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I.

Perched on a chair. My feet in tiny stiff boots. My arms at my sides, my fingers deliberately still, held still. The melodies in my fingers silent. I am at attention.

My clothes are being adjusted, my sleeves tugged down tightly, impatiently; though I rarely grow, never more than an inch or two in many months, this jacket seems too small for me already. And the expense of it, this silk and handmade lace! . . . I am being instructed in the need to be absolutely fearless. The valet's long, mournful, grayish-pink face is so familiar to me that I hardly need to look at it. But closing my eyes would be impolite, it would show fear. I stand at attention and listen.

It is necessary to endure all things, all sounds, to cringe before nothing. It is not necessary to live. But if you live, then it is necessary to endure all things.

The valet is telling me that the single instrument I fear, the one sound I despise, is my only weakness and must be eliminated. How else to be immortal?—to be equal to my destiny? “So you won’t cry as you did last time, you won’t be reduced to a hysterical infant. . . .” My little shoulders hold themselves firmly, in spite of the fear that is
gradually beginning. Maybe my tight-fitting jacket will encase the trembling so that the valet will not notice. And if I press my lips together firmly enough I will not whimper.

I am centuries old.

No, I am five years old. The sharp crease in the valet's bony forehead belongs to my fifth year: when I almost died of pneumonia. That was the year of the many carriage trips, the windy rain storms, the air that sucked away my breath. But I never died.

"... the trumpet isn't a delicate instrument, no. It isn't beautiful. Nobody argues that it is beautiful. But it belongs to life; it belongs to the world. What portion of the world is beautiful? You must harden yourself. You must realize that the world will always try to blast itself into you..."

The day of my final "trumpet lesson."

The valet is eye-to-eye with me; he must be crouching slightly. His jacket, too, has grown tight, but only because he is tensing his body, his muscles straining the frayed black material. He adjusts me, my head. Seems to be balancing me in place. His two wide, familiar hands frame my face, the way you hold a mirror up to your face, with an affection and yet a dissatisfaction you display to no one else.

Perfectly balanced. Proud. At attention. Not trembling so that anyone can see. He stoops to pick the trumpet up from the floor. He raises it to his lips, and still his mournful subdued face is not changed; even with the gleaming instrument brought to his mouth, the upper part of his face remains the same. But no—there is a slight reflection on it, an almost imperceptible glow from the metallic surface of the instrument, glancing up onto the bridge of his nose and his bony, frugal forehead, to emphasize the severity of that crease.

There is no sound that the mind of man has devised, no music, that can be foreign to me.

II.

The trumpet is blown into my face.

III.

You and I are children, perhaps six years old. But we look younger. We are travelling, not here and not there. Past the window of our carriage flows the backward kingdom, where everything flows back, behind us, in a steady bumping stream. The carriage rocks with a certain comfortable rhythm, but sometimes there is an irregularity in the
road and the wheels bounce; sometimes one of the horses falters or shies away from an object we can’t see. You and I are drawn forward into the future, and behind us the world turns into yesterday and last year and the last century. Beyond that, a blur. We are too young to think about it.

You are puzzled at this journey, but I, who am accustomed to carriages much worse than this, am quite content. I am almost happy. You don’t know where we are going and this worries you. But I can see the shape of our destination, though of course I haven’t been there either—it is perhaps like other cities I’ve visited, it will play itself out on a day like other days I have experienced. So I am content, I am almost happy.

For the trip, a new outfit of scarlet-and-lace. New white gloves. My father is sitting beside me in his regular travelling clothes, with his booted feet on one of our valises. He is reading a musical score, turning the pages slowly. The inside of the carriage is so cold that he is wearing his gloves.

Though you are a little stronger than I, a larger child, you seem more affected by the cold; you are shivering openly. I try not to shiver, because once I begin I can’t stop—it’s like coughing—and also because my father will notice. But he seems to notice anyway. He looks at me and says, “Tonight a hot bath, a bed with goose-feather pillows and quilts, and tomorrow morning absolute good health. This is not too much to ask.”

No.

At the inn a sign is creaking in the wind. It hangs from a hook. My father smooths his clothing, adjusts his hat, walks carefully a few paces behind me, carrying the valise. He is watching the back of my head; he does not dare walk beside me. He is too common, his clothes are the clothes of a valet, his long narrow mournful face is the face of an ordinary man.

You and I walk bravely before him, princes.

IV.

Do you love me?
Do you know enough to love me?

God daily works new wonders through our child: a message sent home to my mother. She is a fact, my mother. But she is distant, unclear, as remote in time as the farthest reaches of my kingdom, ugly barbaric tidelands and marshes where the only music is that of sea birds.
But it is possible to imagine her: inside the face and heavy yards of cloth of one of the women at the court, not the queen or the empress or an obvious favorite, but a smiling unquestioning woman at the periphery. She smiles at me because I am so small.

My toy-like sonatas fly out beneath my toy-like fingers, improvised after everyone has finished eating. One of the gentlemen has commanded: “Play us a song inspired by the word truète—it has such a musical sound!” but one of the ladies protests and amid laughter the gentleman amends his request: “. . . the word amour, then!” And so I am playing this song.

It is a secret code, a song that says Do you love me? But: Do you recognize me, appreciate me, do you know enough to love me?

Afterward I must be carried out, away to my room, my warm bed. My father weeps with joy. He pulls off my new black suit and lays it carefully aside. I can see in his face a joy that is almost blinding: he worships me.

. . . love?

My fingers twitch to improvise a new song. But I am beneath the heavy quilts, I am sunk into the warm dark bed. Helpless here, beginning to drift into sleep. . . A keyboard rises to me and my fingers take their place and so I am saved . . .

V.

In Frankfurt I performed in a powdered wig, I wore a sword fashioned of the most delicately engraved silver, and the boy Goethe stared at me and thought: Another immortal!

But afterward my valet took away the sword so that I wouldn’t hurt myself; he took the other gifts away also, laying them aside, with care, tenderly, and drew me away from the mirror I was gazing into, to kneel beside him as he offered thanks to God for the success of the evening.

. . . help us to hurry onward with firm strides across all of Europe . . . help us to avoid the smallpox . . . fever . . . other shapes of death . . . Help us into immortality.

VI.

You wince at my happy endings, you wince as you realize that this too has a happy ending, rounds off to the usual sprightly ending that is a habit of mine. But you get in such habits as a child—the habit of satisfying people, which then becomes satisfying and is its own ending.
Am I loved, am I saved . . . ? is a song people don’t want to hear. Even you don’t want to hear it. Well, maybe at a distance: across centuries. You listen for it in my music, sly and clever as my music is, so powerful it can’t be measured; like ordinary sunlight. But you wouldn’t want to hear it close up, face-to-face, a face mirror-close to yours, would you? What answer could you give?

So the happy ending is really for you, for your guardedness. And if you are anesthetized . . . After all, that is a kind of rehearsal.

VII. Theory of the Happy Ending

As I walk out onto the stage the applause begins. I am accustomed to applause, but this is almost overwhelming, almost frightening. Wave after wave of applause! I pause, staring out at the great assembly. Rows and rows of people, the flash of handsome gleaming arm-rests, an illusion of enormous distance—and from that distance there come several lights, shining on me and around me, singling me out. I am in a very large hall of a kind new to me: the floor seems to slope upward. Can this be right? Or is it another illusion? The rows of spectators seem to rise and to recede. There is an odor of newness here, new cushions, new wood, new carpeting; and the audience seems new, very anxious to applaud. As I grow somewhat calmer I can see individual faces in the first several rows. They are wild in their applause—some of them are crying—I can see tears running down their healthy cheeks and chins. But why? Astonished, I notice something else about them—their teeth are so even, so white!

Who are these strange people?

I walk to the piano, which is extremely large, a monster. Made of excellent wood. But it is very large and I can hardly sit before it, my legs are so short. They seem to have shrunk. My fingers are childishly optimistic, though, and if I spread them wide enough—like this—so wide that the web-like folds between them almost split, I can reach the necessary number of keys with my left hand and almost that many with my right hand. Perhaps I will be able to reach it after I begin playing . . . perhaps, if I play fast enough, I can split a chord and no one will notice. But my legs! My legs are far too short.

And now, behind me, the orchestra is taking their seats. They move quietly, humbly. Some coughing, some rearranging of chairs, an odd sense of uneasiness about them. If I turn to look at them they don’t meet my gaze. The conductor wanders in, unnoticed. He is not
an old man, but his hair is white, his face is lined and pale; he carries what appears to be a handkerchief made of paper, crumpled in one hand. And he is dressed quite ordinarily, in a black outfit with a white shirt and a white tie. He is very mortal.

So I begin. The fear ebbs, is forgotten, I concentrate on my hands and wonder how, this time, they will vary my song. The piano stool is too high for me, the piano is too high, but other people know best how to exhibit me... other people, like the orchestra, know when it is time for them to accompany me and when to falter and fall off into silence... I have never played more beautifully, in spite of my small aching hands and the strangeness of this place.

The music emerges out of my fingers note by note, as the cells of any man’s blood emerge one by one out of his bleeding, no miracle to it. The miracle would be to stop the process. Child-like the manipulation of my fingers, the innocent runs and jumps of those fingers, and child-like also the astonished gasps and scattered applause of the audience. Why? What is wrong? I notice that some of the spectators have risen, some are out in the carpeted aisles; a few are even approaching the stage. A woman hurries at me, stumbling, her face smeared, the fleshy colors smeared... clapping, clapping... her hands are brought together in rough violent sweeps that agitate the air... Now a man pushes ahead of her, to get to me. He too is weeping. And someone else pounds against the piano, he is too excited to be restrained... I keep on playing, toward that ending. It will be a closed, perfect ending, a happy ending.

But someone grips me hard, from behind, as if to stop me... now a man tries to force the keyboard cover down onto my fingers... But no. No. The song inside the music insists upon its ending, and the hell with anyone who wants to stop it. I can’t be stopped! I can’t even be understood by people like you!

You wince at the ending I have imagined, because you prefer tears. You are piggish in your appetite for other people’s sorrows; you are pigs, really, wallowing and snorting around me—pitying me!—imagine, pitying me!

No, I won’t tell you you’re happier than I am.

VIII. Alternate Theory of the Happy Ending

Child-like the manipulation of my fingers, the innocent runs and jumps of those fingers, and child-like also the astonished gasps and scattered applause of the audience. You must imagine your hands here,
your fingers springing out of mine, suddenly adult and powerful. There is no other way to know my music.

And your legs replace mine, long enough to reach the pedals, of course. Long powerful adult legs. The heel of your right foot is firmly on the floor, the rest firmly on the pedal.

Enormous power in us!

The audience grows silent as we approach the sacred ending: one last spasm of clapping, then silence. You might almost imagine that there is no audience. You might be playing in an absolute emptiness, in a purity of silence, a listening silence, in which every note of your music is registered. To make a mistake at such a time—! Your heart contracts with the terror of it, but there is no need for terror, no need to imagine that you are heading into an unperformed future. I, who have been dead so long, have perfected these notes, these exertions of your brain, and there is no terror left for you. . . . Even the exertion of dying: that too has been explored and perfected and rehearsed—endlessly rehearsed—and it is only another kind of performance for you.

