andy and I to



Charles-Henri Ford (left) & Gerard Malanga at the opening of the Surrealist Exhibition, Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.C. 1968 Photo: Courtesy Ace Archives

I'm really being true to myself. But sometimes I've had an ending for a film before I'd actually begun shooting it from the start. I don't change the film with the ending I already have, to complete it. I simply allow the film to change me in the course of shooting it to arrive at that place, which is a signal telling me it's time to stop shooting and pull all the images together.

W.L. I know you're presently working with still photography with almost the same intensity of energy you've been putting into your writing. Is the feeling of working with photography different, let's say, from working with moving film?

G.M. Well, first of all I was always conscious of color when I focused my vision through the reflex of the movie camera, but then maybe that's because I was shooting most of the time with color film. On the other hand, however, I've never been conscious of color through the still camera's rangefinder. I can't recall color in any instance of my involvement with photography; but, again, let me say, this must relate to my working with still photography through my eyes as a film-maker, in that context of what is moving in a still photograph is still moving as a reality even though it may not be actual in terms of the photo depicting the motion.

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Advertisement for the film 'CAN HIS MURDER LAST?' by Gerard Malanga. The ad features a black and white portrait of a man with a serious expression. Text includes: 'A FILM BY GERARD MALANGA IN CINEMASCOPE', 'plus Pre-raphaelite Dream', 'SUNDAY, MARCH 16th 11:15 am', and 'elgin Nema 8TH AVE & 19 ST 675 0935'.

gether. So my influence on Andy did not derive its source from Charles. Although I've never been directly influenced by Charles' works, I do appreciate and am in sympathy with his artistic expression. Charles was my reinforcement, but Paul Morrissey, in fact, was my first guiding spirit and some of my very first photos, including the ones of Charles Olson, were taken with Paul's Zeiss Ikon. In fact, Paul looking at my contacts of Olson knew they would make fine enlargements. Paul explained to me how one can see the photo as a full frame, whether it be vertical or horizontal, and to be conscious of that way of seeing when taking a photo. I think, from looking at Paul's own contact sheets, he preferred shooting vertically. In other words, I shoot full-frame for full-negative results. I'm not into cropping unless it's the only choice left to improve a photo which might otherwise be not as interesting.

W.L. For how long have you been involved with the visual arts?

G.M. Ever since I can remember I've been involved with images and in expressing what I saw, even before coming to poetry with what I could already see. I started drawing cross-sections of subway plans and elevated trestles and street lamps of the most exact and duplicated detail from memory. I was fascinated with movies. I devised a shadow box theatre and made 8"x 10" cut-outs from colored construction papers and taped these cut-out silhouette drawings onto colored cellophane sheets I'd buy by the roll at the neighborhood stationery store. I made a story board, titles and all, using the old ten-cent E.C. Cinemas as my model, including a make-believe movie company with its own logo. I would line up the frames in such a way that they would indeed follow a story line but one that I would more or less make up as I went along, contact-projecting each frame from behind, a rather crude rear-projection, in a darkened room with a flashlight. This was more or less for my own amusement and fascination as I rarely had more than an audience of one, if any, to show them to me. I was even into stamp collecting as a youngster, but not because of any historical value but because I was mostly into the images and designs depicted on these stamps. I always wanted Andy to be commissioned by the Federal Government to design a postage stamp as it would give me the chance to fulfill that fantasy through him. If you can't fulfill a fantasy, it's no longer real.

But all this had very much to do with my evolution into poetry as a vehicle for image-making. The poet Robert Creeley defines it as "how to be in what life makes that time, where, when, what is supposed to happen is waited for so patiently." So, in a broad sense, everything that occurred prior to poetry was very much a part of that process much in the same way that now I'm still writing by the way I perceived what already exists as a poem, as language, prior to the act of writing, and prior to the poem.

The poet Bockris-Wylie, in an interview, asked me if I had a definition of what poetry might be; what it means to me, and I obliged him with what might be an adequate definition at the time, but in no way should it be considered a definitive answer. By definition I cannot define poetry but only recognize it, as such. And yet when I'm into the other forms of expression, photography or filmmaking, the expression is very much the same with me, because I'm dealing with images. What does happen is what I don't know to explain it to you or to myself even in the sense of what the next poem will be or when it will happen. That's what makes poetry so exciting for me. In this sense, then, poetry is knowing before any understanding.

W.L. Since you've touched on your early years of discovery, can you recall your first homosexual experience?

G.M. I was sixteen. I hadn't begun writing as yet; but there was another boy, called Paul, my age in the same English class who befriended me. I can't think of why offhand, except I must have been carrying this attitude of dashing innocence and sending out vibrations as such. In short, I must have been getting such a rush out of being me because it was the first time I was taking notice of myself that I didn't notice anyone else. Anyway, it turned out that Paul already knew our English teacher, Daisy Aldan, had known her from our Junior year. I later found out from Paul that he worked for Leon Hecht, a former student of Daisy, for the summer prior to his Senior year. Because Daisy saw that Paul had taken an interest in me, she must have sensed something about me. As my relationship with Paul grew, I got to know more about Daisy, and about Leon as well, even before I actually met him. Through Leon I got to know about fine restaurants and table manners and museums and clothes and



John Wiener (right) and Gerard Malanga on location in Boston for Gerard Malanga's *Pre-Raphaelite Dream*, 1968

what to wear with what and about taste, in general. I learned, and still hold this to be an absolute, that there is no such thing as good taste or bad taste. Either you have taste or you don't. And then Daisy got wind of my having met Leon and how Leon finally seduced me. It was all very gentle. Leon had seduced Paul, so it seemed quite natural that he would me, although I never did go to bed with Paul. Maybe that's why Paul introduced me to Leon, because it was a projection of going to bed with me without really doing so but knowing that Leon had. It doesn't matter; we were boyfriends at the time. We were always together in and out of school. And we did begin to look conspicuous together in school because we were always seen together. I was certainly the passive one in that relationship. Paul made almost all the decisions as to what we were going to do, whether it would be taking in a museum or a suggested reading list.

W.L. Had you begun to get involved with the New York literary scene as a result of all these encounters, or prior to your writing?

G.M. Getting involved with the literary scene came in a roundabout way. Daisy had invited two friends of hers, Ruth York and Kenward Elmiae, to read some of their poems in our class. I was covering the event for the school newspaper and also Daisy asked Paul and I if we would both be escorts for Kenward and Ruth while they were in the school building. I also conducted an interview with Kenward for the school paper. When I finally pulled together my material, I found that the interview was really lacking, not so much in Kenward's response but in my questions in knowing what to ask him, since I was only familiar with maybe four or five of his poems at that time. So I sent him two or three additional questions in the mail and he was kind enough to respond.

I might add here as an interjection that Ruth was so impressed with me that three years later she wrote a long poem about youth, dedicating it to me, and also mentioning me by name in the poem. Anyway, a couple of months passed, and I received a note from Kenward along with an invitation to a party he was giving, and he noted that I should come with Paul. It was at this party that I first got a glimpse of Frank O'Hara in the flesh and many other poets whose work I was into, like Kenneth Koch and Jimmy Merrill and Bill Berkson who snubbed me when I went up to him to introduce myself because I liked his works so much and because he was so good-looking and that's how I envisioned a poet should look. I always like to cite this particular encounter because now Bill and I are good friends. It was also at this party that I was introduced to Willard, or rather the first thing I felt moving up my leg was Willard's hand, at the other end of which was Willard yelping *Hey! You're cute! What's your name?* It was love at first sight for Willard, and when he asked me what I did, and I told him that I was a poet, that nearly sent him flying. He couldn't believe that a 17-year old would be sophisticated enough to even assume such a position, and slight-unseen assumed that my poems had to live up to my looks and had to be nothing but GREAT. A few years later he was to say of my poems, "Like Rimbaud this young poet's genius is unexplainable, but it is there definitely, and I should not be surprised if some day he would surprise us and achieve what Rimbaud did—only one hopes that his talent will grow as Rimbaud's did not."

But if you were to analyze what Willard did say, you would see that something's not all together there. First of all, I haven't achieved what Rimbaud did



Gerard Malanga and poet/film-maker, Willard Maas, Riis Park, Summer 1960. Photo: Courtesy Ace Archives

That night at Kenward's party Willard had invited me to dinner for the following night at his home in Brooklyn Heights. To make me feel at ease, he suggested I might bring Paul as he had a friend that Paul would find interesting, and said that there would be a Flamenco guitarist playing music for us, which I was naive enough to believe. Willard was such a Romanticist even when he lied. Well, there was no Flamenco guitar and what Willard had in mind was an orgy. Paul went to the back bedroom with Joe, Willard's neighborhood boyfriend, and Willard proceeded to seduce me and blow me. There was no foreplay. He went right to the zipper of my pants. I wasn't much attracted to Willard physically to go

much further than a blow job, and never did throughout all the years I knew him. He died three years ago of a heart attack only two days after his wife was buried. It was sad. Anyway, Daisy got wind of this and hit the ceiling; she got paranoid for her job being in jeopardy and rightly so, we were legally minors, and made Willard promise not to see or try and reach either of us as long as we were still her students. Willard kept his promise, and I didn't miss seeing him, nor did I ever think of running into him again. Graduation was two months off.

After I graduated and when I had weekends to myself between working as a silk-screen technician for Leon, whom Paul had worked for the previous summer, I commuted by subway and bus to Riis Park with some gay friends, Tony and Turk, and a straight girl, Nancy. On one of these weekends while walking through Section One—the gay section—of Riis Park, I met Willard on the beach, clad in a saffron-colored bikini with a huge belly and smacking his lips as if he were waiting to be fed. The first thing he did was grab my hair and yank it. Right away we got to talking and he invited me to join him on his blanket, and he began right away in telling me what a great young poet I was and how he wanted to see everything I was writing and he was really sincere and serious and concerned, and curiously enough I whipped out my notebook in which I'd been notating all my most recent works.

He invited me home and promised that everything was on the up-and-up, but sure enough he was up to his old tricks—sex came first, poetry second; but there was something endearing about Willard that didn't much put me off. Maybe it was because I was really impressed about the attention I was getting from someone whose poems I had grown to admire when I first read them in high school without any prior knowledge of the fact that they were written more than ten years ago. He literally hadn't written anything in that time except for an "Epithalamion" he wrote on the occasion of Marilyn Monroe's marriage to his friend Arthur Miller who lived in the neighborhood at that time. I liked Willard because he was appreciative of my presence and maybe because of all the wonderful books of poetry he had that he'd read and collected over the 25 years that he'd lived in the Penthouse in Brooklyn Heights; and maybe because it was the first time that anyone, especially a poet, had actually sat down and seriously took into consideration a discussion of my own work in front of me. I certainly didn't have this rapport with Daisy because she was too concerned about not getting too familiar with her students. So, in a sense, Willard for me, was what I had wanted in Daisy but didn't receive, and at that time I was really hungry for a feedback that would prove a viable way for improving my writing. I was very serious about what I was doing. There was no question about it, I knew I was a poet.

Willard wasn't exactly what I would call the ideal writing workshop instructor. He was more than that. He considered himself a great teacher and he did have the gift for bringing out talent in someone, but in my case he was just too busy being excited by the fact that I should be writing at all because I was so poor scholastically, and I had no way of knowing how I could improve my writing. Later, Kenneth Koch, my poetry workshop instructor at the New School straightened out the situation and put me on the right track. But when I first knew Willard I had all the feeling, but lacked the craftsmanship.

Willard and I saw one another quite a bit that summer. We'd arrange to meet at a pre-designated place at a specific time, and usually it was always the same place on the cement walk at Riis Park, or occasionally I'd join him at his home and we'd start out together. I was still living at home with my parents in the Bronx. On occasion he'd pick up someone on the bench and bring him home with us and while he was making it with the person I'd be out killing time by walking Willard's dog, a black Labrador Retriever named Blackie and a white Borzoi named Alexis. I never indulged in any group sex with any of Willard's tricks. Summer moved into Fall and Willard grew more and more restless and at the same time somewhat solemn because I had already been accepted as an undergraduate to study art design at the University of Cincinnati. There was a deep sadness in Willard's eyes as if the child inside him was re-discovered in me, and now that child was leaving. I knew he didn't want me to go, but at the same time he was proud that I thought to continue my academic education. He was an associate professor at the time at Wagner College. When in Cincinnati I would receive at least two letters a week from him and sometimes some spending money or books of poems or copies of literary magazines and I'd answer all his letters. In a

way, he was keeping me in close touch with the literary situation as it was then happening in New York in 1960. I learned to appreciate the sense of correspondence through Willard's letters and, in fact, answering his letters taught me how to express myself in a fashion other than what poetry had to offer.

W.L. I know your poetry caught attention when you were in your early twenties. How do you feel this came about?

G.M. Well, if you're meaning there was an audience for my poetry I'm not aware of it, nor was I then. In a recent letter from my friend Jim Willems, poet and editor of *Isthmus*, he wrote that he hesitated at the idea of writing for the self, and I responded by saying that, personally, I don't write for an audience and never have. An audience doesn't even exist when I'm writing a poem because I'm the only one present in that actuality. I simply write for me. I am my own audience. What I write is never addressed to the great public nor even to the few, the small number generous enough to want to listen and to see the ideas and feelings of one individual. These poems are written for myself. I cannot think or feel in terms of numbers of an audience. After all, when it comes right down to it, poetry is the language of speaking to oneself. My poetry didn't catch any attention that could account for, although my lifestyle might have eclipsed what, if any, attention my poetry might have received. I'm reminded of something William Sarroway once wrote, "unknown but very famous." In other words; it was me, not my poetry that caught the attention of lots of people when in my early twenties. After nearly 13 years of my involvement with the writing of poetry I find myself in the peculiar and precarious position of that fame and public image far exceeding the recognition accorded to it by critics, my peers, most of my contemporaries, and, in particular, all the establishment editors and publishers.

I am not any less of a poet because of my being a star. It's just that most poets and all publishers and anyone connected with poetry won't accept you as a poet if you are a star. That's why I've not been asked by an establishment publishing house to have a book published, and yet my credentials far exceed all poets of my generation covering roughly ten years. That would include anyone in his late twenties to late thirties, and they would be the first to admit that what I say is true, although more times than not their books don't go past a first printing, or are even remaindered in some instances, although I do think it's chic to have your book remaindered. It affords all those people who couldn't buy your book before because of the outrageous prices publishers set for a book of poems these days to obtain it now; but they willing that to the publisher or even to the poet who is more times than not very sophisticated to perceive the situation as so, and uptight besides.

W.L. Why do you think this is so, or why do you think this is happening to you?

G.M. I don't want to sound like I'm being the victim of some sort of publishing conspiracy to keep my poems from receiving any widespread appeal they would surely get, although that could be a possibility. But America has always been afraid of the unconscious, of the imagination, of beauty, in fact. I get such a rush out of being me! The problem with the way I look, of course, is a simple one if one can call it a problem. The New York literary establishment is uptight because I look the part of what I write and what I write is a reflection and a revelation of the way I look. I mean, it would have been acceptable for someone like myself to write well and not have the good looks, or to be good-looking and not write well; but to write well and be good-looking besides can be a disadvantage. I know I'm not going to look the same 30 years from now, if I live that long, but even so, it won't affect my poetry any. I'll definitely be writing better than I am now, in fact. It's not my fault that I happen to be good-looking, and if I didn't write poetry, I probably wouldn't care; but I do have the right to capitalize on my looks if I am a poet, because I've always understood and perceived a poet to be nothing but beautiful. Also, I've had the rare advantage of writing about my life in terms of encounter as I am living it, which didn't sit well with many of the other poets who aimed or desired at the same centering but who unfortunately couldn't make time nor find the "spot" to coincide with their living rhythm because they were too busy concerned with *earning a living*. And the excuse they'll always find to give you is that they've a wife and children to support. There is nothing wrong with having to earn a living. It's just not my work. *Writing poetry* is my work regardless of whether or not I can derive an income from that work; but that's not the point. Living just as learning is not a gift. I say living and learning



Allen Ginsberg & Gerard Malanga at The Village Vanguard, N.Y.C. ca. Winter, 1966

Photo: Finkelstein (Black Star)

because these two activities can coincide: learning to live and living to learn.

W.L. You speak of Americans as being afraid of the unconscious, the imagination. I've discovered that there is a dichotomy made by writers, artists, between their sexuality and their writing. I think that quite often writers—this has been so in the past—have tended to push their sexuality, especially if it's something which was considered deviate such as homosexuality was, into a very private corner of their lives, and it has not spilled over into their work. You see this in many well-known writers. It's known that they are basically homosexual or bisexual; but this aspect of their sexuality has really never spilled over into their work. And I believe that one's creativity is going to be affected if one goes through one's entire life maintaining this kind of dichotomy. I think it's beginning to change now. The change in consciousness, the relaxation in censorship, are part of this change. Poets and writers are now more open to their own sexual identity.

G.M. Winston, I tend to disagree with you. I feel, unless the artist is inspired by his homosexuality and the homosexuality around him; it is not a prerequisite to allow his artistic expression as such to be of that nature also. That's like saying a person should be inspired by his sex to allow that to enter his work. That is not the ingredient that goes into making a love poem. Also, you can't help but to write love poems when you're in love;

but being in love doesn't necessarily necessitate such poems come into existence, although from my range of experience, and God knows I've written hundreds and hundreds of love poems, being in love is a prerequisite for writing love poems. But what to do when you're in love and you want to write something other than a love poem. The challenge is not so much in writing such a poem but to write a poem that is anything but a poem to the person you're in love with, whether it be homosexual or heterosexual in nature. Poetry is never discrete, and should never be. The most difficult poetry of all for any poet to write is the poetry containing the absence of it.

W.L. I am talking about the writer who happens to be basically gay and who cuts off one area, in effect saying, "I will not enter." He or she can be very creative, very brilliant, in fact. But quite often throughout his entire life he has set aside one area, that of gayness, which is not permitted to affect his work as a whole. Or, if it is brought in, it is done so in a subtle, often closely, way.

G.M. Well, it's fear....

W.L. Fear, right! Fear of being ostracized by the community at large, by the literary community, and a fear of losing one's job if one is an academic, if one is published in a homosexual journal. There's always this fear.

G.M. Fear has always been the deciding

factor, personal, in terms of who the person was, what his desires were, how he used his power, maintained his power. Willard Maas, who later became my college professor when I transferred from Cincinnati to Wagner College, was loved and hated by both students and teachers. During the course of his career as a college professor both at Wagner, and prior to that at a Catholic school, Iona College in New Rochelle, he had published his homosexual love poems, some of which were written to the English poet George Barker, and also giving head to students every available chance he'd get. Yet he seemed untouchable, as if those who hated him also feared him and that was their weakness, that was his strength: their fear.