Therefore the happy ending: which you now realize is unavoidable. Your audience waits anxiously, row upon row of people waiting, listening. If you glance out into the darkness you can perhaps catch a glimpse of someone—a face—yes, there is a face, several faces—if you weren't concerned for the propriety of such a gesture, you might turn your head openly to stare, to count the rows of seats, to multiply, to calculate. . . But out of respect for the occasion, and perhaps out of respect for the difficulty of my composition, you don't dare look around.

And now as you begin the ending, which is so perfect that no other ending is imaginable, as you feel the shape of my music closing in upon you, with the rigor of my skull closing in upon your brain, you are teased suddenly out of yourself and you are now myself, we are fused together with a grace that must be godly, it is so obvious.

And then—

Then the silence is broken by applause. The music is over. The audience applauds wildly, unrestrained now, as if such applause is somehow necessary, or a part of what they have bought with their tickets. And the members of the orchestra applaud as well, at first not so enthusiastically, and then with more strength—those professional rivals who resist until the very end, who believe they must despise all happy endings except their own.

But why resist?
I am from Kashan . . .
I am a Moslem
my Mecca is a red rose
my prayer-spread the stream, my holy clay the light
my prayer-rug the field
I do ablutions to the rhythm of
    the rain upon the windowpane
In my prayer runs the moonlight
I answer to the prayer call of the wind's muezzin
upon the minaret of the cypress tree
I say my prayer in the mosque of grass
and follow the sitting and rising of the wave.

My kaaba is by the water
beneath the acacia trees, and moves
like a breeze from orchard to orchard
from city to city
the sacred stone of my kaaba
    is the garden's light.

I am from Kashan
my profession is painting
now and then I make a cage with colors
    and sell it to you
so that its prison song of mountain poppies
would keep company with your loneliness
what a hope! I know
my canvas is inanimate
the pond of my art has no goldfish.
I am from Kashan
my lineage may go back to a patch of grass
in India
to a vessel made of Moroccan clay
to a whore who lived in Bukhara.
My father died after two arrivals of swallows
after two snowfalls, after sleeping twice
on the patio
when father died the sky was blue
my mother jumped up from sleep, my sister became beautiful
when my father died cops were poets
the shopkeeper asked me: how many
melons do you want?
I asked him: how much is joy?
My father was a painter
he also made mandolins, played the mandolin
and was a calligrapher.

The water I drank had no philosophy
the berries I picked had no knowledge
as soon as a pomegranate cracked
it became the stand of desire’s fountain
when a bird sang, the joy of my listening trembled
whenever loneliness pressed its face against the windowpane
light came and put its arm around my shoulder
love came and told jokes—
what was life but a raining of new years
a pine full of starlings
light and toy standing in line
taking free rides to the pond full of music.

Then slowly the child tiptoed on the street
of dragonflies and faded out of sight
I packed my belongings and left the city of carefree
my heart heavy with the nostalgia of dragonflies.
I went to the world's party
to grief
to the garden of gnosis
to the patio of knowledge
I walked by the staircase of religion
and went as far as the street of doubt
as far as the cool air of desirelessness
as far as the rainy night of love
as far the Woman
as far as the pleasure's lamp
I heard the wingbeats of loneliness
and I saw many things
I saw a child who smelled the moonlight
I saw a cage without a door
where light fluttered its wings
a ladder upon which love climbed
to heaven's rooftop
a woman who rubbed the sunbeam in a mortar...

I saw a beggar who went from door to door
singing the larks' song
I saw a poet who addressed the lily
of the valley as "lady"...
I saw a train carrying light
I saw a train carrying politics (and going
so empty)
I saw a train carrying morning-glory
seeds and canary songs...
stairs that led to lust
stairs that led to the cellar of alcohol...

Farther behind I saw my mother
washing the teacups in the memory of the river.
The city
was covered with cement geometry
the rooftops of hundreds of buses had no pigeons
a flowershop owner auctioned his flowers
between two flowerstems of despair a poet
hung a rope
a boy threw stones at the school door
a child spitted out apricot stones at father’s
faded prayer rug
and a goat drank water from the Caspian
of the world map.

I saw in summer’s hand a fan.

the journey of the seedling to the flower
the journey of the ivy to the other house
the journey of the moon to the pond...

And I saw the people
I saw the cities
the fields, the mountains
water and soil
light and dark
and plants in light, and plants in dark
animals in light, and animals in dark
man in light, and man in dark.

I am from Kashan
but my city is not Kashan
my city is lost
I have built a house on the other side of night
with love and earth.
in this house I am close to the wet loneliness of grass
I hear the sound of gardens breathing
the sound of the darkness raining from a leaf
the light cleaning its throat behind the tree
the sneeze of water from every crack of the rock
the whisper of the swallow from spring’s rooftop
the sound of the rain on love’s wet eyelids
the song of pomegranate orchards
the smash of the glass of happiness at night
the ripping of beauty’s paper
the comings and goings of the wind in
the wandering exile’s bowl.

I am near the beginning of earth
I take the pulse of flowers
I am acquainted with water’s wet fate,
trees’ green course. . .
I haven’t seen two pine trees hate each other
I haven’t seen a poplar sell its shadow
the elm tree gives its branch to the crow
at no charge. . .

I don’t know
why they say: a horse is a noble beast
a dove is pretty
and nobody keeps a hawk
why is a cowgrass of a lower rank. . .

Maybe our mission is not to unfathom the “secret” of the rose
our mission is to swim in the essence of the rose
to wash our hands in the ecstasy of the leaf. . .
to recognize the sky between the two syllables of being
to unburden the sparrow from the load of knowledge
to take back the name from the cloud. . .

Maybe our mission is
to pause between the words of flower and Century
and walk toward the song of truth.
Vitezslav Nezval

RUKAVICE

Nad knihou jež má tisíce stran
Svíti svíce
Vždy za zvuku hran
Visí nad tou knihou rukavice

Nikdo neví
Kde se tu vzaly
Proč zní sborové zpěvy
Komu odzpívali

Ta kniha jež má tisíce stran
Obrací sama své listy
Vždy za zvuku hran
Je zkropena slzami místy

Její ohnuté růžky
Ohýbá se samy víc a víc
A do knihy padají mušky
Z tajemných rukavic

Ten kožený fantastický pár
S prsty jež o sebe tlukou
Má tvar
Dvou sepjatých rukou

Z jejich namodrálých cév
Zatím co je slyšet štkání
Prosvítá krev
A prýšti z dlaní
THE GLOVES

Above the book that has a thousand pages
Tall candles burn
Whenever the death knell rings
Gloves hang above that book

No one knows
How they got there
Why the choir is heard
For whom they are chanting

This book that has a thousand pages
Turns its pages by itself
Whenever the death knell rings
It is sprinkled with tears

Its curling corners
Curl more and more
And into the book flies fall
From the mysterious gloves.

That fantastic leather pair
With fingers that knock together
Have the shape
Of folded hands

From their bluish veins
To the sound of sobbing
Blood glistens
And spurts from their palms
Vitezslav Nezval

ZAJEČÍ KŮŽE

Zaječí kůže
Vycpaná drtinami
V kterých má hnízdo
Užovka
Zmitá se
V průčeli
Zaláře
Pokrytého
černým cukrovým papírem
A neprodyšně uzavřeného
Aby nebylo slyšet
Zevnitř
Příšerný štěkot
Buldoka
Odsouzeného
Na týden
Do káznice
Bilou pani
Z nedaleké zříceniny
Jež přichází
Vždy v noci
Bosá
A za novoluní
Šetřit prach
S černého piana
V malovaném
Domě
Se staženými záclonami
Vítězslav Nezval

THE BIZARRE TOWN, NR. 38

A rabbit's skin
Stuffed with sawdust
In which is the nest
Of a viper
Swings
On the façade
Of a prison
Covered
With black sugar paper
And hermetically sealed
So that you would not hear
From within
The terrible bark
Of a bulldog
Sentenced
To a week
In jail
The white woman
From the ruin near by
Who comes
Always at night
Barefoot
When the moon is new
To wipe the dust
Off the black piano
In the painted
House
With closed curtains
Vitézslav Nezval

TENTO MICHELANGELŮV JINOC

Tento Michelangelův jinoch
se vrhal jistě každé ráno do moře
Potřeba dát se objímati zrodila jeho velmi oblé boky
Malé dívčince se bude zdati velkým bratrem
jemuž chystá své panenství
Jeho nedokončená hlava je zárulkou že dlouho nezestárne
Stydlivy jinochu
v tom je všecko
Nikdy se netvářit patheticky

Vitézslav Nezval

POLYKAČ NOŽŮ

Život je tvrdý tvrdší kamení
Nejtvrdší je však chléb
Obměkčit jej vodou snu tot umění!
Prázdná tvář prázdný stůl prázdná step

Touha je palčivá palčivější než hlad
Ó Pane Bože
čas naučil nás hrěby polykat
čas naučil nás polykatí nože
Vitezslav Nezval

IN THE LOUVRE, NR. 4

This youth of Michelangelo
surely thrust himself into the sea every morning
The need to be embraced created his very round hips
To a little girl he will seem like a big brother for whom
she prepared her virginity
His unfinished head guarantees that he will be slow to age
Bashful youth
everything lies in this
never to behave with false solemnity.

Vitezslav Nezval

THE SWORD SWALLOWER

Life is hard harder than stone
But hardest of all is bread
To soften it with the water of dreams is an art!
An empty face an empty table an empty tundra

Yearning burns burns more than hunger
Oh my God
time has taught us to swallow combs
time has taught us to swallow swords
Enrique Huaco

PIEL DEL TIEMPO

I

Heme aquí
sobre la piedra dura
del tiempo
extraño y claro
bajo la sencilla túnica
de hombre
que uso,
o quizás me han puesto,
que duele a vecino
o tal vez
será en el centro mismo
de la boca
que duele a hombro de hombre.

II

Dentro de la camisa
el corazón huele a piel
el pecho huele a hueso
(a lluvia y melancolía)
el corazón huele a piel
del tiempo.

III

Esto es lo que se llama vivir;
obstinadamente verticales
resistiendo el aire, la gravedad y la memoria;
sobre todo la memoria.
Enrique Huaco  

tr. Ben Belitt  

TIME’S SKIN  

Here I am  
on that hard stone  
of time  
at once odd and apparent  
under the simple tunic  
of a man  
that I use;  
or perhaps my lot  
was to suffer  
close at hand,  
or turn up  
in my mouth’s very center  
it may be,  
and grieve on man’s shoulder.  

II  

Inside the shirt  
the heart smells of skin  
the breast smells of bone  
(the sadness, the rain)  
the heart smells  
of time’s skin.  

III  

It’s a life:  
obstinately vertical  
resisting the air, gravitation, memory;  
most of all, memory.
IV

El sol diamante,
sal iluminada
de nuestra boca
y de nuestros días jóvenes
rectifica las calles
y nos lleva consecuentemente
como una corriente
hacia destinaciones desiguales,
quién más
a una esquina
o a aquel cuarto
donde el dolor
tiene la forma
de una imagen antigua
bajo los párpados.

V

Estamos separados
por algo más denso
que el esqueleto,
más concreto y armonioso
como la distancia
o algo que se acaba de quebrar definitivamente.

VI

Rodeados por la terrible
sabiduría de la naturaleza,
de objetos familiares
y las máquinas;
no queda ya tiempo
para caminar juntos.
IV

The sun’s diamond
the salt flash
of our mouth,
of our youth
aligns all the streets
then sweeps us away
like an undertow
to unlike destinations,
some corner,
perhaps,
or that room
where pain
takes the shape
of an image, time-worn
under the eyelids.