While on the subject, Frank O'Hara was not in fear of losing his job either, and Frank, more than Willard, stood the chance of losing far more, if only because he was younger than Willard and was not a teacher. I must say, though, that Frank's behavior was such that he knew when and where promiscuity was condoned. Frank, if he were alive today, would continue to write the kind of love poems—love poems to his many boyfriends and one-night stands. He wanted to write over and above whether he was going to keep his job as a curator with the Museum of Modern Art. Frank might have been somewhat slow in making decisions when it came to what was current in art, and, of course, unless those decisions would ultimately alter the flow in his favor; but in the end when he made a decision it always seemed he made a decision for the better. For example, Frank was strongly anti-pop art in its first days in the early '60s, because pop art was a threat, in his view, to the abstract expressionist movement in painting and sculpture which had dominated that period due in part to Frank's prodigious efforts in promoting it. It was only during the last year and a half of his life did he begin to come round to pop art and only after the persistent advice of friends such as Joe Brainard and Ted Berrigan to name a few.

W.L. When did you meet Frank O'Hara?

G.M. I met both Frank and Charles Henri Ford through Willard's catalytic efforts.

W.L. What was Joe LeSueur's relationship with Frank O'Hara at this time?

G.M. I got the sense that Joe was Frank's room-mate, although it might have been something quite different when they first met. I was never really close to Frank on a personal friendship basis, because Willard used Joe as an instrument to plant the seeds of a not very pretty picture which worked in Willard's and I might add Joe's favor, in keeping Frank and I apart. It was basically what I would refer to as a homosexual jealousy, although it's quite a natural thing, and happens in heterosexual relationships, also. It was only after I drifted away from Willard's dominating influence and after Joe and Frank had decided to go separate ways and Joe moved out from the loft they shared on Broadway, that Frank extended the first friendly gesture I'd known him to make toward me. It was at the opening of the Nakian sculpture exhibition, that Frank had installed at MOMA. Frank actually came up to me from behind and said he would very much like to have me come to a reception he was giving in Nakian's honor at his loft. Frank knew what the right feeling can do, and it was as if he had given serious consideration to any misgivings, all of them second and third hand information, he might have had of me. In fact, at the party, we did hit it off, and Frank kept



Gerard Malanga with portrait study of himself by Larry Rivers, 1969. Photo by Jed Johnston

introducing me to all his friends, some of whom I even knew, quite to Frank's surprise. I didn't see Frank after the party, though we did speak to one another a couple of times at length over the phone.

W.L. Did Frank O'Hara's poetry have any influence on your writing to any great extent?

G.M. It was Frank's pioneering breakthroughs which he inherited from the Dadaists and Surrealists and combined with the paintings of the Abstract Expressionists, in his own work, and ultimately for all poetry, that helped me to recognize the possibilities of what language itself proposes. Poetry is a process, not a structure as many are led to believe, especially the New Academic Poets that are currently rising, and, again, I don't mean to define what poetry is by any means in my talking about my commitment to it. Frank's poems were impenetrable because they were very much Frank's own personal vision of what he saw and felt, and how he viewed the world, make no mistake about it. His poetry was without judgments. His poetry was pure ecstasy. You could feel all his senses were working simultaneously to express through language the joy of living, which was really an ongoing theme in many of his longer poems. I knew instinctively from reading his poems that he felt there was always a poem to be written because his life continued and he continued to live it. Frank's poetry was gigantic. There's no other way to describe it. And yet because his poems are unique, like all great masters of the language, they are easily imitated, which can be very dangerous, because one gets accustomed to writing in a certain way, or writing a certain type of poem, and that becomes all you know, and that's very limiting. But I realized that by using Frank's poems and their inherent formulas of association as a model for my own exploration, I was writing what I had already known. I realized that to write what you know is a bore. To write what someone else knows is a bore to that person, so I began writing what I didn't know. And the point of this is the poem becomes a process of realization, because poetry is knowing before any understanding, as I've said before. Illusion, like poetry, is real because it is all we know. But what we don't know, is real, too, because we know that we don't know, because what we know of what we don't know is the unknown, like the unconscious, that wants to make itself known or conscious, is knowing something's missing, and this something is the presence of absence, the absence of what is not missing. The self created out of the self—not into but from. And yet whatever I have done ceases to be part of me. My poems, imperfect, humanly explain things that I did in order to know.

W.L. Since we're on the topic of influence in one's writing, has Allen Ginsberg been an influence on your work? What have been your feelings in regard to his poetry?

G.M. We both come from the streets, more or less; but the street energy poetry nature comes from different areas of our imagination as an extension of body, as form is an extension of content. Allen has never been a direct literary influence to any extent on my writing. Allen's work is too easy to imitate, even easier than Frank's, although you have to be already sophisticated to imitate Frank's poems, whereas you don't have to be to imitate Allen's writings. I'm not making a value judgment. I'm simply stating an actuality of what each of their work proposes in terms of technique. Both Frank's and Allen's poems are very casual in their writing; where they separate is in how what is seen is expressed. Whatever ground these imitations cover is a waste of energy as far as I'm concerned. One would have to go back to the original 1855 Edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, and maybe single out a poem like "The Sleepers", one of my favorite Whitman poems, and try to imitate that before one should try and write a Ginsberg-type poem. I might say, though, that I've learned quite a bit about Whitman's writings through Allen's own personal explorations.

W.L. You know Allen Ginsberg, I gather. Do you think Allen tends to take on a protective position with the young, especially with artists and writers?

G.M. I think Allen's trying to shed whatever motherly instincts he does have, because he's beginning to realize that it's costing him money in the long run to maintain such an image. Every time one of these young punks gets stranded somewhere, Allen's off and running to Western Union wiring money to bail them out. I'm not putting this down. I've been in a similar scrape once where Allen was there when I needed him. That's Allen's nature. He loves being hit upon, because he loves the attention. If he didn't he wouldn't

allow himself to be interviewed by such magazines as *Esquire* so they can put him down. But, then, no one escapes the media. Power has a way of playing tricks on you and is costly besides. But Allen's been open, too open in fact, in terms of his life and nature; he keeps nothing of his reality to himself without some sort of balanced return on what does go out. And one very easily can become demanding in terms of wanting what has been exposed, revealed, in oneself, to be filled in again, nourished.

I found myself on many an occasion where I wasn't capable of equalizing Allen's feedback, sexual or otherwise, and although I tried, it was, again, too much. Allen and I will always be tight friends, above and beyond anything literary simply because our literary tastes differ widely. I cringe every time I read a book of poems he's endorsed with a blurb to discover the poems are ninth rate horseshit! And, too, he's known and watched me grow up in a ten-year time span all the way back through 1964 when we were living in two adjoining flats on the top floor of this six-story walk-up on East 5th Street and Avenue C. I was still an undergraduate then at Wagner and commuting to Staten Island three days a week and the rest of that time was snorting amphetamines with John Wieners who would stay with me in my part of the flat on many occasions.

And then there was Ondine, "Beloved" Ondine, and most of the amphetamine rapture syndrome that had its links all the way into and through the Warhol Factory. Why do you think all those superstars talked so much in the films? And we all knew each other or slept with each other. We were bed friends. We initiated each other. There would be days on end when I didn't show up, and when I would be strung out and crashing from speed and Allen would be in the kitchen and say, "Gerry, do you want some chicken soup?" He always had a way of putting a smile on my face, even in my darkest moments.

W.L. What other influences on your poetry have there been?

G.M. I seem to gravitate between Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, W.S. Merwin, and most recently Robert Bly, whose new book *Sleepers Joining Hands* is the most powerful singular statement since the publication of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*. And of all the poets of my generation Aram Saroyan has been the most potent influence on my recognizing the possibilities language proposes in terms of where the poem can go and how it moves. Also, the Peruvian Cesar Vallejo. I know of no other poetry so isolated as his. There is, I mean, no close affinity which affects his work organically. He still remains a towering figure, a giant almost, in the world of letters.

W.L. Influence, I take it, when in the wrong hands, becomes bad in terms of repetition, then, like Andy Warhol.

G.M. I've exhausted any possibilities to allow myself to be influenced in a way that it would show. And then repetition is a counter to evolution or change. Repetition, by nature, is not change, or does not change; it merely repeats itself. It is narcissistic much in the same way that the repetition in the Warhol paintings tends to be narcissistic.

W.L. Do you want to talk a bit about the multitude of directions you've moved in or are presently involved with in your poetry?

G.M. The poems I have been writing over the last two years are something there is no name for. It is always after the fact of continual living as if the poems were trying to catch up with that life which is trying to complete me—trying to describe—and discovering over and over again that my public life is existing without me.

W.L. Do you mean to say that the public you which is not the real you, I take it, is not inside the poems you do write?

G.M. I try not to be in my new poems so much as under them like a buried secret moving with my senses and my inner sight to the poem's surface in accordance with my life's flow, my inner nature, and my absolute sincerity. What would come after this I do not know. If there are readers for my work, they must proceed in their own ways. I cannot guide them. I will not guide them. If poetry were not deeply rooted in our bodies and in our world, it would be a short-lived thing. To stop short at this point, it would have had to be a short-lived thing. We do not know the end of poetry, like we do not know the end of a dream when we are dreaming it, because we do it. As in my end of our lives while living it. As in my work with photography I'm primarily concerned with the depth of field of how much can be seen by my reading the poem—how deep I can go in my writing—not only seeing but listening to the

silences as they occur in what is seen. Silence has a depth also, as much a horizontal depth as a vertical one. I try to reach these depths to become quiet in them, to learn from them, to be restored by them.

W.L. What is poetry for you, then?

G.M. Poetry is, first of all, language, and language for me is a way of pointing to the energy that is already in me given the perception to work with.

W.L. This change of consciousness, then, is beginning to affect your work in regard to some of the new poems you've been writing?

G.M. The poems I am writing now have really gone beyond what the poems I wrote up to several months ago had accomplished, not only in the way they're written but in what they have to say. Also, my pacing is different, my attitude is different, but only because my life is. I feel secure in my poetry because it is as interesting as my life. My vision has changed, is changing, and I have developed deeper, more telling skills closer to and at once an outcome of that vision. Plainly now, the poems I now write I do not think of in terms of publication, although I do feel a responsibility toward them. What is and always has been the primary concern to me is the mere essence of living a truthful life, deliberately and with strength. My aim is to write more clearly, plainly, and straightforwardly. A poetry absent of any clever inventiveness—obvious figures of speech—but one in which the words fit into context with each other quietly and with grace. To no longer just see myself as poet but to transcend that label of the *enfant terrible* that Neil Rorem cited in reference to me in an article of his that appeared in *Status & Diplomacy* way back in '67. When Ginsberg recently asked my age, I told him: "When you reach 30 you're no longer a teenager."

Remy de Gourmont says, "Freely to write what one chooses is the sole pleasure of the writer." I write not so much to tell me things about myself I may not have been aware of before as to allow me to bring to my writing the presence of myself in its expression. As in dreams, there is no sexual identity. We don't dream dreams in a certain way because we are male or female. It's what we are in our dreams, and in this same instance, then, my poems are not what they are because of my sexuality of my identity with its sexuality. I've written poems for both men and women, boy-friends and girlfriends, but if the themes of my poems have changed, it's not because I am not in the flow of my life, homosexual or otherwise, but because the flow of my life of which I am in has changed.

W.L. In regard to your own sexuality—again I don't want to try to categorize you—would you say that you tend to be basically heterosexual open to gay experience, or basically bisexual?

G.M. Usually the premise for that line of questioning was simply *is he gay?* But now the reverse is happening: *is he straight?* I don't feel the Gay Liberation movement proposes such possibilities of cross-examination and if it does, then I feel it's become more a matter of semantics whether a person is gay, straight, narcissistic, sissy, transvestite, transformer, sex-change, androgynous, butch, cockette, polysexual, angelic, etc., etc. I've known men, like Andy Warhol, who've gone without sex for years but that doesn't make them any less homosexual. And I've known women, like Willard Maas, who are married, and have fathered children, and still they're homosexual. In that instance, then, there have been few men whom I've slept with who have meant as much to me as my friend Jim Jacobs, whom I've not slept with, means to me. In the end, it's the attitude you carry, not with whom you sleep, that determines anything. I'm open to all experience, not just what you consider gay or straight. Each to his or her own.

W.L. Do you feel that there's a kind of evolution in regard to the gay parts of your own personality? Do you feel you've begun to explore more of the gayness in yourself within the last couple of years?

G.M. I do feel that there's a kind of evolution to the gay parts of my personality, in terms of homosexual chic, although, again, I must say I don't perceive these parts as such which doesn't exclude them by any means; but in the sense that homosexuality on the physical level is a perfectly natural way of exploring one's feelings with another human without having to identify with that person because that person's sexual identity is the same or similar. On this level, then, I have been exploring more the gayness in myself, even to the point of making notation

of my dreams. The most recurrent dream I've had over the past few months is one where I'm giving head to myself. Being gay is not being different from anyone else because you just happen to be gay, just as we are all not any different from what the world is because we are the world. The French poet Tristan Tzara once said, "I am against systems; the most acceptable system is in principle the one that has no system." There have been very few men who have meant anything to me, of the countless number of men I have made love with. Then there are those who will try to find ways to use homosexuality against me, as if they assumed I were not homosexual, and more times than not, the ones who attempt this are persons who are in fear of being gay themselves, whether it be male or female. I'm not saying that we have a responsibility to the world to make public our sexual identity.

W.L. Why do you feel this to be so?

G.M. I suppose you can't have your cake and eat it too. And I've always managed to have both, because I've never rejected what either side of my essence desired or was drawn to. I've never made preferences that would, in any way, contradict either aspect of the one person that is me.

W.L. Can you give me an example of someone using homosexuality against you in thinking you were straight?

G.M. Let's take the most recent example to point. I just received this letter from a friend of mine; we'll refer to her as Shell since that's the name of the character John Rechy models on her in his new novel *The Fourth Angel*. Have you read the book?

W.L. Yes.

G.M. The letter's an emotional response of sorts to some poems I sent to her at her request at the time I told her of my decision to go to the East Coast. In the letter she begins by saying, "You must stop cultivating relationships with ladies of means." Then she goes on to say, "You lack the finesse to carry it off for any length of time. You would probably stand a better chance with men at this point," as if to say there would be a someone other than a man or woman I'd stand a better chance with to survive. This reminds me of that line in the 21st chant of "Song of Myself" where Whitman cries out, "And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man." First off, a "lady of means", whatever that means, would never say the things Shell did say to me in this letter, because if you read between the lines she's making a qualitative judgment in saying that it's healthier to have male-female relationships than it is to have male-male relationships. I don't know how this is going to sit with her homosexual friends. But the point it, everything she accuses me of was uncalled for and surprisingly so, since we parted on friendly terms, and it was nearly six weeks before I even heard from her. I hold to the reasons for the feelings I have. I wanted to tell Shell that so much of what I was telling her was never what she was listening to, or wanting to hear, because Shell sounded so good to Shell, and what went down between us was already a separate reality of time and distance. She also went on to say that "life and art are the same—this is something I know." She even underlined "know", as if she really did know. I would say she was right, up to a point, but for the wrong reasons; it's always been the intent that counts, and Shell's intent was quite twisted, because art and life were something she did not know, otherwise she wouldn't have written what she did write and underline it besides.

W.L. On the basis of what you say I would assume that you would separate art and life?

G.M. Let me put it this way, the world is made up of people first of which, a few are artists and some are horse-breeders and some are ballerinas and some are carpenters and some are movie stars and on and on and on. Okay. Now, we may be different to each other but we are not any different from the world because we are the world, we make up what the world is: society. Ray Brock, a living legend in his own time and an indisputable man of wit and wisdom, and a "heavy" besides, told me that "art is art but fucking is fucking," and I couldn't have put it better. My life continues and I continue to live it, and I'm too busy living the life I am given to live to think of it as art.

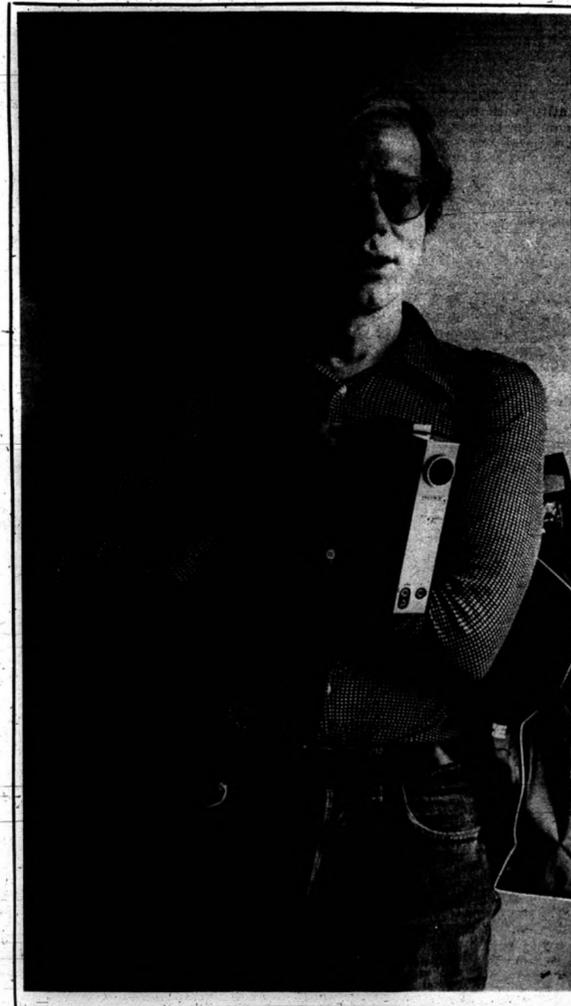
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Gerard Malanga on location shooting "The Recording Zone Operator," Rome, Winter, 1967/68.
Photo by Norman Solfer



Joe D'Allesandro, Dec. 1971 N.Y.C.
Photo by Gerard Malanga



Andy Warhol, The Hamptons, L.I. 1970
Photo by Gerard Malanga



Self Portrait by Gerard Malanga
Frankfurt, Germany, Oct. 1970

DIARY NOTES BEFORE AN EVENTUAL ESSAY ON THE PERMANENCE OF FRANK OHARA

In Rome I became this dead man's voice not knowing how differently I could have written what I felt or did not feel in spired to write at that time winter of 67 into 68

I read Olson's "As the Dead Prey Upon Us" for source as example of the dead coming to life as much in opposition when Frank was alive I doubt very strongly for such records do not exist to confirm his beliefs his anti this or that province of poetry except of course by word game of mouth as unreliable source to his tastes his prejudice

He in whose poems I passed my time imitating in residence at Rome Don Allen's anthology my only source of supply in review Then poems were pushing themselves out of my acute observations when walking the streets in search of a handout I take up the tone of his voice box without his earthly permission emphasizing the idea of several time breaks in the day the places of meeting the storefronts catching my eyes on my way to visit donna Francesca in Via Margutta the stopping points in order to catch one's breath before moving on

What would he say if he were alive today to discover Bill's past falling away as a Donaldson, Williams & Ward custom-made wardrobe slowly given away

at least something's changed hands what he always wanted him to be in his heart

Don't you remember how life is governed by the fact that death is the result of being alive beyond whatever ends

His life whose style becomes his poems never ends and nothing's changed a permanent place where to die's to live and to live is to move

When will I be able to make that instant, too, perfect so the euphemisms like sleep and rest come to mind as in the rain: -voices: I think about Frank O'Hara or the secret composer Charles Edward Ives transforming the existing air waves into music

Asking you for the sleeping pill box of night "I'm plotting" as Frank would say I walk out into the day dreams of children running on the grass are not the same children on target / falling their faces turn red

What is the environment of heaven like in life after death of the physical body? Why did Delmore Schwartz bring about the death of his body if not out of despair?