V

What divides us
is denser
than the skeleton,
more concrete and concordant,
something like distance,
or a thing just broken past mending.

VI

Hemmed in by the awful
omniscience of nature,
by quotidian things
and machines;
no time is left us
to walk off together.
VII

Me gustaría poder obrar con las manos; enseñar a alguien, por ejemplo, a desarticular una palabra para ponerla en pie de nuevo, nueva. Hacer una frase de trapos viejos inventar un hombre hambriento. Enseñarle a decir una cosa simple, a cantar quizás. Es tan difícil decir una cosa simple.

Enrique Huaco

EL TAMAÑO DE UN HOMBRE

Toma tu parte, toma la parte que te cabe de la vida y cierra la boca.

Lo quieras o no, lo que no hiciste con tus propias manos y con tu violencia

lo hicieron otros a tu lado o fuera del tiempo que conoces.
I would have wanted to work with my hands;
to teach someone
something: to disassemble
a word, for example,
and put it together again, upright and new.
To make a phrase out of old rags,
invent one hungry man.
To teach him to say something simple,
or sing it, perhaps.
It is hard to say something simple.

Enrique Huaco

THE SIZE OF A MAN

Take what's yours,
take the portion
life meant you to have
and shut up.

Like it or not,
what you never intended to do
with your own hands
or your violence

others close to you
did,
or did long before you were born.
* 

Hemos mentido desde el primer día de la historia; ya ves, hasta en nuestra humilde profesión se ha ayudado a corromper un poco más al hombre.

Los animales y los ángeles son testigos.

En el mundo lo que cuenta es el grado de inclinación de un objeto, la calidad y resistencia del material. Así se mide el tamaño de un hombre.

Cuando el labrador mira hacia abajo sus ojos se oscurecen y el concepto de pájaro desaparece.

**Enrique Huaco**

**CONSCIENTE DE LA BREVEDAD DE LA PALABRA**

Consciente de la brevedad de la palabra de la inconsistencia del gesto,
We've been lying
since history began;
now you see it—those
of our own humble calling
helped
to corrupt
man
a little.

The animals and angels
are witness.

What matters in this world
is an object's
angle of inclination,
the quality and resistence of substances.
That's how
we measure the size of a man.

When a farmer looks down in his plowing
his eyes darken
and the idea of a bird disappears.

Enrique Huaco

AWARE OF THE WORD'S BREVITY

Aware of the word's
brevity

the gesture's
inconsistency,
de la pobreza material
del sentimiento;

me rebelo contra mi propio
esqueleto,

me rebelo contra los actos
voluntariamente premeditados,

llamados hábitos,

*

contra esta carne que no huele
ni a animal ni a objeto
y contra esta voz
que sirve sólo para adornar
mi cuerpo y hacerlo visible.

Detrás de cada articulación
dolorosamente
formulada
encuentro una puerta falsa
donde
perderme

Llena de posibilidades

pero que no corresponde
a la forma de mis dientes
ni a mi ser
natural.
the sleazy stuff
of the feelings;

I rebel against my own
skeleton

I rebel against all acts
willfully premeditated,
habits, so-called,

*

Against this flesh smelling
neither of animal nor object,
this voice
whose only use is to spruce up
my body and render it visible.

Behind every articulation
so painfully
shaped
I find only a false door
and lose
all direction

so full of possibilities still

which correspond neither
to the shape of my teeth
nor my natural
being.
"Drawings with Stone" 1964
24 inches by 24 inches
Mary Bauermeister
"This Has Nothing To Do With Nature"
Mary Bauermeister
"Trichterrelief" 1962
48 inches by 48 inches
Mary Bauermeister
"Writing" 1966
Box 14¾ inches by 14¾ inches
Frame 33½ inches by 33½ inches
Mary Bauermeister
"Zahngold" 1965-66
14 inches by 14 inches Lens Box Construction
Mary Bauermeister
"PST" 1966
3 Parts: Box, Frame

Mary Bauermeister
João Cabral de Melo Neto

AS ESTAÇÕES

Uma chuva fina
caiu na toalha;
molhou as roupas,
encheu os copos;
esfriou os corações
enlaçados nas árvores
(do frio que separa
como os nomes).
O mundo cheio de rios,
lagos, recolhimentos
para nosso uso.

Num céu profundo,
máquinas de nuvens,
elefantes de nuvens
passam cantando.
Sob as mãos inertes
os móveis suam.
O ambiente doméstico
quer abrir as janelas:
sobre fólihas sècas,
sobre sonhos, fantasmas
mortos de sède.

Os homens podem
sonhar seus jardins
de matéria fantasma.
A terra não sonha,
floresce: na matéria
doce ao corpo: flor,
sonho fora do sono
e fora da noite, como
os gestos em que floresces
também (teu riso irregular,
o sol na tua pele).
THE SEASONS

A soft rain
fell on the towel;
it wet the clothes,
it filled the glasses;
it chilled the hearts
entwined on the trees
(against the cold that divides
like names).
The world full of rivers,
lakes, retreats
for our use.

In a deep sky
machines of clouds,
elephants of clouds
singing drift by.
Beneath the inert hands
the furniture perspires.
The domestic environment
wants to open the windows
to the dry leaves,
to dreams, to ghosts
death-thirsty.

Men can
dream their gardens
of ghost matter.
Earth doesn’t dream,
it blossoms: in the matter
sweet to the body: the flower,
a dream outside sleep
and outside night, like
the gestures in which you blossom
too (your irregular laughter,
the sun on your skin).
João Cabral de Melo Neto

NOTURNO

O mar soprava sinos
os sinos secavam as flores
as flores eram cabeças de santos.

Minha memória cheia de palavras
meus pensamentos procurando fantasmas
meus pesadelos atrasados de muitas noites.

De madrugada, meus pensamentos soltos
voaram como telegramas
e nas janelas acesas tôda a noite
o retrato da morta
fêz esforços desesperados para fugir.
In the fruit on the table
I search for a verse
that will reveal autumn;
I search for the air
of the season; I imagine
an ash; I experiment
with tricks, with words
(facing the ripe fruit
on the brink of death,
motionless in the time
that it dreams of stopping).

João Cabral de Melo Neto

NOCTURNE

The sea blew bells
the bells were drying the flowers
the flowers were the heads of saints.

My memory full of words
my thoughts searching for ghosts
my nightmares late many nights.

At dawn my disengaged thoughts
sped like telegrams
and in the windows lit up all night
the portrait of the dead woman
made desperate efforts to escape.
THE PANTS

BENNY ANDERSEN

tr. HANNE GLIESE-LEE

Yes, yes, I’ll get to the point all right, I’m the minority, then you always have to get to the point; the majority never needs any explanation, for them it’s sufficient being the majority. You say: not so many details, but it isn’t easy to say, just like that, what’s important and what’s not. Now the clerk in the dairy shop, for instance, has a glass eye.—What that’s got to do with it?—Well, I’d just bought half a pound of butter the other day, and as I’m scraping it on my bread for the lunch bag, there it is suddenly looking at me with a fixed stare. He’s got a larger eye now, but I was so shocked that I immediately switched to margarine and this way tastes from my childhood revived; margarine on rye bread; so many memories came back to me, and I think that’s why I bought those pants.

You see, as a child I always got the worst of clothes; I got my brother’s old boots, sweaters and stockings with knotted mending, his coats, books and toys. It made me mad, and I complained about it all the time, but there was no way of getting around it; I had to take my place in the row. But now, when I’m middle-aged, living by myself, able to buy my own clothes, now I rummage through boxes of old clothes; I feel naked in a tailored suit. In junk shops and at auctions I buy shoes and clothes that have belonged to other people; watches, suspenders, pants and hats; it’s a relief to let yourself slip into a pair of pants that somebody has already walked in, sat in and sometimes even pissed in. I calm down. All my worries simmer down in the cuffs, ready to be poured out occasionally with the gravel and dirt that has gathered there. Yes, yes, I’ve seen they don’t use cuffs any longer.
Why don’t they do away with gutters too, just let the dirt fly around? With cuffs, at least you know where the dirt is.

Once I’d had that taste of margarine I knew I’d have to have a pair of second-hand pants; I had an urge to revive that feeling again. So yesterday I found a pair in a small shop, where I’m a regular. They were dark brown with the start of a swagging behind and bulging knees as if they’d been riding a horse, but I’m never concerned with their looks or if they fit me; I buy them if they’ve got personality, the right atmosphere. They’d been dry-cleaned, of course, but I immediately sensed their unique smell of something sad and faithful, which appealed to me and filled me with tense expectation. I could hardly wait till I got home to try them on, because every time I wear old togs like that, their atmosphere percolates through me and makes me behave differently than I normally would; they draw me to neighbourhoods where I’ve never been before, make me accost strangers whom the clothes know, I suppose.

Those pants urged me on to the harbour, but not to the part where I usually go; they took me along the marine drive, past the last nice shops, all the way to where the little low-class pubs start, but the pants continued to the very last one. You couldn’t really tell what kind of a place it was; the curtains were drawn, so it looked rather dull and uninviting from the outside, and who feels like going in then? But there was no way, that was the place the pants had decided on.

It wasn’t too bad inside after all, even though the tables were covered with green oilcloth for the dice to do the tap-dance on. Nice people, shooting their mouths off a bit, but not particularly drunk; they were sitting with their coats on and the hats on the table so they had to move them every time the dice were rolling in that direction; then rather let them fall on the floor; there was an incredible moving about with hats and bottles. I kept my coat on and ordered a beer and a stout. I was satisfied with the pants. I’d been a bit nervous to start with, but I could pat them now and enjoyed being able to sit down without them fitting too tight over the knees like new ones usually do.

Then there was this woman sitting by herself in a corner; very attractive woman; in her thirties, I’d say; dark coat and fur hat, Russian style, a rather full face, dark eyes almost like stout, her mouth looked as if it were going to cry, but I wasn’t really sitting there evaluating her, I’m through with that. The last one I had was called Ruth, and one day when we were lying home on my sofa doing it, she says a timely word: Your ceiling needs a whitewash, Karl. It stopped right there by it-
self, because it wasn’t Ruth or anybody else I was interested in, it was a small frightened girl from a long time ago, an incident with dripping trees and a wet bench, little hands in big pockets and big hands in little ones and a treat of rum cakes and cold truffle; that’s what I couldn’t forget, all the rest was just cotton and bandages. I kicked Ruth out, of course, but I guess I should be grateful for that remark, there was no mistaking it. After that I started buying my beer from different places, my consumption increased, and I didn’t like being conspicuous. Stouts and schnapps; alcohol to clean my greasy thoughts. Yes, yes, I’ll get to the point all right, but this is all part of what happened later. You should rather worry about me forgetting something. Now concerning that woman; it had something to do with the pants; either they spotted her, or she discovered them. She looked at me, but I think she looked at the pants too, and then she got nervous, started searching in her handbag for her lipstick, put it back again, lifted the glass, put it down again, looked at the waiter, but then looked at me again—or at the pants—when he caught her eyes. I can only explain her nervousness one way: there was something between her and those pants; maybe she’d expected the pants to show up, but not with me in them. And then this strange thing happened—now don’t interrupt me—the pants drew tight over my knees, they made me get up and walk over to her table. Well, maybe you don’t find it so strange, you’re probably thinking: dirty old man, but then it’s only because you haven’t paid any attention to the details which are the most important things. The pants wanted to go over to her table, and since I didn’t want to indecently expose myself I had to come along. There I was; the pants couldn’t talk, so I had to plead their cause, but I first sat down and tried to find out what they wanted.

Naturally I started by asking: What would you like to drink? Idiotic. There was already a glass of liqueur on the table.

—Thank you I’m fine, she said. See, this is what I mean, that’s a clue. She’d either have said: Leave me alone, who do you think you are anyway?—Or: Thank you sweety, how much can you afford?—but she said exactly what I just told you, and I think that’s proof that she was well acquainted with those pants. As soon as I’d sat down she placed her hands on the table and remained quietly that way. I thought: Well, we’ll have to figure this one out, just take it easy—if the pants want anything, they’ll tell me. And then I sat quiet as a mouse and felt it penetrating me. Something was wrong somewhere. Someone had been done wrong; maybe it was her, or him with the pants, maybe both
of them. A dampness radiating from the pants gave me goose pimples all the way to my thighs.

I stared at her hands lying across from mine. Her fingertips scarcely touched the green tabletop. My own carrots were placed the same way, and my square, yellow and cracked nails stared straight at hers that were very fine and transparent like petals you hold up against the light. Then she curled her fingers and this made mine all crazy; they reached for hers, crawled over the table and grasped under hers to open them again, but it was still those pants which were at the bottom of it all, and she didn’t take her hands away, didn’t open them either, but let my fingers remain halfway under hers—and only then did I look up. Her eyes were round and black now; first I thought she was looking at me, but it was something right behind me.

—What’s going on here? A shrill, jagged voice like a youngster trying to sound more masculine, so I was kind of flabbergasted, when I saw a big man walking up to the table. I quickly pulled my fists away. Her hands jumped into the handbag and hid there.

—Nothing, it was just—. She attempted a smile; I suppose she’d wanted to say: it was just those pants; but I guess he would’ve misunderstood that too. I shut up, since I didn’t get any instructions from the pants.

I hated his face from the start, but this should also be understood correctly, since I have friends who look as forbidding as he did, and it doesn’t bother me at all; the same tiny, distrustful fox’s eyes in a big doughy mug and the same striding, self-righteous mouth; I’ve never been able to understand what pleasure a woman gets from a head like that, but they’ve all been good pals, and I think that he and I could’ve shared many a good drink if we’d met and I hadn’t been wearing those pants.

—Did he bother you?
—Not at all; we were just talking. It’s nothing.

Talking. We’d hardly said a word. I was touched by the way she was trying to shield me, even though it was the pants she was showing consideration for, but at the same time she said it was nothing. I was moved and relieved, but also unhappy about the way women humble themselves before men and are afraid of them, because they’re big, cocksure and jealous. I got up. He placed himself in front of me.

—Do you have to leave right away now when I’ve just arrived; that’s strange, he said sweetly.

I felt better standing up, even though he was still a foot taller than
I was. But I find that the last thing to do when you're facing tall people is to put back your head and talk to their nostrils; they really enjoy that; they position their nose accordingly, sniff blissfully and pat you on the shoulder as if they were letting you off an old debt. I stared straight at his tie knot that was very full and accurately done the opposite of my own, which looks like kink and said:

—Yes, that is strange, now that you mention it. I'll go out and think about that.

Then he stepped aside. The gamblers were silent now; I only heard her smoothing down after me:

—But I assure you; he was so polite—
—Yes, I saw you were shaking hands.

I strode out into the cold air. The wind was blowing and the pants fluttered about me. I hurried away.

Fall was here; On my way out I hadn’t noticed it, I’d just been wondering where we were going, the pants and I. But I saw it now. You know, sometimes it can be autumn for a long time without you really noticing it—naturally you know it, and if somebody were to ask you: what time of the year is it? You’d at once answer: fall, of course. But suddenly one day you notice it; the leaves squashed on the wet tiles, the wind up your trouser legs. Your heart is swallowing uneasily; it’s fall. And you wonder why you didn’t realize it till now, even though you kind of knew it for weeks, but in a sort of absent-minded way; but now you’re in it and can’t get out, even if you wanted to. You yourself are one of the slippery leaves being squashed and there’s nothing you can do about it. Come to think of it, spring is almost the same way—well, okay, okay—then we’ll stick to fall. As I said, there I was looking at the second-hand leaves; I really must have been hanging my head, cause I remember nothing but paving stones and tiles, cigaret butts, dog shit and silver paper, the kind that’s wrapped around chocolate bars, cold truffle and the like; and it’s so sad to see discarded, creased silver paper squashed by wet shoes. I was walking there, quite sad about the whole thing, but I thought, hell, there’s nothing you can do about it, just stay away from it all; they’ll work it out on their own, just forget about it, it isn’t like you to turn in on yourself like this; think about your own worries—that might cheer you up. And so I did; it was easy, much too easy, since I was already sliding in the withered silver paper. She was afraid of me, the little one. I didn’t mean to harm her, but the only thing that would calm her down was cold truffle, so I crammed her with cold truffle, but
there wasn’t enough cold truffle in the whole country to calm her down, poor thing. How old was she; seventeen; and I was maybe twenty-two. I’d known several girls but never that way, that wasn’t at all what I was after. I wanted to make her happy, it was like having a younger sister; a sister to look after, buy nice clothes for, be good and polite to, take to the movies, make her smile once in a while—now don’t interrupt me, otherwise I’m going to shut up altogether.

Well, so it didn’t work out. And the worst thing is that I’ve seen her since. It would’ve driven a guy to drink, if this hadn’t been the case already. I was out for a pick-up myself, on my way in to one of these places with red neon over the door and an unpleasant bouncer, a judge of character, inside, so I stepped aside for a couple on their way out, a fat blighter with a girl; it was her; she didn’t see me fortunately. She was laughing loud at something, but I could’ve done without that laughter. She wasn’t having cold truffle any more; she wasn’t having anything. There simply isn’t enough cold truffle in this world.

Well, I walked like that, pondering, with my hands in my pockets and my chin buried in my collar. I didn’t really see where I was going till I suddenly stop at the edge of the pier. The wind was blowing quite hard, the water was splashing towards me. It was cold standing so near the edge, but I stayed there all the same, I don’t know why, everything was so strange. Your ceiling needs a whitewash. And what about it when it has been whitewashed.

I’d walked quite a way down the pier. Nobody lived here, there were just closed warehouses and naked crane scaffoldings for the wind to whistle in. A lonely, dark coal freighter was creaking at the mooring, but the rest of the boats were anchored in shelter, closer to town, where there were lights, people and taverns. They must have reached home by now those two, arguing about me or about the one who’d been in the pants before me. Maybe he was beating her up; he looked like that kind of a guy, the big boor, since he didn’t get hold of me. And she was probably crying, making herself small, warding off his blows with her fur hat and the bag. But maybe she felt she deserved it too for what she’d done to that other fellow, thrust him aside, so that he’d left and stayed away for several days. It’d probably happened many times and he’d returned every time; but women want to see how far they can go, as if they wanted to calculate something, like how beautiful they are, how indispensable. But at last she’d calculated wrong all the same, pushed it a bit too far, and then he’d gone out here like me and jumped in, I suppose.
But that's what I didn't want to think about any more, and I didn't want to think about myself either, so how was I going to entertain myself. Think ahead—of new margarine sandwiches, new topers, who've got so many problems that you don't want to bother talking about your own—maybe go to a show that'll give you new inspiration, but I don't believe in that any more. I can't concentrate on the screen any longer. It's among the audience the action takes place. There're so many around who're sitting with somebody. A big hand and a small hand meet in a bag of licorice lozenges so that it splits and the lozenges roll under seats like dice; they're sharing cold truffle, and he courteously lets her have all the silver paper—no I don't get anything out of the film and too much out of the rest; then I'd rather share a couple of bottles with myself at home, just sit and stare at the ceiling. It does need a whitewash. And what about it when it has been whitewashed? Why were you afraid of me, you poor little thing, I only had your interest at heart. Oh, shut up. One should stop thinking.

There was a landing place right down by the water, like a drawer that had been pulled out. I walked down the concrete steps and tried to stop thinking. The water came licking. I was first shuffling to and fro and was about to step back again, when suddenly one of my shoes takes a big pull, quite a sinker. Oh well; it was some time ago I'd washed my feet anyway, so I just stood there and let the water splash around my shoestrings. Just stop worrying. You've quit doing so many things, so why not that; why not quit all together—take a break, get off—honestly, who'd miss you?—I stood there shivering with my hands in my pockets; there was my lighter, out it goes. I didn't even hear a plop; anyway I couldn't distinguish it from the other plops and noises. One plop among others. Just an installment. The pipe was in my left pocket, out you go too; then I've stopped smoking at the same time. Then away with my coat. It lay there for a while with the sleeves widespread, trying to hold back the waves, consoling them as it were. One tail sank, but the coat was still afloat; there was probably still some air left in the pockets. It irritated me. The shoes were wet anyway. I couldn't undo the shoestrings, so I just tore them to pieces. One shoe went into the water too far away, but the other one landed on top of the coat; then it finally started to sink. I was really cold now, but it didn't matter; that was one of the things I wanted to stop being too. I bent down in my knees and stretched my arms out; but it looked too much like the starting position at a swimming festival. It was probably better to just step over the edge and let yourself sink. Then I happened to
remember that I hate getting water in my ears. I groped through my pockets; I found everything but cotton wool. But my tobacco was in the inside pocket, so I got a good fill in each ear. I should be ready now. But which leg was to go in first? I tried to remember which foot I normally use first, but that’s something you’re never really able to decide, and when you need it, then there you are. You simply need some grounding in that kind of a situation. I could move out sideways too, of course, or backwards, or I could lie down and roll over the edge. The longer I stood there, the more confused I got because of all the possibilities. My trouser legs were soaked at the bottom now, and they stuck to my shins; the pants should be able to give me a good tip; after all, they were the ones who’d started it all. I stared at them and then my knees started to shake, but it wasn’t because of the cold now. It was the pants who’d wanted to get here, they made me do the kneebendings in the waterline. I’ve never claimed that life was splendid, on the contrary, life is hard, but it does have certain advantages, like stout for instance, no it sure was those damn pants who wanted to get down to the drowned. He might have worn a pair of new, harmless pants that day and left the old ones high and dry, and now they wanted to get down to him, but it had to be without me. I got them off fast and threw them into the water. One leg sank first and was shaking to and fro under the surface as if it were looking for something, then the other one joined it and they seemed to agree quite well; that’s the way they were going all right—and in no time they’d pulled down the swagging behind and all the rest of it. I turned the collar up about my ears and hurried up the stairs to go home.

I can imagine you had your own ideas when you saw me running at top speed along the street in jacket, underpants and wet socks, but this is the explanation, pure and simple, and that I didn’t stop the first time you called me was because of the tobacco in my ears; it’s tough to get out. I don’t mind spending the night here, officer; I know it’s no use claiming that I’m more sober and level-headed than I’ve been for a long time—and if I could borrow a pair of pants for tomorrow to go home. But I want some information about them first, whether they’ve belonged to a dipsomaniac, a pimp or a faggot. After an experience like this you become critical.
TOPOGRAPHY OF A NUDE

JORGE DÍAZ

tr. MARGARET S. PEDEN

Index of Characters-Actors:

THE TOPOGRAPHER
THE METEOROLOGIST
THE NOTARY
RUFO
ABEL
JUANELO
SAN LUCAS
THEO
"THE NUN"
DON CLEMENTE
GENERAL WHITE
THE GOVERNOR
THE PRIEST
THE POOR

"A great principle of violence governed our customs. . . ."