A poet is dead and gone except for such reports of him as can be gathered from written and pictorial records and from the anecdotes-of-acquaintances, strangers and friends

It's almost as if I couldn't recall a thing about myself before I learned to speak

I refer to records concerning my parents and make of their youth before I was born as real to me as my own for my own early youth is to me only a faint and hardly discernible echo chamber that occasionally comes thru to me out of a distant past

Is it any wonder the poet incarnates words shed like explosions of physical energy across the open space of the white page proof of his life/style as part of the past

I'm looking for my permanent muse would rather drive cock up the butt of 1968 Yale Younger Poet I'm not the opposite of visionary I know what I want in the twentieth century and maybe could change us into literary history before our time

POEMS BY GERARD MALANGA (all previously unpublished)

OUT AT LARRY RIVERS in memory of frank ohara

a train whistle off in to the night the 4:39 (pm) bound for southampton \$4.92 (one way) not knowing what room ill be sleeping in & with whom (im true blue) light flows gently thru the window frame in the living room this light so undoubtedly yours because you have entered in to summer before us and tomorrow is sunday the day begun so oddly but the light flows evenly along the lawn in chilly southampton

out on the stereo hrs go by i re-read you "Getting Up Ahead of Someone (Sun)"

in memory of my feelings and yours switched around a calendar wristwatch its not 1960 its 1970 10 years to this day sitting back in this very same easy chair at larrys (lean back blow smoke rings in the air) wherever he was i knew it and i saw him moving 28:vi:70 southampton ny

numbers / for john rechy

i am with numbers at the frozen arena with the nameless encounter it is 12 oclock noon the bodies single file walking in silence the bodies sitting on fenders of parked cars the bodies of fire and silence

i am with numbers at the magic place burned in disaster that each of us wears i am with numbers at a quarter past three at the summit at the ritual dance at the numbers of bodies sending out signals the unbuttoned jeans at the waist the bare shoulder that points, to the spot in agreement the language of eyes the circle of the unbroken i am with numbers who gives me his hand when i fall the blazing moment i am with numbers with the numbers in dance with the numbers of minutes elapsed and evolving i am with numbers at 5.30 pm as our bodies decept with the sun with bodies moving into the shadows with shadows moving into the numbers i am with numbers walking from one piece of ground to the next in a place between darkness and light 18:ii:73 los angeles

for john wieners

theres no one in my personal experience quite like you meaning today when the things i want to say are not said with words that the only thing my life is to be made of days i walk thru taking all night to end where i bed down with my lover 3:iii:70 nyc

That he is as present with me when I walk the streets of New York clutching my coat in the face of a head cold as he was when he was alive: It is merely that i am possessed of an image of you Frank of your head and your body as one continuous cell in the sudden and unfortunate end of the world in your life becoming a spiral sucking you under or up

But let's not think of things that will be unrewarding and hard in the daily news schedules we cannot keep; for with confidence we continue to outlive our physical forms in the air

It's the final knowledge of a life to which the only way we might avoid the lie-detector test is with truth necessary for another life.

You carry a branch into my mind's eye that was a long time ago "Papers, letters, a few photos. It's all over. There's no going back." Bresson's "pickpocket" replies 27:1:69 nyc for Bill Berkson

love poem for a boy for tony pinck

there is always a third person singular in the past tense that relates to memory as the world of silence relates to the persons who were speaking at the place where silence is listening its always as though silence itself were speaking the persons who were speaking becoming listeners to the silence in memory of my feelings for you only a phone call away the way you comb the neighborhood for blond beaver to score the way you phone me telling me youre on the way 1:v:71 nyc

the day frank died

news print now disappearing in the rain on second avenue 26:1:71 nyc

the inner life for mark saunders

hands in pockets scarf wrapped around face feet soaked right thru shoes to the bone i reel up madison alone every day resembles a holiday in mid town manhattan i hate days like this comes fifty years those lovely ladies who were loved are gone the dead preying upon us i wonder how long it takes to accept the past as past it seems as if ive been writing this poem forever 25:xii:70 nyc

The Fifth World

The fifth world is the world of the last minority—the single man. Only 7% of the total population, single men account for 27% of the unemployed, 65% of the prison inmates, 87% of the war casualties and 90% of the homeless. Surely, this is America's most oppressed minority.

Single men, of whatever complexion or sexual orientation, are discriminated against in hiring and passed over in promotions. They are charged higher insurance premiums and taxes.

In the military, single men are the first taken in the draft, the first sent to the front lines, the last to get promoted and the last to be admitted to training schools. They comprise 76% of the enlisted men, 22% of the officers and 87% of the casualties.

Single men's ghettos, or skid rows, as they are often called, are the most undesirable, overcrowded and decrepit neighborhoods to be found anywhere. In Los Angeles, a vast single men's ghetto stretches along Fifth St. south of Main. Every Black ghetto has an inner ghetto for single Black men. It's usually near the main street, and is always the most undesirable part of the Black ghetto. Chicanos, like Blacks, ghettoize their single men in a ghetto within a ghetto in East Los Angeles. Single Gay men are ghettoized in the cheap hotels and run-down apartment areas around Westlake Park and Hollywood Blvd.

The complexion of the men varies from ghetto to ghetto, but everything else is the same. Everywhere are the tiny, cockroach-infested rooms, the rancid odors and the large numbers of unemployed men standing about on the streets. Many feel they are unemployed and outcast, not because they are Black or Brown or Gay, but because they are male and unmarried. Indeed, the unemployment rate among single white heterosexual males is just as high as among single minority males.

Despite anti-discrimination laws, the Black unemployment rate has continued to soar. Married Black men and women find jobs quickly. Holy wedlock is not considered quite so holy in the Black culture, however. The vast majority of unemployed Blacks are male and unmarried. One could conclude that they are unemployed not because of race, but because of sex and marital status. It's almost as if there were an unwritten law that says you have to be married to avoid poverty.

Although single men are probably the most impoverished minority, few counties even give them welfare. They are the only minority who, when they go to apply for welfare, are laughed at, chased from the welfare office and told to go find a job—and for single men, jobs are practically non-existent. The County of Los Angeles, one of the few counties that has a welfare program for single men,

maintains a special "unattached males center." It's located down in the heart of the skid row. Those who get here for aid are given a voucher for two weeks lodging in a \$12-per-week skid row hotel, four bus tokens and a meal ticket for two 75-cent meals per day. After two weeks, the single man is refused further assistance and told he should have found a job. Single women are given more than twice the amount, and can stay on welfare as long as necessary.

Most of the people in the unemployment office are single men. Secretaries, clerks, nurses, librarians and teachers—the traditional single women's occupations—pay far more than the "boy" occupations to which the establishment has confined single men: office boys, page boys, messenger boys, bike boys, hospital orderlies, field hands and common heavy laborers. The work world of the single man often centers at the "Slave Market," like the one at Seventh and San Pedro in Los Angeles. The Slave Market consists of several corners and a score or so of "day labor" employment offices. Most of the men stand around on the street waiting for a few hours' work loading furniture, scrubbing floors, passing out leaflets, or farm labor. The going wage is \$3.65 per hour in covered jobs and \$1 in those that aren't covered.

Conservatives say that single men are poor and unemployed because they are lazy, alcoholic, worthless, uneducated, promiscuous or otherwise morally depraved. Yet surveys have shown that Beverly Hills has a higher alcoholism rate than skid row. There are many idle people in Beverly Hills, and many college grads on skid row. For all anyone knows, skid row is more industrious and better educated. And with all the drunken orgies in Beverly Hills, surely it is more promiscuous than the sexual desert of skid row.

Many employers say that single men are "unstable" and "unreliable." Yet there is no survey or other evidence that implies this is so. Like other stereotypes of the single man, it is probably based on bigotry. Senator Russell Long (D-Louisiana) perhaps knows the real reason for discrimination. At a Congressional Committee meeting to discuss legislation to equalize taxes on singles, Long said that granting tax equality would amount to "a denunciation of the holy institution of marriage and encourage people not to have their children born in holy wedlock." The American family, Long argued, is the foundation of our economic, political and religious life; therefore, laws that favor marriage are legitimate.

Most prison inmates, Black, White or Brown, are unmarried men. The criminal justice system discriminates against single men on several levels. Policemen often feel compassion for married men, and let

them get away with things a single man would get arrested for. Take for example the drunk arrests. Married men, if found drunk in public, are often helped into a taxi and sent home by the police. The single man, who often lives in a single men's ghetto, may be forced to donate 90 days free labor at the county road camp or prison farm.

Every criminal defense attorney worth his salt knows that the best defense, in some cases, is to have the defendant's "lovely wife" appear in court. In such cases, the defense often consists of the expressed or implied argument that this lovely woman and her children will suffer if the defendant is sent to prison. Judges and jury members are often impressed by the argument: Single men rarely serve on juries because they are rarely registered to vote. Even those who do get on juries are awed by the sacred family institution and oppressed by the stereotype of the single man.

Blacks are disproportionately represented in the prison and jail population. Yet 65% of the Black inmates, and a similar percentage of the White inmates are single men. Maybe the disproportionate Black prison population results from the fact that Black men are less likely to be married since marriage is less popular among Blacks, and the high percentage of Black prisoners may be due to discrimination based on marital status rather than race.

Parole boards are blatant in their discrimination against single men. Parole hearings consider the marital status of the convict. Men who have a family, a wife and home waiting for them on the outside are considered better parole risks. As a result, single men serve an average of two extra years for the same offense. The high crime rate among single men is connected with poverty; and poverty with discrimination; and discrimination with homosexuality; and everything with society's infatuation with holy wedlock.

Discrimination against single men is a class issue, as it is a Gay issue. The marriage institution, like exclusive homosexuality, is more prevalent in the middle and upper classes. Homosexuality does exist in the lower class, however. Indeed, one survey shows that 78% of skid row residents engage in homosexual practices, and a survey by the California Department of Corrections shows that 70% of California prison inmates were "practicing homosexuals" before they were incarcerated. Homosexual practices are the rule among unmarried lower class males. Most lower class single men, whether in prison or on the street, claim to be straight. But studies have shown that most of them have sex only occasionally with women, but frequently with other males. Those who live in all-male environments like skid row have frequent opportunities for homosexual relations, but rarely for heterosexual relations.

Middle-class Gay men are only a small percentage of the homosexual world. In

the middle class, a sharp line can be drawn between the Gay and the het. But in the lower class, there is a blurring—a large grey area. No such clear line can be drawn, because lower class exclusive homosexuality is uncommon. Because homosexuality is so widespread among lower class single males, everything of concern to them is a Gay issue.

One thing that causes the issues to be blurred is the integration of the exclusive homosexual in the single men's institutions and ghettos. Skid row bars are all mixed. The Salvation Army, the Gospel Missions and hotels are completely integrated. Social relationships are without regard to sexual orientation. There are a few nelly queens—in fact, the queen is a skid row type. But most of the homosexuals are indistinguishable. Their sexual behavior, like their social and economic lives, is integrated with that of their heterosexual brothers. Even the queens are integrated. Usually they live with a man who claims to be heterosexual, and often claim to be his "wife." Even the words "straight" and "heterosexual," in the single man's argot, often mean "a man who plays the 'male role' in homosexual acts."

I believe that much of the oppression homosexuals suffer is shared by other single men, and to get a true picture of where they stand, homosexuals must look through a wide-angle lens. My recent adventures in jails, missions, jungles and skid rows have confused me as to who is homosexual and who is not. The Gospel of Gay Liberation is percolating down to the lower class single men. Many are identifying as Gay. Most think that homosexuality is just something everyone does. If current trends continue, the Gay world may triple in size in the next few years. My consciousness has been raised by my search for a job. I've been refused employment in many places because I am male and unmarried. Not one employer asked if I was Gay, so homosexuality was not the reason they wouldn't hire me.

The world of the single man is a world of cheap hotel rooms, jails, poor houses, Gospel Missions, hobo jungles, freight yards and weed patches. It's a fascinating world, a little-known life style. It's the world of a minority larger than the Chicano minority and nearly as large as the Black minority. It's not really a Gay world, but almost everyone in it engages in homosexuality.

In future articles I will cover some hard news, a little analysis, a few opinions and a lot of personal experiences. I hope to write articles providing glimpses of life on skid row, an expose of the homosexual promiscuity that goes on in the Salvation Army and in Gospel Missions, a visit to a Mississippi poor house; a night cruising the bushes in a river-bank jungle, and a story about the aggressive homosexual gangs or "jockers," as they call themselves, who cruise railroad yards looking for queens or potential queens to gang-fuck—willingly or otherwise.

-Don Jackson

Film Review

THE LAUGHING POLICEMAN

This must be one of the most grimly ironic titles in recent American cinema. At a glance you might misconstrue it as one of the current vogue of films by the Hollywood establishment intended to ingratiate the public with police and their hazardous and difficult life-styles, possibly with a light comedy touch, with a cast featuring Walter Matthau and Bruce Dern. In actuality it is one of the most corrupt and devastating entertainments concocted by a Hollywood mentality in years, and it deserves the open, vocal contempt of every decent, freedom-loving person in the country.

The trouble is, of course, that the package has been made to seem very attractive, and like most Hollywood craftsmen, the producer-director, Stuart Rosenberg, and his skilled technical crew, have made a very suspenseful, action packed film. The fact that its social consciousness is absolutely nil may seem beside

the point. But nothing is insignificant unless we choose to see it as such (which is precisely the problem with millions of apathetic Americans.)

For openers, this sick little movie concerns a psychopathic killer (we never really get to know him, so even this characterization is questionable) who guns down a collection of innocent, unsuspecting victims on a bus one evening in San Francisco. Walter Matthau — his usual droll and laconic self — is an officer whose young partner is a victim in the mass carnage, which we are invited to dwell on in detailed closeup for the first two reels. He is assigned to the case, along with an embarrassingly inexperienced young officer, played by Bruce Dern. Deeply moved by the loss of his partner — the one positive emotion in the whole film — Matthau uncovers strands of a case in which he was formerly involved. His investigation leads him through the sleaziest and most provocative elements of San Francisco's underworld and sub-cul-

tural milieu. (The original story was set in Amsterdam.)

With the aid of his bumbling, mentally adolescent side-kick our "hero" finally nails the former suspect — a respectable Latin insurance/real estate man — as the killer. And this killer happens to be a closet gay. After exploring the suspect's favorite haunts, Dern flippantly proclaims him a "fruiter" and a "fag." At the end of a very well-made chase sequence, Dern shoots down the villain just as he is about to carry out another mass-slaying on a city bus.

This bigoted and morally corrupt film exploits not only San Francisco but also the most sensational aspects of that city's prominent minorities — Blacks, Chicanos, Chinese, and most significantly, its gay population.

Not only does the presentation of a homosexual mass-murderer in a potentially popular genre vehicle seem grossly exploitative and damaging at this particular moment in the history of the gay movement, but it seems to be a blatantly reactionary gesture on the part of the filmmakers. There is nothing for business like appealing to the fears and prejudices

of middle America. Gay businesses in San Francisco (the Ramrod, Ritch Street Baths and the Frolic Room) received several hundred dollars each in recompense for allowing their premises to be used in the filming of *Laughing Policeman*. This again shows the insensitivity of big scale gay businesses to exploitation by other capitalist businesses.

The small segment of the gay community of San Francisco used in the film are treated as facets of a freak show. A brief sequence of the leather-boys at The Ramrod offers the incongruous image of the suit-and-tie clad killer pushing his way through the sea of black leather. Later a Fellini-like shot of The Fat Fairy whets our sensibilities. Then on to the Frolic Room for another exemplary exercise in drag, where the killer picks up on a blond, masculine, cyclist. Earlier we have seen the suave killer being done up by his favorite hairdresser and making a clandestine visit to another gay bar (or bath). To make sure we get the hip fringe a long-haired attractive dude swings in the same door. None of this is in it-like appealing to the fears and prejudices

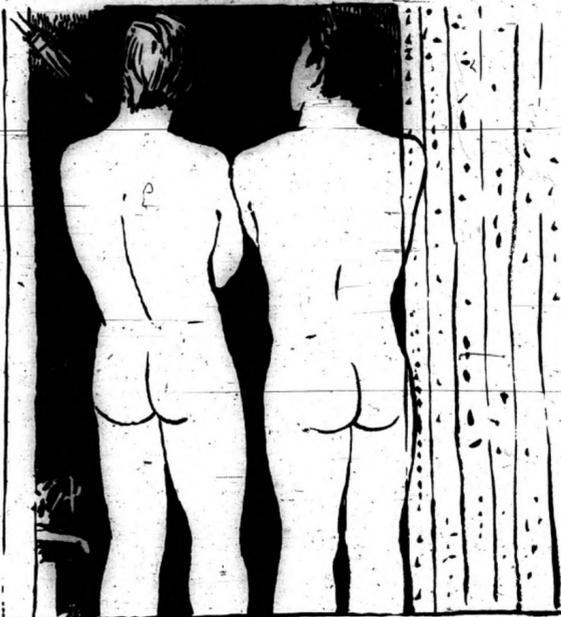
SELECTIONS FROM THE LAST I REMEMBER

by Joe Brainard

I remember blowing the white fuzz off dandelions after the petals are gone.
 I remember making awful noises with a rose petal in my mouth, but the "how" of how to do it is something I don't remember.
 I remember knowing what "c-a-n-d-y" meant long before I knew how to spell.
 I remember "Go to Jail - Pass Go - Do not collect \$200."
 I remember blowing up paper bags, to pop.
 I remember "bread and butter" when something in the street divides you from the person you're walking down the street with.
 I remember "last one to the corner's a rotten egg!"
 I remember that George Washington Carver invented peanut butter.
 I remember wondering if goats really do eat tin cans (?)
 I remember how long (long!) it took me to learn my left from my right.
 I remember red hands from falling down on gravel driveways.
 I remember penmanship pads and big fat black pencils.
 I remember pencil boxes with a little ruler and compass in a little drawer.
 I remember diagramming sentences.
 I remember learning to add and subtract with arithmetic cards. But, alas, I remember the cards more than I remember my "tables."
 I remember thinking that "S.O.S." meant something dirty.
 I remember never really understanding why Cinderella couldn't just pack up and leave, if things were really all that bad.
 I remember not very scary ghost stories, except for the dark they were told in.
 I remember having a friend over-night, and a lot of giggling after the lights are out. And seemingly long silences followed by "Are you asleep yet?" And sometimes some pretty serious discussions about God and life.
 I remember electric garbage disposal horror "visions" of shredded hands and mangled arms.
 I remember the fear of "horror" coming out of my mouth as "whore," as indeed it often did.
 I remember taking baths with my big brother Jim when we were very young, back to back.
 I remember inching myself down into water that was too hot.
 I remember the "tornado" way the last of the water has of swirling down the drain so noisily
 I remember stories about people getting electrocuted to death by talking on the telephone in the bathtub
 I remember telephone nooks built into walls and "party lines."
 I remember (recently!) getting blown while trying to carry on a normal conversation on the telephone, which, I must admit, was a big turn-on somehow.
 I remember awkward elevator "moments."
 I remember rocks you pick up outside that, once inside, you wonder why.
 I remember infuriating finger cuts from a piece of paper.
 I remember (in infuriating) looking for something you know is there, but it isn't.
 I remember (ouch!) bare feet on hot summer sidewalks.
 I remember thinking what a shame it was that Fred Astaire and Frank Sinatra weren't better looking.
 I remember exposé photos of Judy Garland during a period when she got very fat.



Brainard - 1973



Brainard - 1969

I remember, after reading a gay porn novel about a boy who "practiced" with a cucumber so he could learn to enjoy being fucked, trying to casually buy a vibrator at a drugstore: "Two packs of Tareyton's, Wilkinson's Blades and one of those." And then I remember how long it took me to get batteries for it. And then I remember using it a few times, and how more ridiculous than sexy it all seemed. And so that was pretty much that (almost) until one night, feeling rather "far out" (for me) I used it on a friend with a rather rewarding sense of power.
 I remember being all alone with J.J. Mitchell at a ski lodge out of season fantasies; (which worked out just fine).
 I remember, in the morning, "hickies."
 I remember, just before coming, fantasy close-up visions of big fat cocks being yanked out of bulging underwear, anxious to be serviced. And big pink cock heads spurting hot mountains of white in my mouth, my nose deeply buried into wiry masses of dank pubic hairs.
 I remember (stoned) reaching out for a joint that isn't really being passed to you yet.
 I remember how long a seemingly empty tube of toothpaste can go on and on.
 I remember picture windows with not much view except other picture windows.
 I remember, up high, wall paper borders.
 I remember the very sharp angles of "oriental style" lamp shades and bird pictures from Mexico made out of real feathers, with hand-carved frames.
 I remember dolls with "rooted" hair. Baby dolls that peed. And negro dolls that were just like white dolls, only brown.
 I remember record stores with glass window booths you could play records on before you bought them, or didn't.
 I remember "spin the bottle" and "post office."
 I remember collecting bubblegum baseball cards not because I gave a shit about baseball I assure you.
 I remember traveling salesman jokes a bit over my head which didn't keep me from laughing at them anyway.
 I remember dangerous bee-bee gun stories about kids losing eye-balls.
 I remember when the "powdered cheese" you put on spaghetti smelled suspiciously like dirty feet to me.
 I remember, in bed at night in the dark, visions of our house catching fire during the night.
 I remember when you have to go so badly it just seems impossible to wait another minute more, but do.
 I remember the basic fear of dogs. And balls.
 I remember (basketball) total frustration over how to "dribble."
 I remember the "needles and pins" of an early sore throat.
 I remember those certain foods (ugh!) that make the roof of your mouth feel funny.
 I remember (Oklahoma) boring annual Indian pageants of many feathers, and much stomping.
 I remember the totally mysterious to me association of western music with greasy eggs in a diner on a Sunday morning.
 I remember very fuzzy ideas as to what "ground hog day" and "leap year" were. (Or, for that matter, are.)
 I remember believing enough that you could get warts by touching frogs that Actually, I was such a big sissy that I was scared to touch one anyway.
 I remember waiting for a certain piece of mail with almost total belief that, if I really wished hard enough, it would that day come.
 I remember (bars) tending to look more interested in pool that I most certainly am.
 I remember a few too many beers, and then the right song comes on the juke box, and then that incredibly warm flood of pure big "want."
 I remember no way to say "I love you" if you think about saying it for even a moment before you say it - or rather don't.
 I remember (spooky) when all of a sudden for a moment someone you know very well seems to be a total stranger!
 I remember (night) desperate (to say nothing of fruitless) flips through my address book.
 I remember how silly it all seems in the morning (again)

(Angel Hair books, New York, has published in paper three of Joe Brainard's I Remember books. The selection printed here is from the fourth book, to be published in Spring, 1974)

I have thought of myself only as a lady, a woman always I could not live without my husband, Afaeus, very wealthily foolproof.

I love my husband so much; as the academy I love that early-before-words, working

acclamation of 10,000 maidens hailing the beauty an eternity between Sappho, God and Psyche. backwards above love.

Each word of stranger or family strikes as a blow in the sunlight mocking the wounds of his length's

strength beneath authority not Christ's but Emily's identity like a child frolicking upon similarity

The Nordic Races of Prussian Authority.

The Austrian-Hungarian Empire

Founded Upon Commentation's Simultaneity.

-John Wieners
 Boston, Oct. 1973
 [previously unpublished]

Three popular songs from Tuscany

(Anonymous, 15th-16th Century from *Canzoniere Italiano*)

Translated by W.I. Scobie

Beautiful boys, be still more beautiful:
 Don't listen to those who'd cut your long hair!
 Let it fall round your necks like black silk,
 Like threads of pure gold around your necks:
 It is your hair that binds me to you, beautiful boys.

Cruel bloody death
 You don't care what you do,
 Pacing the streets in black leather,
 Saying: This one, that one!
 But I tell you Death:
 I know one who will tear
 This white veil before you!

Look, look how the lovely hawk
 Taking flight heads into the sun!
 So with you beautiful boy,
 When you go out of your house.

When you go out of your house
 The air is seeded with songbirds
 And earth is covered with flowers
 I never noticed before

SURPRISE

1
 Choosing to take fate
 we can approach
 ending discouragously

2
 the horror is
 that we find it
 not for a truth or a lie
 but for contingencies

3
 it comes unexpected
 suddenly studding
 our lightning rods
 with mystery

that fickle butcher-knife
 lye-swallowing suicide
 that *semper paratus*
 Boy Scout in his youth
 that octogenarian
 in her lingering cancer
 that hopeful soldier,
 Christ on the cross

surprised, they all find it
 like a lingering
 wild morning-glory
 at noon
 late but yet too soon.

- Charley Shively

THE SOCIAL GARDEN

Love him who is the warmest and the gentlest. Stay beside him. Protect his romantic, sensitive self.
 Don't let him die turn sour ragged frustrated warped beyond all social redemption. Cradle his curly head in your feminine hands. Think of flowers, think of flowers together, and an incredible garden where the two of you are alone. Exploring itself, becoming its fountain and jasmine and delicate lemon trees. He could become your husband, your lover your brother. No matter. Choose him who is the warmest and the gentlest, who has the most infectious laughter and the clearest eyes. You and he are the Engl of Society Start the world over.

Walt Curtis

HERMES WITH THE BOY DIONYSUS

Hermes with the boy Dionysus
 Saucily posing, eyer gracious.

From the curls to the chin
 On his face that soft sheen

Unknown to mortal men
 Beyond the marble corpse of sin.

I stare at the babe, his father's muscles,
 The arc of torso to the testicles,

To the thighs and ankles,
 No cloak, no wrinkles.

Saucily posed, he stares
 Back at me. I blush unawares,

Dreaming for myself in his place,
 Posing for money, robbed of grace

Michael Higgins

ACT OF LOVE

Lying face
 downward waiting,
 as a mosquito skims
 my right arm outstretched.
 Squashed. Slapped
 by the nude
 atop
 about to enter me.

J.D. Butkie

Four poems written by Arabic-Andalusian poets during Moorish rule in Spain.

Translated by Erskine Lane

If you loved his face because it was a garden where the fragrant narcissus and red rose grew
 then love it now all the more, now that the violets of his beard have blossomed.

Ben Aisa of Valencia (12th century)

THE WEAVER BOY

If only you had fallen in love with a boy of higher rank, not from so humble a station, they said, intent upon shaming me.
 If I had the power to command my love, I answered, perhaps I would not love him. But I have no such power.

I love him for his teeth that gleam like bubbles, for the fragrance of his breath; I love him for his lips and for his eyes that bewitch me.

His fingers dart like gazelles among the threads, just as my thoughts, when I see him, dart about in search of ways to win him.

His fingers toy with the shuttle of the loom, while the passing days toy pitilessly with my longing.

Muhammed ben Galib al-Rusafi (12th century)

He was beardless, skin the color of gold, enough to make men cry from love

When the first fuzz appeared on his cheeks he could not bear it; he fretted like a colt unaccustomed to the harness.

He shrank from my gaze, head down, timid, fearful that the beard might lessen my love for him

But I saw his beard only as a sheath to shield me from the saber of his smile.

Ben Rasiq (11th century)

Ahmad has a mole on his cheek.
 It bewitches
 even those men not given to love.

Ah that mole on Ahmad's cheek,
 like an Abyssinian gardener
 in a field of roses!

-Abd al-Aziz ben Habra (11th century)



Brainard - 1973

A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE AT THE B.O.O.M.

A Short Story by Daniel Curzon

"What do you suppose makes a guy gay?" Chet asked, wistful, swirling a swizzle stick around in his gin-and-tonic. He raised his dignified eyes, troubled. Then a smile twitched in one freckled cheek.

"Who wants to find out? Let's just enjoy it," Graham replied. He snuffed out his cigarette, taking his own medical advice. He pushed the ashtray away from them. "Are you sorry?" he asked Chet, wanting to touch his wrist to comfort him.

"No, I'm not sorry. Of course not!" Chet spoke forthrightly, in his best pilot's voice: decisive, firm, yet behind the authority was something mildly elegiac. "It's the best thing that's ever happened to me."

"You're nice." "It's the truth." "If your wife could see you now!" Graham lifted an arm toward the streamer-filled ceiling of the Bangkok Officers Club.

"She'll have to get used to it." Graham looked across the dance floor at three dozen couples gyrating to the music that a group named The Melting Pot was playing loudly, frivolous and raucous with festivity. The bandstand was decorated with reindeer and angels, silvered angels and red velvet reindeer the Club members could actually feel if they wanted to. "If your wife were here, maybe we could all dance together. That'd make it all right," Graham snorted, nodding at the male-female couples. He and Chet, he noted, were the only ones not dancing. But after a moment a laughing couple staggered off the dance floor, stumbling and giggling into their booth a few tables away. The man, a captain who Graham worked with at Fifth Field Hospital, grabbed a crimson-and-white streamer that had fallen across his table and tossed it into the air, then leaned over and kissed the woman, an Oriental, sloppily on her neck.

Chet noticed the couple too. "Now that they've left the floor, there's room for us to dance." He revealed his roguish smile, and Graham melted a little inside. Chet's too perfect, he thought. Despite the freckles. Lean and tall. I've fallen in love with a homosexual fantasy—a pilot. He blinked again, knowing that Chet would still be there.

"What do you suppose they would say if we danced together?" Chet asked. He touched his cleft, after-shave-spiced chin with his thumb. "Huh?" "You start, and I'll join you later." Chet grinned, "Why is it that people aren't allowed to dance along?" "Nobody's stopping you."

"Sure they are. If I danced by myself, everybody would stare." "Mere custom." "Yeah, mere custom." If I asked you to dance, they'd do more than stare. He pointed at Major Sullins, a warrant officer, a man over fifty, with an unredeemable, bedraggled face, with shoulders like a yoke on an oxen. "Old Sullins over there would grab his pistol from the checkroom and shoot us."



Edward Aulerich

the Santa Claus, who squeezed the waitress again, until she disengaged herself and scurried to another section of the bar, serving the drinks to two couples. Then Santa, with difficulty because of his artificial bulk, jumped up onto the bar itself, casting multiple reflections of drunken Santa-Claus in the mirrors behind and to the side of him. "Now who wants to come up here and sit on Father Christmas's knee?" he called to the room full of boisterous people. "Who wants to come up and tell me what she wants for Christmas?"

A couple of women half-stood up at their tables, wobbly with too much alcohol and merriment, happy, as if they would go to sit on Santa's knee. "I'll tell you what Sugar Daddy wants for his Christmas!" the man dressed as Santa Claus roared. The crowd roared with him. "Should I go tell him I want you for Christmas?" Graham asked, touching Chet's suit-sleeve, the sturdy arm.

Chet turned his face toward him, not smiling. "You know you've already got that." He wanted to press Graham's hand on his sleeve, but it moved away. "It's only Christmas Eve. How do I know I'll find you under my tree in the morning?"

"If I'm not there, look for me in your bed." Graham, against his will, looked around to see if anyone had overheard. It was reflex. He had been doing it for all of his thirty-four years, it seemed. An Air Force doctor had to be on guard at all times, especially if he was not married. "You're the nicest Christmas present I've ever received," he answered. "Or is that too sentimental?" He felt a tinge of self-consciousness.

"I'm in love with you," Chet said matter-of-factly, directly. Graham tingled somewhere in the recesses of his chest. "It won't last. It never does." He took a swallow of his martini. "Yes it will." "Until tomorrow anyway. That's long enough." He said nothing more, not wanting to tell Chet, who was inexperienced, that their love would not last, that they both would go on to many others, lovers and episodes. Chet was glowing comfortable with his gin-and-tonics, with the spirit of the season, grateful to Graham for restoring him to health; he had already declared his love a dozen times in the past week. "It won't last, but that doesn't make it wrong now," Graham said, knowing that he couldn't be heard because of the music.

The inebriated Santa Claus had jumped off the bar and was marching, followed by several others who were prancing like his reindeer, out of the room to The Melting Pot's slapdash accompaniment of *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen*. In a minute the band was playing dance music again, and the male-female couples were hard at their play.

"I want to dance with you," Chet persisted, moving his chair closer to Graham's. He put his hand under the tablecloth and squeezed the other's leg. "Remember Major Sullins!" Graham warned him.

"Major Sullins be damned. I want to hold you, to kiss you." "But you're a man!" Graham said with mock horror. "A man wants to dance with another man. My God! Jesus in his manger! What's the world coming to?" Chet shrugged, squeezing the hidden leg again. "Someday we will."

"I doubt it." Graham caught a distant glimpse of Major Sullins's handsome teeth, the arm he had around his date. "Old Scrooge over there will never allow it."

"Sure we will. Men used to have other insanities. We'll get rid of the one against us someday." "What other insanities?" Chet thought for a moment. "Oh, husbands used to shoot their wives for infidelity, and fathers killed their sons for miscegenation; women had to hide or even murder their illegitimate babies; the Inquisition tortured people in order to save their souls. All those seem incredible now."

"Just goes to show you how decadent we've become," Graham said with a weary irony. "Next thing you know men'll be touching each other in public." "I'd like to kiss you right now." "It'll never come true. Never," Graham said, shaking his head. "Can you imagine the two of us sitting holding hands in the Bangkok Officers' Open Mess? Can you?"

"Let's make a wish on that," Chet gestured at the huge red tinsel and electrified star on top of the tall Christmas tree at the side of the bandstand. "What do you say?" He stroked Graham's thigh. Graham noticed another lieutenant colonel, another doctor, look over in their direction, and he moved his leg. "You're insubordinate, captain!"

"Come on. Let's make a wish," Chet stuck both of his hands at the star on the Christmas tree, which almost reached the ceiling, decorated with faintly phallic baubles and white lights and strings of popcorn and sprayed with soap that looked like snow. "I wish—that we will always feel exactly the way we do right now."

Graham looked at the still-smoking cigarette in the ashtray. "Dorjan Gray made a wish like that, and see what happened to him!" "Come on," Chet coaxed. "Or I'll grab your leg again! Make the wish." "Okay, okay. I wish that we won't have to kill our wives for infidelity ever again. Amen."

Chet looked disappointed. "You're cynical, aren't you?" "A little." "Even on Christmas Eve?" "What better time? That's when people have to beware of slipping on candy-coated Charles Dickens. They're everywhere."

Chet looked at Graham's dark mustache, unsettled and at peace at the same time. "Well, at least I got you to make the wish. Sort of." "Maybe it will come partly true. Half a wish is better than none." Chet grew thoughtful again. "You know, if you did dance with me, we might start a trend."

"You mean, shooting queers instead of just discharging them from the military?" "If somebody doesn't fight back, nothing will ever change." "You trying to earn a Purple Heart? You'll get that one, that's for sure." Chet looked down at his own large hands. "It would take more courage to dance with you than to drop a bomb on Cambodia."

"The Pilgrims of the Confraternity of St. Anne have to be careful." Chet wrinkled his attractive face. "That's just what I mean. Pilgrims of St. Anne! We have to resort to that kind of roundabout bullshit." "Are you calling me a coward?" "I'm only saying that it would be a brave act to dance, strange as it may seem."

"Did you know that if you call a Chinese a coward, it isn't much of an insult? Civilized people! But Westerners will die rather than be thought cowardly." Graham ran his fingers over the coldness of the glass. "They teach you Southerners strange codes of honor, don't they?"

"Southern Illinois isn't the South." "Same difference. You say 'sodee,' did you know that?" "Are you changing the subject?" Chet said quietly.

"Of course I'm not. We'll dance for our country. And no doubt eventually the

Daughters of Gay-Liberation will erect a monument to us. To our corpses." "They might. You never know." "I know."

"The plaque will read: To the Conquerors, Who Were Not Afraid." "Only Major Sullins will come along with his machine-gun and blast out the lettering, putting 'Goddamn Queers' there instead."

"I don't intend to stand by and let people push my face in." Graham twisted in his chair uncomfortably. "Why do I always fall for pilots, do you suppose? Does that make me a Sky Queen?"