Saint John Perse
FIRST ACT

When the audience enters the theatre it will find the curtain open and the stage bare. At the rear of the stage an immense white projection screen should occupy the entire background, almost in the manner of a cyclorama. Five or six chairs and a stepladder are scattered about the stage as if left after a rehearsal.

When the lights of the auditorium go down and the mur­murs of the audience have stilled, in the midst of the most complete silence (without musical overture or sound effects) and total darkness, the slide projector is flashed on and a slide bearing white letters on a black background is projected onto the screen. (All the projections should be gigantic, larger than the normal size of a movie screen.)

First Projected Text:

"This play is based on a real event which took place in a Latin American country whose newspapers reported the event as they were able."

1. Slides that show a documentary-type photograph of a heap of rubbish in a dump on the outskirts of some city, and others of a turbulent river.

Second Projected Text:

"This is a freely conceived testimony that will not attempt to recreate literally the characters or the details of what took place."

2. Close-ups of starving faces, and others of military men.

Third Projected Text:

"... but the events could occur in any country where injustice, repression, and violence still exist."


One begins to hear the sound of a turbulent river. The cold light of dawn begins imperceptibly to light the empty stage. Now, center stage, one notes a man lying face down in a grotesque position like that of a disjointed puppet.

Three men enter wearing black. They are the municipal officials. They carry umbrellas. In their gestures and words one can sense the impersonality of their routine.

The Notary and the Meteorologist stop beside the body. The Topographer crosses the stage, looking all about.

The Topographer. This must be the place. This is the only body that looks suspicious.

The Meteorologist. Of course, this is it. Let's not lose any more time.

The Notary. (Taking out a notebook and making notes) I testify
that at six o’clock on the morning of the twelfth of July, 1961, as Cancer is expiring in the Zodiac and Leo is beginning to open his yawning jaws to the cold of August 23, the following municipal officials, have verified, considered, and analyzed the facts: signed, The notary on duty!

(He raises his hand as if giving a solemn oath)

THE METEOROLOGIST. (Also raises his hand absent-mindedly while he looks at the sky and breathes in the air with pleasure) . . . and the attending meteorologist!

THE TOPOGRAPHER. (Coming to join the others from the other side of the stage) . . . and the anatomical-pathological topographer!

(None of the three has as yet paid much attention to the corpse. The Notary continues writing in silence. The Meteorologist now takes out a handkerchief and sneezes, almost with enjoyment)

THE METEOROLOGIST. The air is fresh and smells of gentian and green thyme. Somewhere someone is burning dry pine branches. All signs of instability. New odors that indicate changes . . . atmospheric disturbances.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. (Putting on very thick eyeglasses) The place is indescribable. A fertile oasis of rubbish, the ultimate sewer of the great city. I would say that the aspect of this no-man’s land suggests . . . suggests . . .

THE METEOROLOGIST. A large common grave.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. Thank you.

THE NOTARY. Now you must fulfill your duty: Foretell reality. Get the pulse of the facts. I want responsible, trustworthy witnesses!

(The Meteorologist paces out the distance from the fallen body to the back of the stage. With a piece of chalk, the Topographer traces the outline of the body on the ground)

THE METEOROLOGIST. The body—because I must remind you there is a body—is three meters from the river’s edge. (After crouching down for a moment, he turns towards the others) The fingernails clawed the ground, leaving behind some curious parallel furrows. It has not rained . . . , nevertheless, the river carries surprised hens and the first flowers of the almond.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. (Who has finished marking the outlines of the body) Isn’t it absolutely absurd! He fell without logic or sense. The joints of his body express nothing but contradiction.

(Emptying the cadaver’s pockets)

Put this down: an empty nut shell, two odd buttons, one of plastic and the other of bone, a piece of string, some dry crumbs, a few wet cigarette butts, and a spoon.
THE METEOROLOGIST. Not counting the live parasites.
THE TOPOGRAPHER. And the dead parasites.
THE NOTARY. Documents, photographs?
THE TOPOGRAPHER. Nothing. Besides, he is unidentifiable.
THE NOTARY. He is not carrying arms?
THE TOPOGRAPHER. Arms...? I don't know. Perhaps he used the spoon to defend himself.

THE NOTARY. (Taking notes) Did you find anything near the body?
THE TOPOGRAPHER. The same kind of thing he had in his pockets: trash. I don't know why he bothered to keep things that can be found around here in fantastic quantities: shells, papers, useless junk...

THE NOTARY. (Writing and completing the thought) ... that spread a strong odor that even the air currents cannot succeed in dissipating.

THE METEOROLOGIST. (Interrupting from stage rear) One moment! As meteorologist, air currents are my specialty. (Sniffing) The wind from the southeast carries the distinct and mysterious odors of the fresh blood of a sacrificed animal, and wild parsley. It is going to rain and the river will rise still more.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. Let's go...
(He turns up his lapels and shivers)
THE NOTARY. One minute... Does he have any wounds?
THE TOPOGRAPHER. His eyes are open but completely covered with green slime. One last breath bubbles through the sand that fills his mouth. He is not bleeding. He does not smell bad. He is simply uncomfortable and disjointed.

(One by one the three officials look at the sky. It is beginning to rain. All three open their umbrellas)
THE METEOROLOGIST. It will last for quite a while.
THE NOTARY. Do you have any other observation to make?
THE METEOROLOGIST. (Looking at the river that supposedly runs across stage rear, his back turned to the others) Yes... There's a dead dog by the edge of the river.

(The other two officials turn towards the Meteorologist.)
THE NOTARY. What did you say?
(The Meteorologist turns toward the audience while the other two look at him, their backs to the audience.)
THE METEOROLOGIST. A long-legged, mangy dog, with a big head. He's dead.

THE NOTARY. I'm not surprised. I well remember that this is the city dump. Let's not lose any more time. Sign the report and let's go!
THE TOPOGRAPHER. And the corpse?
THE NOTARY. The men from the City Morgue will be here any minute.

The Meteorologist and the Topographer sign the report. The three officials exit hastily with their umbrellas open. The cold light of dawn decreases and is then blended with a spot without color-filters which focuses on the body. One begins to hear Rufo's theme.

Rufo begins to move slowly. He sits up. He looks about with a certain air of puzzlement—but he is not in the least pitiful. He sees the wet cigarette butts. He picks one up and with difficulty succeeds in lighting it. After several puffs, still sitting on the ground, he speaks directly to the audience.

His expression is neither laughable nor terribly pathetic. His voice does not tremble, and he speaks directly and simply. At no time should he give the impression that he is in the least bit sorry for himself, nor even less that he is the archetypal poor man. He faces facts with a certain resigned fatalism, but never complains.

Rufo. They call me "Rufo," as they might have called me "The Count" or "The Louse" or anything . . . and they do well, because if I ever had a name, some cool breeze from the south, lazying along after a rain, must have carried it away. I've been dead since a little after midnight yesterday, although I don't remember the hour. It's not that I forget things, but about last night—I mean, about my death—I remember very little.

With difficulty he has risen to his feet and is now standing within the chalk drawing of his own body. The things that the officials found in his pockets are still on the ground. He puts them back in his pockets. He looks at the drawing on the ground.

Yes, this is the place. Later, they'll put a few flowers and a candle here, but for now there's just the chalk outline to mark my body. Quite an uproar for something so unimportant . . . A lot of to-do for someone like me with no name and no past . . . Does anyone notice when a window closes, or some burning coals die? I have no memory. The living have the memories, the others . . . the ones who'll have more to say than I do.

Rufo's theme fades out.

The light has changed.

Center stage and down stage are bathed in a harsh, unfiltered light. Surrounding this lighted area there is a neutral zone, not completely dark, but in discreet shadow. The actors who are not actively engaged in the scene will be located in this area as witnesses to the action. Their silhouettes will stand out against the cyclorama. On the other hand, a steady,
harsh light will be focused on the actors who are speaking. The actors begin to enter. They sit down on chairs or on the floor, forming a semi-circle around the lighted area, but they remain in shadow. But for rare occasions an actor will become his character only when he crosses the neutral zone into the lighted area. The rest of the time he becomes a kind of actor-witness, a motionless chorus that watches from the shadow. As each enters, Rufo introduces him. He only knows some of them. An elderly priest also enters and sits down or makes himself comfortable like the rest of the actors.

RUFO. This is Juanelo. He lives at the dump, or wherever he happens to land. They say he’s a thief. He may be a little tricky, but he’s had as bad a time as any one...

That fellow must be a newspaperman because he asks difficult questions and then answers them himself.

The sergeant is named San Lucas. I say he has the name of a saint and the soul of a devil.

That’s Theo. She lives with me... well, of course, she’ll live by herself now, at least for a while. What can I say about her? She can drop a baby as easy as a cow drops a calf, and among poor people, that’s a lot.

That other man I’ve never seen.

That messy-haired brunette is Isabel. They call her “The Nun.” She makes the rounds of all the hotels and always has one eye open to give the police the slip.

I don’t know who the other men are... I suppose they’ll all be coming and going; introducing themselves and lying a little, too...

When you’re dead everything gets a little blurred and you don’t know anymore whether things already happened, if they’re happening now, or if they’re going to happen. It’s not my fault. It wasn’t easy to be alive, but now it’s not easy either to look back and try to figure out the truth...

ABEL. (Speaking from the shadows) The truth about what?

RUFO. (Disconcerted, turning around) Well... the truth about yourself, I mean me, or about what goes on every day...

ABEL. (Stepping into the light) Empty words... You’re talking like a politician, not like a bum. Who knows better than a newspaperman what goes on every day? What ignorant people like you call “the truth” is divided into two categories: that that has news value and that that doesn’t. I’m sorry, friend, but your death—or whatever you
want to call it—doesn’t have any appeal as news. It’s a trivial matter, it doesn’t grab you.

(Speaking to the audience)
I beg your pardon, my name is Abelardo Linares. I sign my column simply as Abel.

(To Rufo) To be brief, I have to finish this up as soon as possible. I have a lot to do. Really, I still don’t know why I was called. As far as I’m concerned your story ended when I wrote the three lines in the “Police Reports.” Besides, because of the quantity of material it’s very likely that at the last minute not even those three lines came out. Things like that happen every day. Tonight three foreign reports on the war and an attempted homicide were left out.

Rufo. Yes, I understand. As far as I’m concerned you can go whenever you like. I’d like to know what I’m doing here, too. I suppose I’ll have to wait. That’s something I do very well. I waited all my life...

(To the audience)
Maybe you don’t know it yet, but it doesn’t hurt to die, it’s only a little bewildering...

Abel. Perhaps you know less than we do about that. I’ll read you a copy of the medical report that they sent from the City Morgue. You might be interested.

4. An X-ray of the corpse is projected upon the screen.

Rufo has stepped back to center stage. The newspaperman, with papers in his hand, is brightly illuminated.

Abel. (Reading) “Date of autopsy: July 13, 1961. Hour, 1:15 P.M. Cause of death: Asphyxia by drowning. The body presents no hemo­tomas or bruises. There is no wound of any kind caused by blows or physical violence. The current of the river dragging the subject down­stream along the rocky riverbed disfigured the face. State of viscera: Lungs, liver and kidneys affected by chronic malnutrition and advanced alcoholism. Although there is no major proof, it is possible the subject took drugs...”