Chet did not answer at first, then: "I'm not a 'queen' of any kind." "Don't be uptight about being a little feminine. You probably like doctors—so you're an Ether Queen."

Chet's voice hardened. "Somebody has to be a man!" "I don't imagine our act would be interpreted as manly."

"Well, they're wrong, that's all." "It must be the heat in here," Graham waved his hand around in the flushed air; it seemed to hold too much, sagging with smoke and movement and music. "You'll learn to keep your tail between your legs, just like the rest of us. We're all very good girls."

Chet loosened his tie. "I wasn't a sissy before. Why should I be one now?" "Nobody would ever think you're a sissy," Graham soothed, sensing Chet's growing anger. "Let's not spoil the Christmas spirit, okay?" He flicked one finger on Chet's wrist on the table.

Chet glared at the captain and his Oriental date, who rejoined the throbbing dancers in front of the bandstand. "That little banty rooster and his concubine can get up there and throw their bodies at each other. But we have to sit here. It's—"

"We can't have everything," Graham manipulated a shin past the other's kneecap. "Besides, I've got enough. I've got you."

"We're supposed to be content with a sneaky pinch under the table or a little finger tap on the knuckle?" "Slow down! Whoa, Mister!" Chet worried the idea. "What would they do?" He took an overlong swallow of his drink. "If we got up for a slow dance, do you think the others would bump into us? Or maybe some guy would come up and try to separate us? Would the Club manager intervene?"

"All of those," Graham snickered. "And don't forget Warrant Officer Scrooge—he'd get his grenades. And they'd court martial the fragments." "Merry Christmas to all. And to all a good night!" Chet said harshly, his glass lifted, toasting no one in particular.

Across the room Major Sullins noticed the toast and yelled "Merry Christmas" back. "What time is it?" Graham asked. Chet looked at his watch. "A quarter to twelve."

"In fifteen minutes we'll have been in love a week." "Is that a record?" "At this velocity, yes," Graham did not say the words easily; he had always snorted when he'd heard people trading lovers' endearments. They made him suspicious, faintly nauseous. But now he understood the impulse, to tell the loved one; to tell and tell and tell again.

"We could go up to my room and make love," Chet said. "Sodomy for Christmas? I only do that on Mother's Day!" Graham said to make fun of himself.

Chet studied him, the upper lip that drooped ever so slightly, the eyes that never seemed rested, even in the morning. "Why is it homosexuals are so often bitchy?" "Am I bitchy?" "There's a streak there."

"You're right. You have the unjaded eye of the neophyte." He bowed, chin to chest. "I suppose we're bitchy because that's where our frustration goes—if you are seeking my medical opinion." "Don't you get fed up pretending to be straight, making up stories to deflect suspicion from yourself?"

Graham shook his head in agreement.

"So sick of it you wouldn't believe!" "And I used to make anti-fag jokes all the time!" Chet pushed on both temples, to show his self-disgust.

"Don't get bitchy. Promise me." "I don't intend to." "It makes us witty sometimes, but it's not our most becoming trait. Self-hatred can begin to stink like... like former lovers."

"How do you get rid of self-hatred?" Graham let his voice do tricks. "Oh, you go to church maybe. Or take lots of showers. Or burrow deep into the flesh of armies of males. Who knows?" His voice grew solemn. "I get tired of analyzing. You live with it, that's all. And you love when you get the chance."

"But these other people here have everything and more." "They have to pay; they have to raise their children. I only have to swab their throats occasionally." "It's unfair!"

Graham leaned nearer. "No, you're supposed to say: 'I'd love to have you swab my throat sometime.' The perfect erotic lover. As long as we confine our Unnatural Practices in sealed rooms, we'll be okay. Hunkey-dory in fact."

"I've got as much right as anybody." Graham took the swizzle stick out of Chet's drink and snapped it. "Tell the truth. Wouldn't you be shocked out of your mind if you saw two fags snuggling up to each other in a public place? Be truthful."

"Sure I would. But I'd get used to it. Fast." "It takes time—a time of liberality for the barriers to drop enough for a few alterations in sexual modes to occur. What happens is that the homosexuals can then venture a kiss or two, a squeeze under the table, let's say—because of the greater liberality. But at the same time other barriers are cracking—rapes and corruption get worse. So we fags get blamed for the growing 'immorality'—you know, like in Rome. We're all lumped together, when all we really are are one of the offshoots of the general increase in freedom."

"What was that again?" "Never mind—I must be drunk." Graham finished his martini. "I was never that articulate—for a queer." "I think you're super just the way you are."

"That's what lovers always say—just before they begin to make 'slight revisions' in the loved one." "Really? What are you going to change me into?" "I'm going to make you shave closer before we hop into bed." Graham held his face rigid, before letting the smile slide out of his eyes.

"Do I irritate you, so to speak?" Graham leaned over and grasped Chet's forearm with his whole hand. "Oh, God! Why can't we stay like this forever?" He looked over at the electrified red Christmas tree star. "Now that's a wish worth wishing. Why must it inevitably turn into something else, something bitter, something crumbling at the edges?"

"What do you mean?" "Oh, nothing. It's just that almost everything turns sour. The Christmas goodies we're whispering to each other will get stale, or become crumbs in the bottom of the box." He tried not to smile too wanly, knowing that he was taking himself too seriously. "It just will. On that we can depend. My patients will continue to break their bones and get diaper rash and lovers will continue to fall out of love. It's built into the system."

"I bet if we held each other on the dance floor, beneath the big Christmas star, we'd never change." Chet did not believe them, but he said the words anyway. Graham felt a surge of passion, a longing ache mixed with melancholy. If only he and Chet really could stay the way they were!

The music changed to a slow number, or perhaps it had been slow for some time. Graham had not really been listening to the music. He glanced at the dance floor and saw that there were only half a dozen couples left. The others had left the bar or returned to their tables. Would he dare?

"Let's dance," Chet encouraged, staring unflinchingly into Graham's eyes. Suddenly Major Sullins was upon them, having stumbled from his own table to theirs. He clapped Chet on the back. "Hey, Swiger, you having a good time?" His face was sun-doused, as clean as a new airplane engine part, hair like-brush bristles.

"Can't complain," Chet replied. "No dates—on Christmas Eve?" "Afraid we've just got each other—Graham and I."

"That's not much!" Chet did not hate Sullins; he was too banal to waste such emotions on, simply one of the impediments that one had to put up with, if one stayed in the military. Maybe it was time for him to get out. Six years was enough. He stared up at the desperate-to-have-a-good-time, uncomplicated face of Sullins, and wondered if he had a right to ask Graham to give up his eight and a half years in the Air Force too.

"Guess you two'll have to dance together," Sullins joked, exploding, but not grossly enough. Chet smiled; he wanted to hate the man intensely. There should have been some spittle on his lip. Or he should belch, to complete the hatred. But such satisfying emotions were rare in life.

"Yeah, I'll guess we'll have to," Chet said, standing up. "You know how it is when you're in love." He looked at the Oriental woman that Sullins had left alone. He looked down at Graham. "You want to dance?" He held out his hand. Major Sullins fell backwards with amusement. Recovering, he winked. "Now if he kisses you, don't giggle!"

"I won't giggle," Graham said, biting on the words. He looked up at Chet, whose hand was still extended. I can always practice medicine somewhere else, I suppose. Then he rose and pushed back his chair. "Reporting for duty, PCS, I hope." He nodded at Chet. "All right. Let's dance."

He and Chet walked to the dance floor. Both began to perspire, but Graham closed his eyes as they circled their arms around each other. Taking the clue, Chet closed his too. Catching the rhythm of the slow music, they pressed together and began to dance. In the near distance they could hear Sullins uproarious with hilarity, but neither Chet nor Graham opened his eyes to look.

"Whooooopee! Aren't they sweet!" Sullins voice said. He still believed they were joking. Two of the men in dancing couples muttered something too, and a woman cackled dizzily.

"Get a load of that!" Sullins shouted, pointing. "How you doing?" Chet said as he whirled Graham around, his leg between his partner's legs.

"So far, so good." Graham felt a gob of sweat grab at his throat. When he opened his eyes, he saw that the other couples were looking at them, as were the people

at the tables. The waitresses were smiling, poking at one another at the spectacle. "What a couple of clowns!" Major Sullins called, jovially, going along with the joke.

"We're quite amusing," Graham said into Chet's ear. "I don't feel funny at all," Chet answered. "I'm not going to back down now."

"I love it!" Major Sullins took a step onto the dance floor, waving at the band. "Give these fags some better music than that! I want to see them jitterbug!" The music flared into a rock and roll number, but when Chet and Graham continued to dance slowly, ignoring it, the band returned to the original music. Out of the corner of his eye Graham noticed the other couples looking at them with surprise. The smiles had faded into uncertainty.

"Okay, ladies, that's enough now!" Major Sullins called to them. His grin had disappeared too. "You guys were a scream!"

"Knock it off!" a surly voice said from a booth in the shadows. "You've had your laugh!" someone else yelled.

Graham started to unclasp Chet, but Chet held him, would not release him. He could feel the warm breath on his chin. "We're not going to stop. Ever!" "Okay, fellows, out out that shit! What do you think you're doing?" an anonymous voice cut into them.

Graham took a deep breath. "I think I can hear Sullins putting cartridges into his pistol." "No, that's just the ice in his glass." Graham looked beyond Chet's head and noted the frowns on a few faces. The other dancers had moved farther away from them.

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Andy

CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE

Andy is astounding for the quality of investigation and imagination. Andy is a telling of a young man's search for his true sexuality in the midst of his own and the world's effects, noise, confusions and fantastic choices. Andy is missing. He is a real person, yet more importantly he is the personification of the author's desire for love and true sexuality out in the world trying to discover itself:

*I have two expressions
the first is for nothing,
and the second is for everything and is
like a man squinting at the sun
the tears beginning to appear:
I can't find Andy.*

In the process of discovery, ours, and the author's, we follow Andy through some strange and enlightening adventures. Possibilities present themselves:

*Andy, what would you do
if a lady sits down on the curb
hikes her dress over her waist and says:
'My sweet tooth is heavily insured'*

And then, the problem, the one we all hopefully face, the possibility that surrounds our lives like the air we breathe:

*and Andy, tell me,
what would you do Andy
tell me what you would do
if Sparkling Love comes to town
and tries to look you up.*

This is how the story starts its sustained narrative, our search, as it were walking on a beach, before the ocean's magnificent, menacing and completely sexual presence, collecting unusual, funny, beautiful, clear, opaque, and well-formed shells, the images of the poem with which to stud the garment we hope to find. We marvel at the collection at our feet and in our hands and "at the bird in the bush/ which sings of the possibilities/ of the flight of life." Andy is told:

*Your clear body
hangs like an amulet
around a certain lucky neck.*

In search of this neck, we find Andy in the presence of characters who sting us with the clarity of their views of love: a blues singer.

*...Pissingers de la Bronx.
Folk aficionados maintain
that when the famous blues artist
plays his jive-ass blues
his fingers nibble at god....*

And his remarkable song

*cause every bed I sleep in
turns to ice and snow
turns to ice and snow.
That's love talking the talking blues
That's fox fire in a rotting log
Cause when one side of my pillow's
burning up
I gotta turn it over to the cool side*

Andy talks to Venus about love and she offers her lucky neck. "Andy, dressed as a Persian Prince, enters the oval painting of concubines, a palace of ferns." Many sides of the question are exposed just as "in New York a sniper, a groaning sexual thief, exposed 20 lives to heaven." It would be impossible to discuss them all, and it would be unfair because Andy has

the quality of a mystery that the reader hopes will never end. The characters become equal in the burning question that drives them (tell me what you would do) and us, equal as men before their god, this love, yes no every morning on our tongues like a small bird the instant we wake up. The language is endearing, sexy, extremely personal, and gutsy as if spoken by a brilliant priest, who, in the light of a new awareness and some drink, has decided to let it all hang out, renounce the cloth, and give voice to his wildest thoughts. In other words we feel like we are privileged witnesses to a great event, one that can truly happen only once.

The logics are delightful, presenting simple yet very crucial turns of mind that usually elude us: Andy says:

*Ugliness has everything to gain.
Beauty everything to lose.
I fear what I fear.*

And:

*Solving a problem is hard
when you hate the answer.*

The blues singer:

*Cause when we walk down the street
I look at everyone
everyone looks at her
she looks at nothing
nobody looks at me.*

Robert Glück's images are clear: "Oh I'd come to you like the midwest/ in boots muscles and a teshirt"; real: "I'm your dream's mother/ I'm a thinker on head lettuce terms/ ahush lay so the children won't hear/ dedicated to un-yellowsplotting underwear"; physical: "each scorpion's triumphant tail arches/ into its own neck"; and mysterious: "Where has he gone/ I sometimes sense his hair," and "What I mean is/ if a man kissed a woman I'd be that kiss." In short, they are many of the things that good poetic images should be, and Glück injects them with a personal quality that is as rare as it is precious. Most importantly, the images always resonate to the deeper levels of the investigation going on throughout the poem. In this way Andy is like a famous echoing house somewhere in Geor-

gia in which you can stand anywhere and talk, and the sound will echo audibly for many seconds in every room.

I do not say the word often, but for lack of another Andy is poignant. To me this is a quality that only love can give to things. Poignancy is an ache we feel, like in our lips to meet a soft thing after a lot of wine. In it there is something of loss and something of desire: It is shape and clean like a blade, yet it is a distinct point where we stand electrified by life.

*At a high pitch we shoot down a mossy
light
past a grotto where we watch the waves
break,*

*where there is a man on the surface
with his cock going to the bottom
and mermaids dancing around it.*

Here this poignancy is defined; it is a place on our bodies and in our histories where we have separated from our sexuality, where we feel the ache of desire and loss, and perhaps, as Robert Glück has, as his Andy has, as all poets must, we descend into our own mythic world to try and recover it. Perhaps too, the answer to the mystery is mysterious itself, "The answer is on my tongue/ when it touches yours," it can only be spoken when we are unable to speak. We must, however, dive into the mystery because all answers become as invisible as everything else when our search has made us a capable of true feeling. In this spirit I strongly suggest that everyone dive into Andy or as the poem says:

*but won't you listen to my story
listen to my story
because you just might like my story.*

Edward Aulerich has illustrated Robert Glück's Andy with six pencil studies of a twisting and ascending nude; first the feet, then the calves, the thighs, and so on. The drawings are very beautiful, delicate and sensual. Two of these drawings are reproduced along with this review.

[This book is available by mail, post-paid from the Gay Liberation Book Service. Send \$2 to Box 40397, San Francisco, Calif. 94140]

Gay Video

QUEER BLUE LIGHT

During the Fall of 1971 I was involved in organizing the first independent gay video group in the country. That New York group was eventually named Queer Blue Light. It was very exciting because we had regular access to equipment and tape donated by a friend. In the beginning we spent a lot of time playing and working with the equipment, developing our proficiency, exploring the possibilities of the medium and considering the direction of the group.

Comparing what we were doing with video to what was being shown on broadcast television, we could see the great potential of video for reaching out to other gay people in a meaningful way. Both national and local television attempted to ignore our very existence as gay people. While it would be extremely difficult to change the narrow coverage provided by the broadcasting companies, video was an alternative immediately available to us. Unlike television, we ourselves could determine how this medium might be used by our community.

Within a few months of its formation, the New York group produced a half-hour gay documentary which premiered at Ohio Gay Pride Week in Columbus. It was later shown on cable television in Manhattan and was distributed to several colleges, gay organizations and museums. This was followed by a tape on the gay platform at the Democratic Convention in Miami and a tape of Ohio Gay Pride Week 1972.

In the Fall of 1972 I returned to live in San Francisco. Queer Blue Light-Gay Video San Francisco, a group of six gay

men and one gay woman, began meeting December, 1972, but we had a difficult time in gaining access to video equipment. It was several weeks before we learned that there was equipment available at Bakersfield College, where gay students were struggling to get their organization recognized by the school administration. In March we went down to Bakersfield to do our first tape. There were several Bay Area showings of the tape during 1973.

The group also participated in a media conference in Berkeley. A number of us were active in supporting a city resolution to establish a cable television task force in San Francisco, now headed by a gay woman.

The primary purpose of Queer Blue Light is to produce and distribute gay videotapes to gay organizations, schools, churches, counseling centers, and so forth, at a nominal cost. We also intend to conduct video workshops for gay people, explore other uses of video in the gay community and to provide a channel of communication to link gay organizations and communities in the Bay Area, other parts of the state and perhaps other parts of the country.

Bay Cablevision in Berkeley has already offered us a half-hour per week if we can provide them with videotapes on a regular basis. Similar arrangements can probably be made to show our tapes over cable in most of the other local communities, including San Francisco, where the cable company is unresponsive to community programming. But they, too, will have to provide free time to community groups within three years as one of a hundred cable companies throughout the country required by law to do so.

Projects we are now working on include a tape of three gay poets, the East Bay Gay Festival and San Francisco Gay

Freedom Day of June, 1973, and M.C.C. of San Francisco. Join Hands, a Bay Area gay men's prison support group, has asked us to do a tape on gays in prison; and the Stanford Gay People's Union has approached us about doing a tape on gay counseling. We also hope to do tapes on coming out, gays and mental institutions, older gays, gay history and literature. And this is only the beginning.

Even after a year in San Francisco, gaining access to video equipment is still a problem for the group. Most of the people who have equipment are straight men with little or no interest in what we are trying to do. Femedia III, a women's video group, has been the most helpful of all the Bay Area groups we have approached. In future Queer Blue Light and Femedia will be sharing equipment and an office donated by the Northeast Community Mental Health Services.

Financing Queer Blue Light is one of the most difficult problems we face here because we cannot depend on other groups for the equipment we need. Our most urgent needs in San Francisco are for a portapak and a good editing deck plus a few other smaller items and videotape. It will take a minimum of \$5,000 for us to function effectively. After that the San Francisco group would be self-sufficient with money received from tape distribution, showings and workshops financing the production of future tapes. Tax deductible contributions can be made to the group.

PERSONA

Persona is a more personal project involving the production of original feature length gay video/films. I will both write and direct, something I was interested in doing even before I left New York.

I think it is now possible to produce dramatic works in San Francisco for, by and about gays far superior to what is now being produced commercially. The quality of art does not depend on the size or expense of a production but in the way that talent and other available resources are used.

My first screenplay is half written. I do not want to finish the script until I see which actors I will be working with and where I will be doing most of the interior scenes. Even when I begin taping, I doubt whether I will have a completed script because I want to be flexible enough to allow for the possibility of change and further development as I go along.