Rufo. (From the shadows, in a choked voice) No!

Abel. (Continues reading) “... it is almost certain that if the sub­ject had not died in the manner stated, he would have expired very soon from natural causes resulting from the generally poor state of his health...”

Rufo. (Almost to himself) “... natural causes...” It sounds so good. Almost peaceful...

Abel. (To the audience) As you can see it’s really a problem for the Department of Public Health or some similar institution. It’s possible
that in any one of us at this minute a cancer is growing that will cause
death in three years' time. It would be interesting to write an article
about that, wouldn't it? A little morbid, maybe, but that always goes
over big. The thing about this poor guy . . . what was his name? (It's
strange how soon you forget the names of people like that. Neverthe­
less, that was the first thing I asked the beggar who found the body
this morning.)

Speaking to Juanelo who is waiting in the shadow with
the other actors.

Hey, you. . . Yes, you. . . ! What was his name?

Juanelo has reacted with a start, and enters the lighted
area reluctantly. He is very poor, of indefinite age, dressed
in rags, distrustful, and sly.

The following dialogue will be enacted exactly as if the
events the newspaperman is reporting were happening at the
moment, as if the corpse were still there between them. It is
cold. The newspaperman rubs his hands. Juanelo is hunched
over.

Rufo has stepped back.

The old priest, after nodding a while, has dropped off to
sleep.

Juanelo. What?
Abel. What was his name?
Juanelo. Who?
Abel. The dead man.
Juanelo. (Answering reluctantly) Rufo.
Abel. I said his name, not his nickname.
Juanelo. I don't know.
Abel. And yours, do you know it?
Juanelo. (Crossly) Juanelo.
Abel. You found him, didn't you?
Juanelo. Yes.
Abel. Did you have to pull him out of the river?
Juanelo. (With a shiver) I didn't touch him!
Abel. If you knew his name, that means you knew him. Were you
a friend of his?
Juanelo. No.
Abel. What else do you know about him?
Juanelo. Nothing.
Abel. Didn't he ever talk with you?
Juanelo. Hardly ever.
Abel. But he did once . . .
Juanelo. Once.
ABEL. What did he say?

JUANELO. I didn’t understand him. He talked about things he’d read . . . around . . . in books, old papers . . . Strange ideas, I don’t know anything about it.

ABEL. When did he talk about these things?

JUANELO. When he was in the mood and had someone to listen.

ABEL. You, for example?

JUANELO. From time to time, every once in a while, I cut his hair for him. While I did that, he talked.

ABEL. Why did you cut his hair for him?

JUANELO. We have to help each other.

ABEL. Had he lived around here very long?

JUANELO. Years.

ABEL. How many?

JUANELO. I don’t know. I don’t keep track of them.

Abel takes out a package of cigarettes and offers it to Juanelo with a gesture. Juanelo, distrustful, takes one out and saves it.

The newspaperman lights his, sheltering it from the cold wind with his overcoat.

ABEL. (After the first drag) What do you call this part of the city? I’ve never been out this far before.

JUANELO. San Lazarus.

ABEL. (Looking about him) And what is there around here?

JUANELO. Rubbish.

ABEL. (Indicating the corpse with his foot) What could have happened to the old guy? What do you think?

JUANELO. (Who tries to avoid looking at the corpse) How should I know? He couldn’t take any more and just gave out.

ABEL. What do you mean?

(Juanelo shrugs his shoulders and turns his back, ready to leave. He takes a few steps, but a voice from the shadowed area stops him. It is Sergeant San Lucas.)

SAN LUCAS. (Still not stepping into the lighted area, his voice hard) You, Juanelo, you’re not leaving yet! I have to ask you some questions first. Now I’ve got to get rid of this nosy crowd.

Driving the invisible crowd towards the wings.

Nothing’s happened! Everything’s all right now. Get on home . . . ! An accident, that’s all. (Hard) Get out of here once and for all, you bastards! You’re like a flock of vultures fighting over something dead.

Sergeant San Lucas exits, dispersing the curious from the lighted zone.
ABEL. (Persisting in his questioning of Juanelo.) You said he couldn't take any more. . . Do you mean he committed suicide?

Juanelo shrugs his shoulders without answering.

ABEL. (Observant and incisive) It's strange that he could have done it and then dragged himself here, don't you think? Look at the traces of his fingers in the sand. Some of his fingernails are broken. Of course, he could have changed his mind when the current tossed him around a little.

Abel squats down next to the chalk-drawn outline as if he is looking closely into the face of the dead man, and then notices that Juanelo is looking in the other direction.

ABEL. It's strange. . . I'd like to know one thing, Juanelo.

Juanelo. (Unwillingly) What?

ABEL. Why have you avoided looking at the corpse all this time?

Juanelo stops abruptly. In a defiant way he turns and looks directly at the imaginary corpse.

5. At this moment the gigantic image of Rufo's corpse is projected for the first time in all its crude reality.

They stand motionless for an instant.

ABEL. You don’t like to look at it, eh? Nevertheless you were the first one who saw him. Was he already dead?

Juanelo nervously lights the cigarette he had previously put away.

Juanelo. Stone cold dead.

ABEL. How did you know that?

Juanelo. (Reluctantly) He wasn’t moving. His mouth was full of sand.

ABEL. You didn’t try to help him, to turn him over?


ABEL. Why?

Juanelo. His eyes were open.

ABEL. Open?

Juanelo. Staring something awful.

ABEL. Did it frighten you?

Juanelo. Mud kept coming out of his mouth.

ABEL. And what did you do?

Juanelo. I went to tell the Sergeant.

ABEL. (Circling around the corpse and approaching Juanelo) Juanelo, what do you do? I mean, do you have any kind of job?

Juanelo. No.

ABEL. How do you get along?

Juanelo. I don’t get along. I get hungry.
ABEL. Juanelo, was Rufo poorer than you?

JUANELO. With us poor it's hard to tell the difference. He was living with his woman. That always helps.

ABEL. Or could it be that things weren't as bad for him as for you.

JUANELO. Rufo wasn't like us. He knew how to read.

ABEL. Was he educated?

JUANELO. I think he was.

ABEL. But he was a scavenger. . .

JUANELO. Sometimes, but it wasn't his calling.

ABEL. And what did he do to make ends meet?

JUANELO. (Ambiguous) When he wanted to he always got along.

(Abel smokes in silence looking at the place where one imagines the corpse to be)

ABEL. Have you noticed, Juanelo, that Rufo isn’t wearing a belt, and that he doesn’t have any laces in his shoes. His pants have slipped down on his hips. They didn’t find anything in his pockets. Not anything he’d written, not a scrap of newspaper. Nothing.

Sergeant San Lucas appears in the lighted acting area. As San Lucas speaks with the newspaperman, Juanelo will be standing in a corner, motionless, inexpressive, observing every­thing.

SAN LUCAS. (To Abel, illnatured) You, my friend are like a hyena: a smile like an angel, but you can smell something rotten a mile off.

ABEL. (Joking) But you don’t smell bad, Sergeant.

SAN LUCAS. Well, did you finish sniffing around in all the corners? Abel. I don’t know, Sergeant, it might be the cold, but this morning I don’t smell a thing.

SAN LUCAS. I don’t like you, Linares. I’m going to keep you out of this. You always manage to get things snarled up.

ABEL. (Ingenious) What is there to get snarled up today, Sergeant?

SAN LUCAS. You know what I mean. O.K., I guess it’d be better to get this over once and for all.

(Handing him a paper)

This is a copy of the police report that was drawn up. Read it. I'll answer all your questions.

ABEL. I never ask questions, Sergeant. Just sometimes, when I can, I observe.

(Reading the report out loud)

“A man they call Rufo, approximately fifty years old, unemployed, no known name or address, was found drowned today at dawn in the area where the river cuts through San Lazarus dump. It is a case of accidental death. Subject was seen many times completely drunk
wandering around San Lazarus bridge. He had been arrested many times for disrespect for authority, and bad habits. The subject was a quarrelsome and subversive individual. . . ”

I don’t think that leaves any questions to be asked, Sergeant.

(Abel smiles but doesn’t move)

SAN LUCAS. Go on, Linares! Juanelo, come sign this report. You were the one who found the body.

(Sergeant San Lucas turns to go)

ABEL. (Stopping the Sergeant) Sergeant San Lucas . . . this isn’t a question. You must have noticed that the dead man’s shoe laces are missing, and also that he isn’t wearing a belt. It’s strange, too, that his pockets are empty, isn’t it? If one hadn’t read the police report you signed—which fortunately clarifies any doubts—he’d think that this man had been arrested and interrogated by the police. Sometimes these details only serve to confuse things, don’t they? But the report clarifies everything, thank God. See you later, Sergeant!

The Sergeant, who has listened with an inscrutable expression on his face, turns his back and exits from the lighted area followed by Juanelo.

The newspaperman remains looking pensively at the outline of the corpse on the ground.

Rufo comes forward and looks around as if looking for something.

ABEL. Were you listening?

Rufo. Yes.

ABEL. What do have to tell me?

Rufo. Nothing. Don’t ask me to find the one word that will clear everything up. You know, my friend. . . ? You never find those words. Besides, I always was a liar, a story-teller. They’ll be telling you that they couldn’t trust me, that I strung people along and then betrayed them.

ABEL. What they have told me is that you weren’t a fool, that you knew how to manage when you wanted to, that you read. . .

Rufo. Read? Bah, only things people throw out! Papers, old newspapers. . . What I really did was try to think a little.

6. The image of a dog’s body fills the entire back screen.

Rufo moves a short distance away from Abel and looks around with a certain uneasiness.

The noise and presence of the river.

ABEL. Who are you looking for?

Rufo. No one.

ABEL. You seem restless.
Rufo. It's just that I suddenly remembered Ginger.

Abel. (Interested) You remember what?

Rufo. Ginger.

Abel. Who's that?

Rufo. My dog.

Abel. Bah, I thought you could clear things up a little for me. After all, you're the victim and one has a right to expect more... But a dog!

Abel moves out of the acting area and sits down in the shadow.

Rufo, his back to the public, continues looking around and whistling for the dog.

Suddenly he sees the dead dog at the same place the official had seen it.

Rufo. (Extremely moved) Ginger!

Crouching down next to the imaginary dog.

(Moved) Ginger! What did they do to you?

Rufo slowly rises to his feet; he turns towards the audience and says:

He's dead. Shot.

The sound of the river ceases.

Immediately one hears the laughter of the Meteorologist, who is still in the shadow. He enters laughing, followed by the Notary and the Topographer who are definitely not laughing.

The Topographer. All this is a little grotesque, but if I were you I wouldn't laugh.

The Notary. Especially in these circumstances.

The Meteorologist. (His laughter dying before the cold dignity of the other two) They breed and have children like dogs. I was laughing because for a minute I imagined the dog surrounded by candles and loved ones.

The Topographer. You have to recognize that people used to die with more dignity. Not any more.

The Notary. Now nobody has the chance to choose a decent death. We just await the fingernail that cracks us like lice.

The Meteorologist. Men and dogs are steadily becoming more and more alike. It's natural.

The Topographer. The world is getting smaller. It's a geological problem.

The Notary. Or demographic...

The Meteorologist. Or meteorological...

The Topographer. I don't know what to think, but since last night both men and animals seem uneasy and tense.
THE METEOROLOGIST. For my part, I can feel the atmospheric changes. I'm as sensitive as a weathervane...

*He sneezes with pleasure.*

THE NOTARY. And what do you feel?

THE METEOROLOGIST. A heavy odor of dust and tobacco... a vague fear floating in the air.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. I must leave documentary proof that I have investigated every hole, every protuberance, of this dump, asking questions. Even though it was not my obligation to do so.

THE NOTARY. *(To the audience)* It is not our obligation to be here. I hope that remains completely clear.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. I interrogated people only for the sake of curiosity, but they know nothing. When you approach them, they run away. Filthy scum!

THE METEOROLOGIST. *(Pointing to the imaginary corpse)* They didn't like him.

THE NOTARY. Who?

THE METEOROLOGIST. Rufo.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. Or if they did like him, they've forgotten...

THE METEOROLOGIST. The river continues to rise. It isn't the season yet.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. This dump used to be full of people. It had a strange life of its own, like a rag covered with flies. But today you don't see anybody.

THE METEOROLOGIST. *(Testing the air)* But listening carefully you hear something! Shhhhhhhhhhh! The wind from the southeast carries voices...

THE NOTARY. Voices?

THE METEOROLOGIST. ... that speak of Rufo, that bad man who met a bad death: an unregenerate alcoholic who was always looking for the opportunity to put something over on someone.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. If one digs through the trash a little it's easy to realize: the dump is beginning to feel fear.

THE NOTARY. And the dog, my friends? He had a dog he called Ginger.

THE METEOROLOGIST. Ah yes, the dog. I think he's been shot.

THE NOTARY. Absurd. Who's going to shoot a dog? It must have been mad.

THE METEOROLOGIST. Naturally, it must have been mad.

THE NOTARY. Yes, like all of us.
The Topographer. Well, gentlemen, the matter of the dog Ginger is another story. . . . May he rest in peace.

The three officials exit from the lighted area. 1st F.S. Now there is a brief filmed sequence. It is a single long take with a set camera, a panoramic view of an enormous and solitary dump. Within this scope, almost unreal, a woman is scratching in the rubbish. She seems very small and very far away. She moves slowly. Hers is the only human figure on the dump.

With the film still running, Theo, Rufo's woman, walks forward out of the darkness. Fragments of the projected picture appear on her body. She is a woman hardened by suffering, aggressive but never complaining, only at times does she rebel. When she begins to speak the projector is cut off.

Theo. (To the audience) I don't like to talk. Everybody knows me. Theo doesn't like to talk around a subject or make excuses. I lived with Rufo. They found him dead yesterday in the river. That's the only thing he hadn't done to me. He always let me down. And now this! Filthy old drunk! There was no other way for him to end up.

They made me come identify him: His face was green and muddy, his body swollen. But he was the same as always. . . .

(Stands pensively)

I don't know what I would have thought about all this yesterday, but I know what I think today: It doesn't matter at all. What happened to Rufo had to happen sooner or later. But there is something that makes my blood boil and that's the business of the dog.

They didn't kill Ginger like a dog. They killed him like a man. It made me sick to my stomach. (Almost tenderly) That Ginger, you know. . . ., that Ginger wasn't anything out of the ordinary, but he was a good dog. And that's saying a lot, isn't it?

Rufo. (Advancing) Theo. . . .

(The woman stands completely still)

Theo. . . .

(She doesn't move)
They shot Ginger. It must have been after I drowned in the river. . . .

Why, Theo, why. . . .?

Theo. (Turning towards him) You ought to know. He followed you everywhere.

Rufo. But I don't know.

Theo. The dog followed you but he wasn't yours. He should have stayed with me.

Rufo. He was a stray, he didn't belong to anybody.

Theo. (Hard) Like you.
Ruso. *(Shouting with pain)* Shut up, you old slut!

*The actors-witnesses murmur in low voices.*

Ruso. *(Pointing to the actors)* They’re scandalized because a dead man can still yell, but they don’t know that you’d thrown me out... that I wasn’t living with you anymore.

Theo. That doesn’t have anything to do with anything.

Ruso. When you have a roof over your head you’re always safe. I knew how dangerous it was to walk through the dump at night without a friend or a place to go... and I was afraid.

*(The newspaperman from the shadow)*

Abel. Good afternoon, madam. I’m a newspaperman, as you know, I just heard that Rufo didn’t live here anymore, that you’d thrown him out.

Theo. *(Shortly)* That’s not true.

Abel. He’d been seen for several days sleeping on the ground.

Theo. He spent almost all his nights outdoors. He was a hopeless drunk. I didn’t have to throw him out. He came and he went. I didn’t throw him out.

Ruso. That isn’t true. Sometimes I got lost, but I always came back to the cave. I was afraid to sleep out in the open, alone.

Abel. Why?

Ruso. I don’t know... Things were happening...

Abel. What do you mean?

Ruso. Don’t pay any attention to me.

Abel. *(To Theo)* So you don’t know anything else... ?

Theo. No.

Ruso. She knows! She knows that one night about a week ago I got home late to go to bed and she met me screaming... ?

*Know both act out the scene as if experiencing it for the first time.*

*Noise of the turbulent river.*

Abel in the shadow.

Ruso. What’s going on, Theo? Why are my things thrown out in the mud?

Theo. *(Yelling)* I’ve had a bellyful. I don’t even want to hear anything about you. Don’t come back here anymore.

Ruso. You can stand it. I’d like to get away, too, and I stand it.

Theo. *(Menacingly)* Get out, Rufo. They’re lots of people around here who’d like to ask you a few things.

Ruso. *(Disdainfully)* There’s nothing around here but trash.
THEO. (Facing him) Answer me then! What business do you have with “The Nun”?

RUFO. You’re jealous of a little whore!

THEO (Sarcastic) Jealous of you? When you’re not even good these days for warming your own bones. You know neither one of us is very hot in bed anymore. And you know very well what I’m asking you. “The Nun” has had dealings with the police for a long time. She carries tales to them. People talk... People say that you gather the information for her... that you’re a stool pigeon!

RUFO. Everyone knows a whore has to do favors for the police so they’ll let her alone. She’s a good woman. Better than you, for sure.

THEO. (Shouting) It doesn’t matter to me that she earns her living in bed! I did too... But stool pigeons make me sick! Do you know that my brother disappeared last night? And Manuela’s son, and Peltre, and Lacho, where are they? Tell me! Where are they?

RUFO. (Confused) I don’t know.

THEO. Ask your “Nun” about it... All of them disappeared during the night. I don’t want to live with a slimy traitor. Get out! Get out, I said!

RUFO. Theo, an old man shouldn’t have to go it alone. You don’t know. I’m afraid...

THEO. Go hide your fear in another cave!

RUFO walks a few steps.

RUFO. Let me come in!

THEO. Go away!

RUFO. You have someone in there.

THEO. No!

Theo stands defiantly in the way of Rufo. He slaps her so hard he knocks her to the ground. Rufo says, as he walks by her and disappears from the lighted area:

RUFO. Bitch!

Theo lies motionless for a moment and then from the ground says in a quiet voice:

THEO. Rufo! It can’t be, not tonight... (As if to herself) It can’t be... Suddenly she rises and shrieks madly: RUFO!

She stands expectantly, pale, a lost expression on her face. Barking, and two shots. Abel breaks the tension of the moment.

Speaking from the rear, entering the luminous circle.

The sound of the river ceases.

ABEL. So you threw him out.

THEO. (Her expression changing again to her former cautious indifference) It wasn’t like that. I asked him to go find something out
for me. Just so I would know what was going on. He's real shrewd and
he can find out anything. But he must have got drunk and sunk like
a stone in the river.

ABEL. But . . . what about the dog?
THEO. What about the dog?
ABEL. Ginger was shot to death and he must have been with Rufo.
I've been told that he never left his side.

THEO. Ginger took to him because he cured an infected paw for him
once with garlic and salt. He howled all that night but from the next
day on he never left Rufo's side. But Ginger was mine. Mine! Like I
had carried him in my own belly.

(She can scarcely contain her emotion)
If I'd known they were going to kill Ginger . . . maybe I'd have
tried to stop it.

ABEL. Then that night . . . you weren't alone.
THEO. No.
ABEL. But Rufo . . . ?
THEO. It wasn't Rufo . . .
ABEL. Then who was it?
THEO. "El Quebracho," the gimpy one. He picks up the rotten fish
they throw out in the market.
ABEL. Is he a friend of yours?
THEO. They're all friends of mine.
ABEL. Did he sleep here?
THEO. (Coldly) No.

Theo turns her back to him. Abel then speaks to Rufo who
is standing motionless at one side.
ABEL. What's this story about people disappearing from the dump?
Did the police arrest them, or what?
RUFO. (Immobile) Tales.
ABEL. But that woman said that her own brother . . .

THEO. (Her back turned) Just the night before Rufo died more than
twenty of the beggars who used to sleep around here on the ground,
or in caves, or out in the open, disappeared. My own brother was one
of them. They haven't been seen since. Nobody knows anything.
She turns towards the audience.
I didn't throw Rufo out . . . and if I did it was without thinking,
I just did it. You never know what you're saying when you're mad.
How was I to know that . . . ?

After a short pause.
I heard two shots. Now I know they shot Ginger. But I didn't go
out. I was afraid. If I had known they were shooting at the dog I would have gone out. There were two shots . . . but I didn’t move.

The voice of Sergeant San Lucas, from the shadow.

SAN LUCAS. There were two shots. Why should we hide it? I had to kill him because he attacked General White.

RUFO. (Clenching his fists and speaking slowly in a low voice) So it was you! It couldn’t have been anyone else. . . Now I understand.

ABEL. Understand what?

RUFO. Nothing.

ABEL. (Sarcastic) So you went out hunting with General White, Sergeant . . . but instead of aiming for a hare, you killed the dog.

SAN LUCAS. You would have saved yourself the work of collecting all this gossip if you’d consulted the record at the Police Station. A report was entered there about the death of a dangerous and aggressive dog. He isn’t the first one found in that neighborhood . . .

ABEL. You’re right. There are things one should do before he does anything else. In that record they didn’t by any chance enter a report about the arrest or interrogation of Rufo?

SAN LUCAS. (Ambiguous) Rufo was a vagrant, a “regular” down at headquarters.

ABEL. (More precisely) I’m referring specifically to last night, that is, the early morning of the day on which he was found dead.

SAN LUCAS. He wasn’t at Headquarters that night.

RUFO. (Still wrapped in his own thoughts) Poor old dog.

SAN LUCAS. (Hard) If he had been I wouldn’t bother to hide it.

Rufo turns slowly to face Sergeant San Lucas and says bitterly:

RUFO. I was there!

A silence charged with tension.

ABEL. Are you sure?

RUFO. They arrested me. They emptied my pockets and they took the laces out of my shoes and a piece of rope I used to hold up my pants.

ABEL. Why didn’t you tell me that before?

RUFO. (As if to himself) I didn’t know he’d killed Ginger.

ABEL. Oh, so if you were at the Police Station, it was later when . . .

SAN LUCAS. (Interrupting coldly) It’s a lie. Moreover, I assume that the statement of a dead man doesn’t amount to anything. He’s saying that out of bitterness, in order to get even for the death of that mangy old dog.

ABEL. Yes, he’s disturbed about the death of that dog. Besides, he can’t be trusted, they say he’s an informant for the police.
SAN LUCAS. *(Rigid and sharp)* That man was not in the Police Station. Three policemen who were on duty can swear to it, don’t forget. Good night, Linares. . .