The play is called *Reunion* and the three principal characters are: John, a gay man in his twenties; Tom, his lover; Roger, a friend from college John hasn't seen since graduation. I want to explore some of the problems of coming out and the tensions which exist between men having to deal with differing sexual orientations.

These are two approaches to gay video both as an idea and as a reality. There are gay people involved in video in other parts of the country too. Five crews of gay people video-taped the 1973 Gay Pride Day march in New York; a gay video group has formed in Washington and another in Ann Arbor. The first Canadian group is in the planning stages in Vancouver. Despite the many problems I am convinced that gay video will soon become a vital and important part of our community in North America and throughout the world.

The office for Queer Blue Light and Persona is currently at 121 Leavenworth Street, Rm. 450, San Francisco. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 4277, San Francisco, California 94101.

-N.A. Daman

MISSING YOU POEMS

is this love,
this empty feeling, this wanting you but not having you,
these memories of a time we spent together,
my head spinning like a drunken train on rusty tracks,
is this how Juliet felt, sipping the friar's cruel fruit,
thinking to awake to romeo's tongue,
acid lips greeted her, the vulture jaws of the
bridegroom death, why have you
abandoned me, in new york, on business, my canadian
executive, if only i could remove my love for you, store
it away, like a suit in camphor,
taking it out when you're back...
i was merely a child,
i guess i'm still no more. a child in a man's eyes,
you made me a house
you were my daily bread

empty feather love,
bruised eternity, the cold nights surrender me already.
i am a widow, i make sacrament of a piece of
cloth. eucharist stains on my bedsheet, i take pain
to keep the color.
seashell ass, its music is yours again, singer
without a melody, senile. it sometimes forgets.
it gets lazy and will not tune its strings,
arrogant orpheus, a call from new york keeps me
preserved like tonsils in a jar of alcohol.
these rocks we both collected in runnede, the one
with a sad stone face, worn by some
invisible artist,
i said i couldn't believe in miracles, no,
not even as this wind stirs.

laxative,
loosening you, i can't conceive again,
my stomach already bursts of you, sterile fertility,
choking on you, the wild wind carries me into you again,
strong wine, drawing you from the earth, magnet that i am,
i attract your particles, i consume them,
but why
but they do not resurrect, fire dancers,
microscopic,
they sting.
this is love, is it not,
this which i am intoxicated with;
abused nun, i bear it like a contradiction,
i had vowed not to fall again,
what pope grants me pardon?
love,

i watch it grow: envying lovers, an old woman in a
gingerbread house i wait by the window.
magic flashes in the sky:
blonde streak, thunderbolted, it summons you.
achilles,
i'm your one weakness.

-Tommi Avicoli
[Originally published in *The Gay Alternative*]

An Act of Jeopardy for Federico Garcia Lorca

A star of blood
you fell from the point
of the hypodermic
singing of fabulous beasts,
spitting out the sex of vowels
with teeth & roses
Your poems explode in the mouth
like torrents of sperm on a night
full of zebras & bootheels
Your ghost still cruises the river —
fronts of midnight assignations
in a world of dead sailors carrying
armfuls of flowers in search of
your unmarked grave
Your body no sanctuary for bees,
Death was your lover in a rain of
broken obelisks & rotting orchids
In the tangled rose of a single
heartbeat
I offer you the shadow of a double
profile,
two heads held together at the bridge
of the nose by a nail of opium
smoke
in the long night's dreaming
& a memory of water poured between
glasses
In my mailbox I find a letter from
a dead man & know that for every
shadow given
one is taken away
Yet subtraction is only a special
form of addition & implies a world of
hidden intentions below a horizon of lips
thin as yr fingernail sprouting mysteries
in the earth...
The ace of spades dealt from the bottom
of the deck severs the hand which
retrieves it & the eyes of Beauty
sewn together peer over a black lace
fan
in the vulgar sunlight of a Spanish
morning without horses***
The belt of Orion is loosened
before you as you remove the silver
fingerstalls
from yr mummy hands & kneel to plunder
the nightsky in a shower of bitter
diamonds
(Somewhere under a blanket someone weeps
for a lover)

Peace to your soul
& your empty shoes
in the dark closets
of kings with no feet

-Ira Cohen
Kathmandu, Nepal
Julv. 1973

SURVIVORS

For Stephen Hernandez

Sitting there sun stroking dark half your face
calming odors of chicken resting in pinot noir
cognac on your lips hands wrestling a cigarette
listening to a song of "passionate strangers
who rescue each other from a lifetime of cares"
that time you first sat in this room
tired stroking your eyes with mine younger then:
Both of us

At Savoy

drunk around a silverylit table
laughing talking about transformations
unstained unturned eyes I should have known
kundalini

kundalini the medium tranced
tore my spine free too much alike you and I
waiting for differences to battle bringing us together
You should not have come back
the experience yes
the result I do not know

This city
of nightbitten poets glass-eyed hustlers
of lost Americas
nothing to offer

I have survived the caricatures of sperm-flowing queens
there is no liberation when we exchange
roles with women they with us a farce
exploitations of hunger Not
only out of love am I writing this you see
I am dying

I am crawling on my belly without legs hands
in aid of my search for the unborn whisper
unconsummated sperm to foster the androgyny
also of anger

drawn from the twisted vacuity of human beings/strangers
firing the dirt of streetcorners love lost
lust lost

No more no more
cognac gone room emptied
of your lips
nightcity gone to the sea We will both
survive

-Kenneth Lee
Sept. 1973

FROM "THE DESERT DWELLERS"

FAGGOTRY

We have learned to survive
like those before us
The only story we have passed
is silence

Out on the Mojave
the hawk glides
layer after layer
until he arcs in the cool air
At night
he rests
on the oldest tree.
In drought
it sends its whole life down
to the tissue
in the thickest bark
Years without rain
it watches the thin branches
crumble back into dust
It waits

-Dennis Cooper
-Richard McCann

SEQUEL TO POEM FOR PAINTERS

Abutting solidity apart when rout
the ivy circuit, went all cost to
shirk
real envy at convent- shirk
tion in the liv- the cheap blouse base-
ing room. ment reject.
17 Irving St. even that "Get him out of my head, now
the Army base, subway car they say he's a great poet,
shookdown past Andrew put him back to bed;
blew the whistle, lights on get rid of him."
in the downstairs, or were Home after work, for
they doused; that new year's vision, cocktails never,
lodge Buck's County greasy hamburgers I got
birthday blizzard? SIS cooking, now, you're getting out
I can stand new friends of hand small potatoes over
& if I had old ones close, call, smoke.
to estimate allot Work possibly how
Cavernous echoes obeyed lines haul haul
no heartache, only hangover jaunty tips daily
upper Grant Ave. horizon shriners. Horse-fout
Endowed, employ, Whitcomb
ed Hasaid
-John Wieners
Boston, Nov. 1973
dedicated to *Gay Sunshine*
[previously unpublished]

INTERVIEW

The following interview is with Edward Androse on the subject of ballet and how he as a gay male dancer, choreographer, and director relates to the art. Androse has danced with the Pennsylvania Ballet Co., the National Ballet of Canada, and most recently the Boston Ballet. During Gay Pride Week of 1973, Androse choreographed and directed a male pas de deux, "Romance," which he is now in the process of reworking for television. He also teaches ballet in the Boston area.

Androse was interviewed by Steven Abbott and John Mitzel who are involved in Boston's gay lib quarterly, *Fog Rag*. The interview was taped in Boston, November 1973, especially for *Gay Sunshine*.

Is the ballet world different from say a theatre company or the art world at large?

Oh, very much so. It's a very cloistered life. It doesn't leave much time for anything else.

True or False: the ballet is filled with faggots.

False. It's true that everyone thinks it has been. It never has, ever. The strange thing about ballet is that so often gay dancers — for some reason, I don't know what it is — marry once they get into a company and have children. They marry in the company. I don't know whether it happens because they're working with women all the time, or just the life.

Why do people continue to believe the ballet is filled with faggots?

I think it's the connotation of dance. People think that anyone who'd be associated with dance would be what they think of as nelly. And it's not true. Dance is the highest form of athletics. As a matter of fact, I've been cutting out clippings from the papers lately. These photos of football. High kicks. Some of them are quite beautiful. This one guy did a forward pass — just like a ballet step. The line was beautiful. The high kicks have a kind of grace to them. Ballet's much more stylized, of course, but there's that look.

Whenever Edward Villena appears on TV talk shows, he always stresses how much like "sports" ballet can be for the male, as though he were trying to legitimize the art for the tastes of tacky America.

Villena is always apologizing for ballet. It's demeaning to the art.

When did you begin to seriously study ballet?

Ten years ago. I was twenty.

Is it difficult to begin as a dancer at that age?

Yeah. There was not a great deal of time. If you had the aptitude and a fair amount of ability you could get on. It was very concentrated. I started so late. A lot of kids do it leisurely over five or six years. They start in their early teens, even at ten. That's because the big schools are supported better.

What were the influences that brought you to ballet?

I don't know where it comes from. I always wanted to dance. My sister took dancing lessons. I loved all the stuff around the house. She had a box full of toe shoes. I took dancing lessons. My parents wanted me to tap. I really loved the ballet. I loved being on points, the stretching. I once saw a ballet at Symphony Hall with my parents. It was really magical. I'll never forget it. I just remember a lot of white, filigree, quite beautiful.

Who have been the great influences on dance in this country in the last ten to twenty years, men or women?

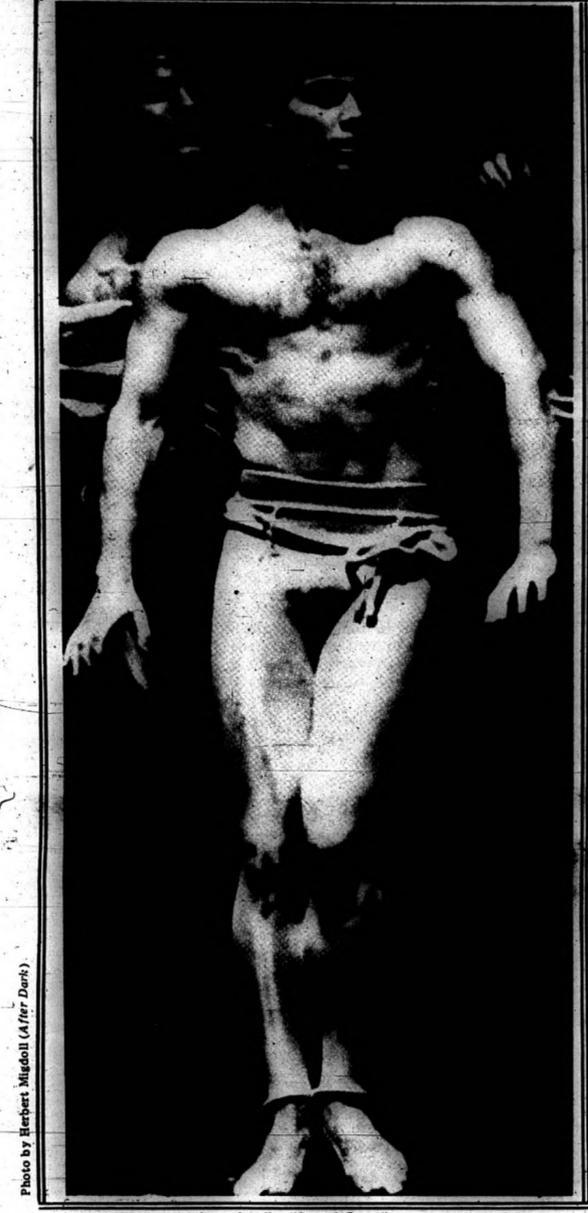
The greatest creative influences in American ballet have been men: Balanchine, Tudor, Loring, Robbins. The only women's name that fits in that category — and it doesn't quite fit — is Agnes DeMille.

The Boston Ballet has always been headed by a woman?

Yes. Virginia Williams.

Why don't we talk more about your personal experiences as a gay male in ballet. How did you feel going in, as a faggot? How were you treated when you were actually involved in an established ballet company?

I had problems about effeminacy. I loved wearing women's clothes till a very late age. I think ballet, initially, gives you a phenomenal knowledge of yourself. I think any boy who's in any way effeminate — when he gets into ballet, it might appeal to him as something beautiful. When you get into the hard grit of it and daily wrack your body to do it, you learn



Russell Chambers in the rock ballet "Sacred Grove"

Photo by Herbert Migdoll (After Dorst)

a lot about beauty, art and yourself. You get a sense of your own body. You get a feeling of costume. You have a chance to be beautiful yourself, to look beautiful, to dance beautifully, to express yourself. I think it takes away from the urge to put on women's clothing. I felt that way until I went into dance, and then it just left me. I had what I needed. From my personal history and that of friends of mine: we worked right through wearing our mothers' and sisters' clothes when we started dancing.

How does that relate to guys who feel feminine growing up?

You realize where the sham is, where the artifice is, where real values lie, and in a way, what beauty is all about. In anything that has to be attained, it has to be attained through work. It gives you a strength and a discipline that very few people can even touch.

How did getting into dance change your sense of being male? Have your attitudes about men and women changed as a result?

When I started the dance, it was very difficult because I started late, as most boys do. I was very unhappy with all these little girls around me, 7 or 8 years younger, who could hack all this stuff because they had started earlier. There's always been a one-up-manship because the women are — until you really get to be professional — better than the boys. They started younger.

Is that because of the cultural prejudice?

I teach now in Roxbury, and it's amazing to see all the black people come in now. It's like 15 years ago and seeing all the Jewish mothers with their little girls. Now the black women come in exactly the same way with their daughters.

Any boys?

I have four black boys in the class. Let's talk about terminology. You refer to men and women as "boys and girls." They're always referred to as "boys and girls" by directors and teachers. They'll say "Boys front!" or "The girls will go now." They're unconscious of it.

No matter what the age of the performer?

I have a *bon mot* about Diaghilev. He said he was only interested in dancers who were very young or very old. That's a big syndrome in dance, especially in America — not so much in Europe: we're very, very much interested in young dancers. God forbid if you're in between! Your career can virtually be over by the time you're 20. Between ages 20 and 30 is a very difficult time for dancers, especially for a lot of girls.

How does being in ballet relate to your sexual life?

Ballet is one of the last sexual forms of art. In some ways ballet is very revealing. It can liberate you and make you more aware of your own body.

Do the gay men you know in ballet maintain a high level of sexual activity?

No. I don't think so. They don't have the time. They're just too goddamn tired.

I'm sure they have the sexual appetites everyone else does. I know a lot of the boys in the company don't have the time, so they take their trips to the baths. Get the sex and it's done. Many dancers are uptight — girls and boys. Not prudes. They're loose in many respects, but sexually they can be frigid. I feel I've been in several ballet companies, and there was screwing going on, but the majority aren't. People are too involved in their dancing. The thing that interests me in ballet now is gay consciousness among dancers. There should be some way for us to get together.

What is the relation of faggots in dance with the progressive trends in the art?

I don't think there's been a hell of a lot of homosexual expression in dance. I think everyone wants to make a universal statement for posterity. They don't want to be too political, too sociological. Some [ballet companies] have explored nudity and ventured into homosexuality. Many small concerts do it, but large companies don't. They want a large audience. They can titillate and have homosexual themes in their ballets, but they can't be absolutely candid. There have been exceptions, though, such as *Requiem for a Dead Boy*, a Dutch ballet. There's homosexuality in the ballet but it isn't specifically about homosexuals. I don't think it's been explored. I don't really know the reasons. When I think of doing a homosexual ballet, I'm drawn to it because it's a valid statement, one that everyone has touched on in their lives.

On the other hand, I feel that I'm limiting myself in a way. I think to myself: How is this going to be five years from now?

Is that the double jeopardy of American ballet? They're trying to expand their appeal, and you can't do that by exploring the taboo.

I think anything's possible. Boston Ballet could do it, in a palatable way. They couldn't hit you over the head with it.

Haven't they got to stick with Giselle and Nutcracker?

They could do something controversial with overtones. Everything is overtone. No one wants to deal with specifics. If you deal with specifics, they call it "obvious," "blatant" or "sentimental."

I want to try to do it anyway. Really say what I want to say. If I want to be blatant, I'll be blatant. If I want to be obscure...

You've got to remember who's reviewing you. They're closet cases and straights, writing for a predominantly mass-market, straight audience who are still unliberated in sexual and artistic terms.

What is the main repertory of ballet today?

It's all very, very heterosexual.

Was ballet one of the last of the arts to shed Romanticism?

I think we're still in the throes of Romanticism in ballet. People want to see *Giselle* more than anything else. That's the height of Romanticism. *Les Sylphides* had a great renaissance a few years ago. The "classic" ballet. Ballet can be absolutely fantasy, fiberglass I call it: spun, but it's steel. It can cut you but there's a beauty to it, filigree, icy structure to it. It really is a fairyland — no pun intended.

Why do you think ballet has such an appeal to the gay community, both as audience and as participants.

There's so many reasons. They love the bodies on stage — especially the men. The boys on stage, the sensuality of the dance, the face, the high-fashion make-up, the great artifice of it all. It's all involved with haute couture. A lot of gay people are attracted to dance. A lot of boys come into dance, see the work that's involved and fall aside. Dancing is the survival of the fittest, especially in this country where there's no state subsidy. If you want a career, you've got to go out and get it. Even with someone backing you up, it's still a fight. I don't know what propels gay people to keep on and do it; maybe a mixture of things: neurosis, therapy, love of the arts. As you go on with it, you start shedding the unimportant things away. If there's enough substance or enough neurosis, who knows — you can hack it.

Much of the creative energy in the gay community — that which reflects a gay consciousness, in design, in the arts — is, if not anarchic, then at least a breaking out of conventionalty. It doesn't support the status quo. It's looking for new forms. What must it be like for a gay ballet student to be so regimented in that tight discipline?

There are many gay men in ballet companies other than as dancers. There are directors and costumers who make the women look like they do. It's just like design.

So perhaps there's a reflection of homosexual consciousness, on whatever level, in the totality of the ballet, in spite of the fact that the ballet may be celebrat-

ing heterosexual love and have no star male dancers.

Right. There's never been any realization, unless we can go into role playing in dance. We're all hidebound in the ballet as to what are "male" and "female" movements. Steps are segregated tremendously. The idea of a man working on point, on his toes, is very foreign. There are many instances of women who should never work on point, and there are some men who could really be quite lovely on point. It's never been explored. It would create a hybrid, but in a way a ballerina is already a hybrid. Men could bring a masculine technique to point dancing unheard of. There's a boy who danced with the Joffrey Ballet who also danced at the Club 82 — in drag — and he danced on point. I understand he was just fantastic. We have boys in the Boston Ballet who can dance very well on point. They train themselves. There are steps you learn in class for each sex. I guess the syllabus of dance was formulated so that there would be a contrast.

Ballet as an art with a discipline is not very old?

About 200 years. It sprang out of the European court system.

It caught on in America when there emerged a large middle and upper middle class with money, time and aspirations.

A lot of ballet teachers make most of their money, on adult classes today. I have students up to 45.

Why would Barnes treat it as though it were irrelevant.

I think it's the thing we mentioned before: it might have been just too out-

fed

New doctrines into my receptive head. Part came from Lane and part from D.H. Lawrence. Gide, though I didn't know it then, gave part.

The net result of these varied contributions from men of letters was to confirm Auden in his view of poetry as a clinical and sharply observant medium. The poet's first duty was to be honest, and he was scrupulous about this at all times, excising works from his collections because they expressed feelings or beliefs which their author never felt or entertained; an honesty no longer in vogue.

W.H. Auden

Wystan Hugh Auden lies buried in Kirchstetten in Austria. He was 66 when he died in his sleep on September 28th. He leaves behind him a mass of highly distinctive writing, an army of readers who will miss him deeply, and a place in literary history as the leading English-speaking poet of this century.

He was born on February 21, 1907 at York. He showed, at an early stage, the voracious appetite for knowledge which was to remain with him, and colour his poetry, for the whole of his life. At Gresham's School, Holt, he took prizes for science as well as for Latin; he gave a talk on 'Enzyme Action' and produced, and performed in, a concert of modern British music. And he began to write poetry.

"I first made up my mind to become a poet on a Sunday afternoon in Norfolk in a ploughed field, in March of 1922 when I was just fifteen." He had been out walking with a childhood friend, "I don't remember how the conversation started but at one point he asked me if I ever wrote poetry and I said no, because the thought had never entered my mind. Then he said 'Why don't you?' and that moment I knew that's what I was going to do."

And that is exactly what he did do. He left Gresham's for Christ Church, Oxford, with an Exhibition in Natural Sciences, read PPE for a term, and then changed his course to English. After taking his degree he left for Germany.

In Berlin he met Layard, the psychologist and anthropologist who:

queers don't exist save as oddities good only for an occasional gimmick song like the Kinks' "Lola."

This, together with large doses of musical machismo, and fear of government's radio licensing power, has tended to keep gay sounds out of range for most rock audiences. With all this in mind, a record like *Chris Robison and His Many Hand Band* comes as an especially welcome and delightful surprise. It has good music and good lyrics, and is openly, unaffectedly, happily, sometimes exuberantly gay.

"Here comes a pretty young man all full of sass/ He looks just like a choir-boy for Sunday morning mass./ Hey, won't you share my big warm bed/ and let me show you the light/ 'cause I'm lookin' for a boy tonight!" The lyrics are from an upbeat, good-humored song which Robison introduces by explaining, tongue in cheek, that "the boys in the band — pardon the expression — have asked me to take full responsibility for the lyrical content of this song."

A playful good humour, never self-hating, always perceptive and gentle, is one of the lovely qualities of this album,

CHRIS ROBISON and His Many Hand Band. Stereo LP. Gypsy Frog Records, 888 Seventh Avenue, Suite 400, New York, N.Y. \$5.25

Reviewed by Ian Young

Gay Rock

blends well with Robison's gifts as a satirist and mimic. "Doctor! Doctor! The Shocking Tale of Jonathan Schwartz Jr." is about a modern young man who, every time he gets excited about a boy he sees, runs to his psychiatrist for electro-shock treatments. "Do you think I'll ever be really cured?" he asks. "Maybe, maybe," the doctor replies, "but now here's your bill; we're making great progress I'm sure." The song's cheery refrain: "electro-shock therapy is good for you... How else could he face his mother-and-his wife, but he still hates himself for the rest of his life. Doctor, doctor, with eyes of pity, would you like to treat some more faggots in this city? We're so full of fear and you're so rich... Take their money while you scare them with their Freudian slips." All ends well when Jonathan Schwartz is eventually cured (but not of homosexuality) by a young man who loves him, sleeps with him and shows him how to "give his own life."

Other songs' attacks on cops and anti-runaway laws are all the more effective for their understatement and lack of stridency. "Hyway Song" is a tuneful, perceptive piece about the come-what-

What are the lifestyles and politics of the gay men you know in ballet?

Dancers are very unpolitical. Look at the strike in New York of the N.Y.C. Ballet. Dancers are the last people to strike. They're very removed from gay liberation.

Do you get the feeling at all that the classical ballet is structured to be anti-male?

I've never been in a position to know that. Males have always been a rarity in ballet in this country. In some companies males have always been treated well. I'm very glad to see them in class; I respond to them tremendously.

In a corps de ballet is the male on a parity with the female — outside the stars, of course?

Now they are. We're still restricted by a whole syllabus of steps that have been evolved — not to highlight the female — but to keep her separate and individual and give that contrast which, to my idea, is not necessarily correct. There was an all-male ballet that Joffrey did called *Olympics*. Critic Clive Barnes mentioned that he didn't think an all-anything ballet was any good. Meanwhile he neglects to criticize the all-female ballets with a performant man in them to lift the girls that Balanchine does.

Why would Barnes treat it as though it were irrelevant.

I think it's the thing we mentioned before: it might have been just too out-

fed

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The net result of these varied contributions from men of letters was to confirm Auden in his view of poetry as a clinical and sharply observant medium. The poet's first duty was to be honest, and he was scrupulous about this at all times, excising works from his collections because they expressed feelings or beliefs which their author never felt or entertained; an honesty no longer in vogue.

In 1930 he published his first volume called simply *Poems*, and enjoyed an immediate success with it. In 1932 came *The Orators*, a dense and difficult work, and rare amongst his output in the explicitness with which it discusses the predicament of the homosexual. Only in this one respect, in his sexuality, does he seem to have found difficulty in maintaining those standards of honesty which he applied to the rest of his life. Whilst never denying his gayness, it was perhaps the one major facet of his personality which he did not affirm in his writing. For one as passionate as Auden, this was a large sin of omission. Especially as his sexuality appears to have assisted him in his role of observer and reporter, an alienation from his fellows which left him on the outside looking in.

It was at this time that he was swept up in the gathering political storms of Europe. It was the time of the depression. In Germany, Fascism had taken root and the Spanish Civil War became the focal point for English radicals, with Auden playing a

leading part in making the cause fashionable. Despite his regrets in later life about the attitudes he took at that time, and the intensity with which he took them, he is probably best remembered as the angry young voice of England's 1930's intellectuals and dissidents. His poems of this time, *Look Stranger* and *Another Time*, no less than the plays he wrote in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood, show an expansive social concern, but at the same time a growing hopelessness at the apparent inability of people to improve, even rescue, a rotting and unjust society. He went to Spain, drove an ambulance, but his main contribution as ever, was his writing.

If he had upset the responsible and respectable worthies of British Society during the thirties, their voice was soon to be raised, when, in 1939, he left for America with Christopher Isherwood. Along with others who left England on the eve of war, he became the object of abuse, and snide comments both publicly and privately. Not only was there anger at the way he had scoured the pre-war establishment, but he was made to suffer for his homosexuality. His leaving with Isherwood was the signal for establishment howls of moral indignation. Cowardice was exactly what one would expect from a pervert.

It was at this time, however, that he achieved real confidence in his own powers as a poet. And with this new confidence came a series of ambitious works including his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Age of Anxiety*. He was fortunate that his powers were great enough to take him above the level of petty bitterness which hurt others in a similar situation. The ex-

perience may well have decided him to take out American citizenship as he did in the forties.

From here on in, his life story was mainly one of the king collecting laurels and tributes. Whilst pushing his own frontiers out to take in new forms which he had not tried before (opera, libretto, film commentaries, travel books) his published poetry was assured of an immediate market. In 1956 he became Professor of Poetry at Oxford. In 1957 the Feltrinelli prize enabled him to buy his house in Kirchstetten. Both Oxford and London University were to award him honorary Dr Litts, despite the attempts of those who tried to write him off when he left England.

His poetry is the poetry of the intellect. Behind almost everything he wrote there is an argument. His massive vocabulary was deployed not so much to set a mood, as to explain a point, to reveal the workings of a character's mind. And yet he was seldom pretentious once his first youthful outpourings were past. He could be grave and rhetorical, or he could be keenly witty. His poetry slipped comfortably from one style to another, assisted by a dry sense of humour.

Whatever particular aspect of his varied writing appeals to you most, his light humorous verses, his psychological insight, his figurative originality, it is to him that we owe the salvation of British poetry from the machinations of obscurantist bank clerks.

And for that much alone, we must thank him.

—Michael Mason [Reprinted from *Gay News*, No 34, England].

right homosexual, just too Olympic Greek with all the implications of what "Greek" was supposed to be at that time. I feel that you have to go with your own ideas if you're gay and not worry about the broad spectrum.

Could you cite some ballets that you find offensive to faggots and/or feminists.

I think Balanchine's ballets are very offensive to men, both men and faggots. *Has he always featured female dancers?* Always, except in a great masterpiece he created in 1927: *Apollo*. A great male ballet. After that it was all women. It's a great silly crotch of shit what Balanchine has said many times: "Woman Is Dance." And then Maurice Bejart came along and said: "Man Is Dance," which is another silly thing. His men are featured for days and it works.

Is Bejart's work homo-erotic as well as all male?

Yes. Very homo-erotic. It's something we're not used to. We put it down.

Maybe ballet can't be very gay, ultimately. But it can be! It has to be explored.

You're working with such a tight formalistic structure...

Sure. You've got to learn it, master it, then throw it away. I think the classic vocabulary of ballet is fantastic.

You feel your own work in choreography and direction is a reflection of a

gay consciousness, a sensibility that's different from the mainstream.

I won't do it yet. I want to get into it. I couldn't reject women in dance, I'm too close to them. I'd love to explore men in dance in my own way.

For a gay person with a gay consciousness there are all sorts of possibilities of opening up new ranges for both men and women in ballet, aren't there?

One hopes so. I'm inundated. I think this coming generation is ripe for it. Especially in Boston. I think Boston is ripe for the right thing.

Can you describe your work? Your idea of a gay ballet?

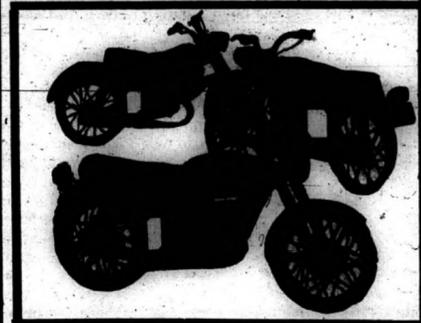
It's very difficult to describe one's own work. In the male pas de deux, I'm stuck with simple movements. It was the first time I was ever really political. It really came from my heart; I felt it was very honest. Brahmsian music. Two boys. Like a love pas de deux. It was natural for me to do it, (see note 1 below)

Is it a very stylized vocabulary, like in ballet, prohibitive of sincerity?

Not necessarily. Modern dance was very much concerned with Freud. Modern dance and ballet are becoming more similar. They borrow from each other.

[Note 1: The people of the Boston Ballet seemed very moved by *Romance*. And the gay community, which saw it during Gay Pride week, were even more enthusiastic.]

REVIEWS



Dream Work by Kirby Congdon. Cycle Press, 18 Warren Pl., Brooklyn, N.Y. 1970. paper.

Black Sun by Kirby Congdon. Pilot Press, P.O. Box 2662, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501. 1973 \$4.50 hardcover.

Reviewed by Charley Shively

Kirby Congdon writes poetry, he says, "for the general intelligent reader and about contemporary things in both emotion and idea." Forgoing pastoral, academic or parlor poetry, Congdon celebrates "the motorcycle as strongly representative of our acceptance of, delight in, or reservations about contemporary technology."

The big theme in both *Dream Work* and *Black Sun* is the melding of death and sex — particularly through the motorcycle. "Sex is not confined," he says, to the practices of the bedroom, but is all life, all activity and all thought — and all images." And death sharpens, focuses sex in — one rushing orgasmic point — a moment of truth.

I half remember a motorcycle death from my high school days in Ohio. Going up a "dangerous" curve on State Route 4 from Hamilton to Middletown, riding beside my lover in a 55 baby-blue Chevrolet, taking a friend home, we saw a motorcyclist speeding the opposite way. When we came back a few minutes later, there was the wreck, the police, the ambulance, and the curious crowd. He was dead, had been thrown from the cycle; his body hit an oncoming car. I still wonder, half fantasy having that sex symbol/cyclist explode on the hood of our car.

Death has a neatness, certainly denied other relationships. Congdon writes in *Dream Work* of "that beauty, that familiarity, and the ease that accompanies a man's grace when life takes on the importance and intensity of death...and death, in turn, takes on the casual familiarity and expendability of life." (p.40) For instance, what would we think of John F. Kennedy if he were alive today? Isn't half — if not all — of his charm in the blood and guns at Dallas? Or the very gay poet Frank O'Hara, struck dead by a dune buggy on Fire Island. Both men were in their forties; they could have lived twice as long as they did. Would they be the legends they are if they had died later? In *Black Sun* Congdon writes: "And the dying and the dead...had more meaning than existence itself..." (p. 42)

For a time I had a motorcyclist lover (around 1964), who came dressed in perfect leather to fuck me once a week. I don't recall him offering me a ride on the bike; actually I don't think he wanted to be seen with me. But he did like fucking and was generous (he gave me a cooking timer I still have). His name was "Derek," he said, and he had many adventurous stories about his travelling life. The other life he led was as a social worker, doing some dreary and meaningless analysis of why welfare recipients were so shiftless or something of that sort.

I've often noticed the same contrast between the gay cycle clubs in Boston and their runs as I saw in Derek: their lives are hopelessly conventional, tiring and tedious compared to their leather fantasies. (Of course, the same is true of

the Judy Garland, Bette Davis, Jacqueline Onassis queens.) The clubs (Entre Nous, Vikings, Bucks) provide a little glamor, excitement and sex that the members would otherwise never find. Four or five years ago I met someone now very active in one of the clubs. We went to his room, which was unendurably small, bare and sad. He had only a bottle of gin for comfort. Today he's much "happier," having found friends, companionship and meaning in the Bucks.

Kirby Congdon explores the tedium in industrial society. His "Office" poem captures "Fluorescent tubes, blue storm's light, / [which] illuminate the calm/ of square, glassed-in rooms." (*Black Sun*, 37) In a review of Hunter Thompson's *Hell's Angels*, Congdon wrote that "There are times in our lives and corners in our characters when we would like to be a Hell's Angel ourselves because much of society is alienated not only from its machine culture but from its laws, its pressures, and its anonymity, all of which any man instinctively rebels against." (*Magazine* 4, 44) Away from the regimentation, mass industry, mass society, we can find a consuming reality, a unique separateness and singleness, ultimately alone — through death. *Black Sun* provides a sign/symbol/power/cleaning/purifying:

whether consumed by public use
or smouldering from its own inward decay,
all life, in its holy concentration, burns
(p. 44)



Kirby Congdon

Writing with a total attention, Congdon achieves an extraordinary tension in *Dream Work*. When I read the prose-poems, I was totally captured. For instance, "Jagannath" (also printed in *Black Sun*) held me in awful wonder. The hero masturbates with his mirror before the ultimate time on a hilltop when he pulls the trigger to the gun up his ass as he comes. "His pain lifted him out of himself, his brain a mass of shapeless fire, a molten, boiling stone of hideous sensitivity and feeling that swarmed over him and advanced and retreated like the sun moving in and out of focus, or like galaxies of time itself exploding and shrinking in the slow motions of astronomical speeds. In time, before the sun itself had set, he died."

Many of the poems sustain a comparable level of intensity. "Ego" weaves image, meaning and rhythm effortlessly towards the winding down. When I first read "Ego" in Congdon's earlier *Juggernaut* (1966), I gasped in wonder. "The Lot" (also in *Black Sun*) captures golden-rod in some trolley tracks in honey-suckle caves into an evening "gray, grave."

Yet, Congdon is not so universally successful in his posed poems as in the *Dream Work* prose poems. Some lines come off annoyingly cute: "my leaping heart is a kangaroo/ I live in the land of the boomerang." (p. 29) And the whole "Icarus" poem is somewhat pompous and stilted for someone trying to move out of the library (Ovid is quoted in Latin).

Congdon sometimes seems overly grim — particularly in his over-posed photographs — sort of set pieces for some leather bar. Someone might misread him as tedious. They would miss the continuous humor. Pedestrian humor, for instance: on "Motorcycle Day, Detroit claimed that automobiles were more effective in fighting the population explosion because of the higher death rate in cars which can hold as many as six or eight people..." (*Dream Work*, 29) Also metaphysical humor; as he says, "What do you mean, 'Why?' It was a joke, that's all. No meaning. Why look for a philosophy, an aesthetic, or anything like that? It was great, and doing it made it great. They carried it off. That's all." (ib., p. 32)

Finally, something should be said about the influence of Harry Crosby. *Black Sun* was the name Crosby used for the press he and his wife Ceresse Crosby ran during the twenties. They took the name from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* and were themselves sun worshippers. In *Shadows of the Sun*, Crosby wrote that the sun was "the only thing in life that does not disillusion." (The Crosbys published parts of *Finnegan's Wake*, another funeral work, and the first edition of Hart Crane's *Bridge*). Harry Crosby committed suicide in 1929 in New York City; he was found in his studio with the body of a young woman. Each had been shot through the head with a pistol found in Harry's hand. During this ceremony, Hart Crane was with Crosby's mother and wife at a play; they went to Crosby's studio immediately. Crane wrote a friend, "The terrible shock of Harry Crosby's suicide threw me flat." Crane followed him in 1932 by leaping into the sea.

We don't often talk about suicide, except to lament or deplore it or to study ways to stop it. Such moralism is quaint and crankish — perhaps effective in the way Alcoholics Anonymous is effective. The motor-cycle, gun, or other suicide weapon give the human victim some human freedom; one can choose death rather than be driven to it or be caught unaware. An outwitting of the universe. (Cf. Albert Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*) Certainly do-gooders get short shrift in *Dream Work*. Congdon calls them "individualists" who stand outside the wire prison fence waiting to "help." "I and my friends are beyond help," the narrator says, "but they do not see that. Nor do they realize that once you enter, there is no way out. Instead...to gain entrance to the prison has about it the sense of privilege." (p. 55)

Granting that we cannot allow ourselves to become spectators to life without being ultimately part of that life (or death), I would raise some questions about Congdon's strategy for facing it. In motorcycles, in guns, in his sun, and in poetry, Congdon worships power. The sun is admired in its ability to melt men and wax. And power is often represented by the penis of a tough, tight-lipped man — his come melting, exploding, burning wax on the rocks. Congdon has many man to man scenes ("Orgy," for example), but there is no kissing, no sucking, little embracing — and fucking seems more a chore than fun. The leather-chain costumes now coming more into vogue in our community represent a similar admiration of power and "manliness" over love. (It would be gratuitous to point out how obviously short-changing this is for women or for men who want to be woman-identified.)

I don't mean to foist my fantasy on someone else, but my fantasy makes it very hard to groove on Congdon's. My fantasy is love, an illumination of the boredom and indifference of the universe with feeling and want and warmth for others. In a poem "Hart Crane, Harry Crosby," John Wieners writes,

...tell the old women under the tin roofs
that life can be better,
that love is the only value,
when the bombs break their tulips
when the shells kill their lovers,
Come on Harry, give a little,
help us, we don't want to die,
I don't want to jump out of the Ritz Tower.

[Both of these books are available by mail from Gay Lib Book Service; see listing elsewhere in this issue.]

EGO

If enemies amputate
both hands and arms,
I still walk
across a summer ground,
and, legless, I can see
the world revolve.
Blind, my mouth will sing
beyond my eyes.
Tongue torn out,
I shall hear
the season turn.
When I am deaf
to my own cries,
and the visions
in my own mind chill,
this heart will beat
like the world's own clock.
And when for want of winding
the works run down,
no man dies;
it's the world that stops.

—Kirby Congdon
from *Black Sun*

[Poems by Kirby Congdon have appeared in *Gay Sunshine* Nos. 7, 8, 10, 11]

Robert Durand. *The Ages of J. Christ-*
opher Books. 1819 Sycamore Canyon
Road, Santa Barbara 93108. 1973. \$2.50

Reviewed by Robert Peters

This impressive book is about the beginning, fruition and end of a remarkable relationship between two men of somewhat differing ages and temperaments. While not overtly gay, the poems can be read as a symbolic working out of the speaker's double, or doppelganger. One thinks of poems by Morgenstern and Rilke. The poems are sexual, though, and celebrate an intense, beautiful affair between an older and a younger man. J., the younger, is the masculine; the speaker ("I"), the older, is the feminine counterpart. The cycle hangs together much as a novel does, starting with the meeting of the friends and continuing on to disturbances from other males and females, until, finally, the affair ends, the friends separate, and "I" is left with his dreams.

Only occasionally does "I" outdo J. In "Coddpiece" both compete to see who can make the most impressive coddpiece. J's is of the Medusa complete, with writhing snakes. I's is a fagsmile of Michelangelo's *Creation*. J. doesn't like being outdone. The deterioration of the friendship happens in a remarkable poem, "The Conjure Room" in which a murderous salamander (symbolizing J's cruelty to I) develops out of I's penis and balls:

From out-
of my genitals a large yellow and green
spotted salamander's head
flowered with frightening
realism. I hesitated
to touch it and called
out to J. But no answer
came. And I
couldn't turn around.

Black legs rose from
my testes while forelegs
climbed upon my chest
The room continued to waft
and the salamander's head
swayed back and forth before my face.

The relationship is over. In the final poem, "I" dreams that J. is a tree and that he (I) is a vine winding around him. Durand writes succinctly and with considerable poetic skill. Any reader, whether specifically interested in poetry as such or not, will find *The Ages of J.* intelligent and fascinating. Copies may be ordered directly from Christopher Books.

LETTERS



GAY PRISONERS

Dear Gay Sunshine:

The interview with Christopher Isherwood (*Gay Sunshine* No. 19) was beautiful. Don Jackson's article was excellent. The photographs by Friedkin are fantastic. In fact, my only complaint is that the editors of *Sunshine*, probably because they have never spent any time in prison, continue to let a few self-serving and whining homosexual prisoners continue to use their pages, giving your readers a dishonest picture of the realities of prison.

I'm 24 years old. Puerto Rican. Born and raised in New York and have spent close to five years in prisons. From one of the most brutal, "La Princesa" in San Juan to the classic "country club," the federal correctional institute at Danbury, Connecticut. Recently in your pages statements were made that are completely false. If I may give a few instances: (from the Endersby article in Number 19) "Gay inmates are treated like second class citizens." My response: So are "straight" prisoners. "Gay inmates are treated like women." My response: Only if they adopt the mannerisms of women. "Gay inmates are not the ones who rape." My response: I will give an example to the contrary:

A young friend of mine was being locked up in a detention center here in New York. He was aware of its reputation for brutality and rape. Hoping to escape the worst he claimed to be homosexual and asked to be segregated with the other homosexual prisoners. On the street my friend had had many homosexual friends and expected that here he would find kindness. The kid was 17! Within an hour of being locked up he was approached by an older homosexual "drag queen" who was being held for mugging and stabbing one of his clients. This homosexual pulled a razor on my young friend and forced him to go down on him. After that he forced the kid to go down on several of the other homosexual prisoners charging them a pack of cigarettes. Not one homosexual on the tier raised a voice to protest. And I can assure you that this is not an isolated case.

The Endersby article goes on to say, "Jailhouse punks have plenty of customers but very few, if any, friends." My response: If that is true, then I feel very ashamed of my brothers in prison who have turned their backs on this human being. A man who probably needs friends more than most. This self-righteous statement is especially galling because I was a "jailhouse punk." And it was a "dirty old jockey" who spent the last two years in Danbury teaching me to read and write English and more important, to accept what I am and be a man. The brother who wrote the article I am criticizing puts down this type of relationship. But I'm willing to bet that I got more out of this relationship with a 50 year old "jockey" than he has from all his relationships with his "brothers." He writes a page long article and never mentions the word love.

I do not intend to minimize the brutality, the pettiness or degradation of prison. Much of what happens in prison is cruel. I admit that they serve no purpose. Young guys starved for any kind of affection or stimulation are penned up in a brutal environment. These are guys that have become convinced by the pattern of failure in their lives that they are losers. They are isolated from family, friends and society. One of the cruellest aspects

of prison life is the loss of identity. A guy realizes that he is changing and figures that those who are on the outside are changing also. Fear and loneliness are constantly with him.

The romanticized, fictionalized and commercialized view of the homosexual in prison, perpetrated by the writers of the homosexual scene, is one big ripoff. Forced sex and gang rape are the exception not the usual. It was definitely not a problem at Danbury F.C.I. or at most federal prisons. At Danbury the law of supply and demand seems to work out pretty well. One of the guys took on 39 men the first week he was there.

Homosexuality is tolerated. There are several areas of the yard where we were allowed to sit on the grass and strip to our shorts. One area was known as "Muscle Beach." This is where the "muscle freaks" work out during the good weather and take their "girlfriends" for some gentle petting. Officially, homosexual activities are forbidden and the most obvious are housed together in the same building — at their request or for their own protection. No prisoner was forced to house there as long as they kept their nose clean. The truth is that the officials ignore a hell of a lot of obvious scoring and pairing off. You probably get more hassle on the street over an obvious affair than we did. The laundry on Saturday was a regular orgy. Another guy used to hold open house every night in the toilet and take on all comers. It was common knowledge to even some of the hacks that Ed (my prison lover) and I were making it. Unless you step on them, most prisoners tend to mind their own business. It's called "doing your own time."

The only hassle that Ed and I had was when a gay turned us in and we were caught. The punishment was seven days in a strip cell. When a discussion came up about assigning us to the same cell, one of the hacks was overheard to remark: "If Wild [Ed] can keep that fucking troublemaker happy, put them in the same cell." Some punishment! I'm sure that Ed will agree that over and over we found more compassion from "straights."

With you in the struggle for justice and peace. Con amour y carino me quedo.
—Luis Corrado
Brooklyn, N.Y.

GAY LIB VS GAY BUSINESS

Dear Gay Sunshine:

I would like to make a few comments on Don Jackson's article "Gay Lib vs. Gay Business" (Issue No. 19).

Although there are many gays in prison for crimes against property (I am such a person) it is absurd to assume that just because a person is gay he can say "What the hell! I am gay so I might as well break all the laws. Sooner or later they (the pigs) will bust me for sucking cock anyway." Hets do not own the patent on crime or criminal affairs. In short, some gay people are criminally inclined and their choice of bed partners has nothing to do with it.

"Gays" that seek to rape other inmates were totally unheard of by me, until I read this article. The inmate social structure (that damn convict code again) will not allow gay inmates to get away with such an act. Gay inmates realize (unless they are totally insane) that they cannot go around "wreaking vengeance on het society by raping straight boys" and expect to live very long. Het inmates will not tolerate such an act.

Don Jackson mentioned the down and out gay that wanted to be brought back to jail so that he would have something to eat and a place to sleep. That is nothing new, but it has nothing to do with Gay Liberation. Once again, hets don't own the patent on institutionalized ex-cons. People that become institutionalized forfeit freedom, peace of mind, human dignity, personal achievement and gain very little in return. That doesn't make prison a cool place to be; that simply makes the person that allows himself to become that way a very beaten person, and certainly to be pitied.

—Ronald Endersby No. 33368
Salem, Oregon

Dear Gay Sunshine:

Don Jackson's article "Gay Lib vs Gay Business in *Gay Sunshine* No. 19 is a very pleasant surprise. At this moment in time the *Advocate* seems to be really very insensitive to so many issues in the whole gay community. I agree with so much of your perceptive analysis of that publication.

I would like to make some additional comments. The *Advocate's* lack of any concept how to handle the Houston murders really appalls me. Does the *Advocate* stop to concern itself with the real human issue of the boys involved: what brought these young men to seek attention, affection and perhaps love of a person who ultimately killed them. What of the society in which a human being cannot be honest about sexuality? Instead of an editorial and many articles about the S&M implications of the Houston murders, what about an investigative journalism article into the whole problem of young gays. The people of the *Advocate* seem unable to really grasp their potential role in helping the gay middle-class to understand the struggle for identity in young people today. Does the *Advocate* really care, or do they really think only of the sex object exploitation of beautiful young bodies?

I am also angered about their blindness on the question of the great tragic fire of New Orleans. They profess to be in charge of the fund raising efforts. Yet they do almost nothing to move towards creating a sense of community around this important event in gay America. There is a lack of focus on the human issues surrounding the fire; for example, who were the people burned to death? The limited points of view at the *Advocate* have prevented a focus on the whole problem surrounding the bar scene and the related personal stories that could emerge.

You really did hit home on the issue of prisons. Even when Bob Cole [news editor of the *Advocate*] visited an institution, he failed to sense the desperate needs of the inmates. The *Advocate* has been forced (or shamed) into printing token prison related material. Perhaps they will understand the gay prison issue in a few more years. Will it be too late? Despite their so-called interest, the best reporting about aversion therapy and behavior modification on gays is not being covered by the *Advocate*. Zodiac and Earth News Services carry articles constantly; very seldom does any of it find its way into the pages of the *Advocate*.

The last several issues of the *Advocate* sadden me; they are really bad. Actually Numbers 119, 120 and 121 reached new lows in gay journalism. Freshmen journalists with two semester hours of investigative reporting could "outdistance" the *Advocate* report.

Solutions lie in alternatives. *Sunshine*, *Liberator* and *Fag Rag* are far superior to the *Advocate*, and they seem to be surviving for the moment. Is there any chance that *Sunshine* can grow into an alternative to the *Advocate*? Also important is gay consciousness raising in other underground and above ground media. So keep firing away at the *Advocate*. Perhaps they will make some changes in their dull sexist format and middle class format.

Love and Kisses,
—Jamie Green
Los Angeles

[Ed. Note: In response to this brother's question, can "Sunshine grow into an alternative to the *Advocate*?" We certainly think it is important that there exist gay publications oriented away from the capitalist gay business scene. We believe *Sunshine* is one such alternative. If we are to expand, publish more frequently and do more investigative reporting, we need the financial support of gay people who believe in our kind of journalism. We have little income coming in from ads, the traditional mainstay of publications like the *Advocate*. Please take out a subscription, sponsoring if possible, and help *Sunshine* grow.]

Brother Don:

Last night I read your article "Gay Lib vs. Gay Business (*Gay Sunshine* No. 19) with considerable interest and respect. I would quarrel with only one of your many points, but I think, a significant one: your statement that "the *Advocate's* distaste for those who have sex in toilets and bushes is also a class issue..." and your explanation that lack of privacy at home or money with which to rent expensive rooms among poor gays is the reason for sex in toilets and bushes won't in my opinion, wash. I know a good solidly middle-class gays and even a few "aristocrats" who regularly enjoy sex in semi-public places. I would assume from conversations with them (non-threatening ones, since I make no moral judgements on sex in toilets etc.) that the reasons for such pleasure at great risk to their respectability, let alone their livelihoods, are psychological.

But other than that paragraph, which smacked of special pleading, I thought your article perceptive and a hopeful sign that *Gay Sunshine* may be moving out of its political closet. Are you familiar with *The Village Voice*? They occasionally expose gay rip-offs and manage in-depth investigative reporting of politicians and their behavior. For instance, the latest issue has a letter to the editor from a Mr. Levinson who rather sarcastically wonders why *The Voice* never attacks the root of such corruption as Watergate: our greed based capitalist economic system. I was glad to see that you also recognize those roots and are aware of *The Advocate's* dilemma.

There is, of course, no solution. It may be encouraging to note small changes: i.e. Castro Street in San Francisco fifteen years ago was a lower-middle class neighborhood. Today it is a gay area. But these encouragements are shallow at best. To be entrenched in our society is to be capitalistic and by definition capitalism exploits and furthermore requires a "have-not" element in order to survive. You noted this in your article when you stated the reason for bourgeois hostility: we need increasingly larger numbers of consumers. Or wars.

Gay Sunshine provides an increasingly broader platform through which to protest. The quality of its literature constantly improves. For those with literary interests the paper is a blessing. I am personally heartened by the publication of your article and the editor's note, especially because your article was reasoned, without rancor, and clearly sincere. (I think a lot of gay lib protest is rhetorical and self-serving.) Awareness and discussion of the problems rampant in the various elements of the gay community may not provide solutions. And the more one examines the extent of our corruption the more one may retreat into frivolousness or bitterness (camp and drugs), both of which are human but non-productive, and in any long run, not pleasurable.

Much is rotten in this country. Our foreign policy is imperialistic. Our elective processes are manipulated. Our educational processes are financially depleted. And while it may be convenient to scapegoat that evil presence in the White House, he really is not to blame. Our system is inherently corrupt. Until that system provides for an equitable distribution of our resources, the corruption can only spread, bringing with it more social chaos. Revolutionaries, of course, are depending on that.

I would hope that you could examine local government that you could expand your reviews of cultural events. And if I may make a suggestion to you personally: I hope you can find the energy to narrow your approach. You mentioned several areas: "gay nomads" and the systematic exclusion of known gays from employment. What is needed is research and informative, descriptive, documented articles. You may find that many "established" gays won't take crap any longer. (Some of the nicest people are boycotting Safeway.) Older, established gays need information. Stimulate and challenge them with due respect, (I say this be-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

dressed to kill

I walked in
dressed
in silver and leather
kind-a
like-a high-speed dragster
in top gear
feeling hot-and-charged

I looked good
I thought
doing my mororcycle strut;
when this skinny man
in a candy-cane shirt
stops me.

I was strutting so heavy,
feeling butch and mean,
that I almost
plowed the guy
down.

But,
he strongholds me
and screams,

"Honey,
ain't you the pits!
Where do you think you're from?
I'm from Hollywood,
glam-capital of the world
You could sure use some tips,
not that I'll spare any.

First of all,
don't wear leather and chains;
wear lame, silver lame.

And,
your make-up is all wrong,
it's far too plain.

What you need
is bright red stars
around your eyes

I used to wear them
all the time
until everyone
copied me.

Take my advice
you'll look fine in stars.

Also, Sweets
get some rhinestones
to cover up
all those spots
that are
far too visible.

Dear,
I can see
you've tried;
but you are a shambles;

Actually,
you look like something that died.

Oh well,
can you spare a dime
so I can buy
another dry
gin-fizz?"

— Lee M. Balan

THE FECUNDATING STING

what do you gain
by dressing like a gipsy?

you'll be the same
& I'll hover round

like a bee waiting
for the cover to be

lifted from a pot
of honey. smear

your loins with
panther fat, stuff

grapes into your
cockplace, rob

a gallery, steal
jewels, murder me!

— Robert Peters

NO ONE LOVES

No one loves you like an empty house
to live in, to move through
to fill it up to its seams.

No one loves you like four walls
to clutter with pictures
to angle furniture up to.

No one loves you like shadows
to try to outrun, to race,
to see if you can step through.

No one loves you like bodies
to get tangled up in,
to come, to be undone.

— Paul Mariah

THREE IN THE MORNING

The stillness is thick.
Dark covers door and corner —
the wall a blind gallery:
paintings without frame or face.

You are awake
while others sleep.

This is the time,
moment only you share,
when you unbutton your shirt,
touch your chest —
your hand an earth in itself
moving so sure, so slow.

Light rises between your fingers.

— Ed Cox

FRAGMENTS

How can I reach with my fingers
thru your brow into the solar plexus
turn your loins inward like a woman's
outward like a man's show you
with the lone blue light of my nipples
the hollow castle within your labyrinth
a wreck enjoined with bulls' heads
and stuccofalling facades of multibreated
clay figurines

And shoot your sperm inward
ride the course of the spine
upward upward outward thru the brow
a lone light wandering the rings of space
earth and her sun a dying nova:
the fantasy of dying myths:
the long saints the dark couplings
dead all dead figures of votive captivity

Eyes blinded by the progeny of unfiltered night
seeing no more idols no more men women
but voices voices voices
implanted in the seed of the serpent
waiting wandering breathing with you
on the tailend of unejaculated sperm

I wait for these loins to grasp your fragments

— Kenneth Lee
November, 1973

ROOM

we go into after getting out of car
morning walk up stairs
when we sit, fall

touching, just touching
blood goes to where it will then
stillness between legs, neck relaxes
veins: arms, legs cock
body inside has curves, places wet

— Ed Cox

I WONDER IF VERLAINE HELD RIMBAUD

I wonder if Verlaine held Rimbaud
like this, slowly rocking the troubled
head, wild with curls.

(Rimbaud murmured,
Verlaine merely smiled
as a wind rose to set them
walking from the park,
far from the stars that drove
poor Arthur into another's arms.)

In our room
a mushroom candle
flickers in the corner,
keeping Night
at a safe distance.

(Outside,
the humans keep to themselves,
sometimes pressing their
noses to the glass.)

— Wayne McNeill