A voice from the shadow. Then “The Nun” moves forward. She is an impoverished prostitute with some remaining traces of a certain showy beauty.

“The Nun”. That man was there.

SAN LUCAS. *(Hoarse)* Lying whore!

“The Nun”. Yes, I am . . . But I’m not blind yet!

*(To the audience)* My name is Isabel, everyone calls me “The Nun”. Probably more than one of you know me. I hang around the Plaza del Conquistador every night, near San Lazarus.

SAN LUCAS. A great job of reporting you’re doing, Linares . . . whores and thieves!

“The Nun”. *(With scorn)* That’s the way the gospel was written, “St. Luke.”

SAN LUCAS. *(Furiously)* Shut your mouth, you filthy bitch!

ABEL. Are you sure he saw him?

“The Nun”. More than that, he talked to him. They nabbed me in the street near the Park and brought me here. I saw him as I came in. The Sergeant was behind the desk . . .

*The Sergeant moves to take his imaginary position.*

. . . and Rufo was facing him . . .

*Rufo takes his position.*

They pushed me in the door and I saw them.

*All the characters relive the actions of that night as if they were in the Police Station. “The Nun” enters, pushed by a patrolman. The Sergeant sees her and laughs.*

SAN LUCAS. *(Mocking)* Again. . . ?

“The Nun” Again.

SAN LUCAS. Why this time?

“The Nun”. For working, while all you do is sit there on your official fat ass.

SAN LUCAS. *(Unaffected)* It’s been days since you’ve dropped in to see us. Don’t you have any news for us? You know we like to keep well informed.

“The Nun”. I thought you already had enough news. I’m not your sniveling go-between.

SAN LUCAS. If you want to be allowed to work without interference, you help the police. We’re your best friends, aren’t we?

“The Nun”. Yes.
San Lucas. Rufo cooperates. Of course, that’s why he’s frightened.

(He laughs)

Rufo. Lock me up and get it over. Please, lock me up!

San Lucas. No. I’m going to do something much better. I’m going to let you go. (He shouts)

San Lucas. Guard! (He goes off for a moment)

“The Nun” approaches Rufo and speaks to him rapidly in a low voice.

“The Nun”. Get away from here, Rufo . . . if you still can. Something’s brewing, I don’t know just what. Don Clemente who owns the dump, has decided to clear out all the bums.

Rufo. Don Clemente doesn’t even know the dump. It turns his stomach.

“The Nun”. Yes, but this time it’s serious. He’s talked to General White about it.

Rufo. You’re crazy! What does the babbling of those pigs mean to an old man like me!

“The Nun”. (With urgency) Go right now, Rufo, and warn the others!

Rufo. They hate me.

“The Nun”. Don’t you realize that the police are using you as bait? They’re setting something up. Big. It’s all set. Go this minute!

Rufo. I don’t have anywhere to go.

“The Nun”. You’ll be safe anywhere except in San Lazarus . . . Don Clemente’s going to clean up the dump.

Rufo. The old goat!

A portly, respectable looking gentleman moves forward from the shadow. He has white hair, and an affable, charming and convincing demeanor. It is Don Clemente; he exudes good will.

Clemente. (To the audience) Yes, I’ve decided to bring an end to this dump. It’s become a problem of conscience. Have any of you seen how those poor devils live? In the most complete abandon, in the most absolute promiscuity, believe me . . . The truth is I’ve never been there, in spite of the fact that the land belongs to me, but the most frightful descriptions have reached my ears.

Forgive me, my friends, my name is Clemente Serrano. I’ve held on to this outlying land waiting, naturally, for it to go up a little in value, but now it’s time to think about the poor miserable souls who live there, and to get them out of there. Furthermore, there’s the question of nearby neighborhoods. The dump is a constant cause of protests and claims. All of you know, when one is the owner of an important
newspaper, as I am, he must listen to the voice of the public. I have finally had to accede to what was asked of me. One is, for good or bad, at the service of the community in which he lives. That is what I had hoped to make one of my employees understand—a slightly corrupt reporter who signs his articles "Abel."

Now another scene—that could have already occurred or might still occur—is re-enacted. One supposes that it takes place in the office of the owner and director of the newspaper, who is seated behind his desk directing an invisible secretary to:

CLEMENTE. Tell Abel to come in!

(Abel walks forward)

ABEL. You sent for me, Don Clemente?

CLEMENTE. Yes, sit down, please.

(Abel sits down)

Just to ask you a small personal favor, my dear friend.

ABEL. As you say, Don Clemente.

CLEMENTE. It has come to my attention that you have been undertaking certain personal investigations in this unfortunate matter of the beggar's death . . . what was his name?

ABEL. Rufo, sir.

CLEMENTE. That's it, Rufo. Well, dear friend, I share your curiosity and your desire to clear up the matter, but I think it would be better not to carry things any further, to consider the matter closed.

ABEL. You mean, if I understand you, that I must stop reporting the facts about the Rufo affair in my column, isn't that it?

CLEMENTE. Yes. I don't understand why you persist in such a matter. You, with all your newspaperman's instinct, must have realized that this story isn't worth the trouble, it's too vulgar . . . even a little sordid.

ABEL. I still haven't been able to ascertain whether it's just a sordid, vulgar matter.

CLEMENTE. (Very amiable) I am confident that your good taste and your professional integrity will cause you to discontinue any further personal intervention as you carry on your other journalistic activities.

ABEL. The matter interests me.

CLEMENTE. I wouldn't want my newspaper to be deprived of your professional services. It would be a great loss.

ABEL. I think I understand perfectly, Don Clemente.

CLEMENTE. I'm glad, Abel. After all, you have your career and your reputation. It would be painful to have all the doors closed to you.

ABEL. (With light irony) Yes, it would be painful. I must thank you for concerning yourself this way about my future.
CLEMENTE. It's nothing, my friend. I'm only pointing out the risks you run by letting yourself get carried away by your imagination. Sensationalist reporting nauseates me, you know that. Your stories are a little morbid sometimes.

ABEL. Perhaps you're right. Sometimes I lose my sense of proportion.

CLEMENTE. Thank you, Linares. Take this editorial to the copy desk.

ABEL. All right.

ABEL starts to exit, and then turns.

ABEL. Oh, if you'll permit me to add just one thing, I'll tell you something. The Rufo affair is no longer just a morbid story. IT IS A FACT! A proved fact.

CLEMENTE. What's a fact?

ABEL. That Rufo was assassinated. They shot his dog when it defended him, but he was assassinated just the same. Before they threw him in the river, they tied his hands with the same cord that he used to hold up his pants.

Noise of the turbulent river.

Barking.

Two shots.

Silence.

On the screen:

Second F.S. Rufo is walking slowly across the mounds of garbage and trash on the dump. A lame dog follows him. Both stand out against a clear sky. They are the only living figures, small, but not overwhelmed by the space. Rufo looks at the sky, but doesn't stop.

The projection slowly fades—or slips out of focus. Rufo, who has been standing to one side, slightly in the corner, is now lighted by a harsh overhead spot. When the projector is turned off, Rufo begins to speak, as if aware only of himself.

He doesn't move, or make any gesture.

The noise of the river continues to sound.

Again, Rufo's theme.

RUFO. (As if to himself) It doesn't matter to me whether I find out or not. It's already too late to try to do anything about it. It seems awful silly to learn to hate after you die. You wear away like a pebble in the river. As you live your life you lose all the sharp edges and then begin to roll, not making any noise or doing any harm. It's one way to survive.

Silence.

Many times, lying stretched out in the middle of the trash, I felt stupidly happy watching the smoke rise, or listening and recognizing the noises of the city. I felt almost as if I belonged...

Silence.
No, this isn’t the time to begin to hate. It’s too late for that. I’m a little tired. At last I can finally lie quietly.
The pebble has stopped rolling.

The light on Rufo slowly fades.
The music, and the noise of the river, cease.

Suddenly all the actor-witnesses stand and turn their backs to the audience, as if they were watching something happening at the edge of the river that supposedly flows across stage rear. The sequence that follows is progressive and eminently rhythmic. The dialogue is accompanied by the muffled beat of a drum. All speak facing away from the audience.

FIRST ACTOR. What’s going on?
SECOND ACTOR. They’ve found something in the river.
THIRD ACTOR. Another body.
FOURTH ACTOR. But just yesterday...
FIFTH ACTOR. Who is it?
SECOND ACTOR. Where is it?
THIRD ACTOR. They’re using an iron hook.
FOURTH ACTOR. They’re dragging it in by the neck.
FIFTH ACTOR. Now they’re pulling it out!
SIXTH ACTOR. They say it’s a woman.
FIRST ACTOR. No, it isn’t a woman.

(Suddenly, a woman’s violent sob)
THIRD ACTOR. Get back! Get out of here!
SIXTH ACTOR. Who is it?
FIRST ACTOR. Wait.
FIFTH ACTOR. It’s an animal.
SIXTH ACTOR. No. It’s a man.
FOURTH ACTOR. He’s all disfigured.

(A sudden, penetrating blast of a police whistle)
EIGHTH ACTOR. Don’t push!
SECOND ACTOR. Damned FUZZ!
SEVENTH ACTOR. Shut up.
SIXTH ACTOR. He’s one of them.
FIFTH ACTOR. What?
SIXTH ACTOR. The dead man. Is he one of them?
FIRST ACTOR. He’s wearing a uniform.
SECOND ACTOR. Sure, he’s Fuzz.
FOURTH ACTOR. It’s the Sergeant!
FIFTH ACTOR. What Sergeant?
FOURTH ACTOR. San Lucas.
EIGHTH ACTOR. But just this morning he was...
FIRST ACTOR. Well, you see him now.
SECOND ACTOR. He's sure dead now.
SEVENTH ACTOR. Drowned and bloated.

   (A loud unexpected guffaw that breaks off abruptly.) Now
   the actors lower their voices as if frightened.

FIFTH ACTOR. Who laughed?
THIRD ACTOR. Who was it?
SIXTH ACTOR. I don't know.
SECOND ACTOR. I didn't see anything.
THIRD ACTOR. Damned bums!
FOURTH ACTOR. There's no reason to laugh, even if it is the Ser­
   geant.

EIGHTH ACTOR. After all, he is dead.
FIRST ACTOR. Who laughed?
SIXTH ACTOR. Who was it . . . ?
THIRD ACTOR. Get out of here! Go on home!
SEVENTH ACTOR. (With a violent yell) Let's go! Let's get out of here!
THIRD ACTOR. Get out!
   All the actors exit slowly.
   Only Rufo remains, looking directly at the audience.

7. A gigantic representation of San Lucas's corpse appears on the screen.

   The muffled drum beat has stopped and Rufo's theme emerges.

RUFO. (Speaking, motionless) Perhaps it isn't too late to try to do
   something . . . but learning to hate after you die seems stupid . .
   The light on Rufo fades softly. Only the distorted image of
   the Sergeant's corpse remains, and it now begins to slip out
   of focus.
   The curtains close.

ACT TWO

   As the curtain opens the three officials stand with their
   hats over their breasts in an attitude of mourning, grouped
   around the bright circle of light formed by a center spot. Be­
   hind them, the gigantic representation of Sergeant San Lucas's
   body (the same with which the first act closed).

THE Notary. Take the body away!
   The projector is immediately shut off. The spots that light
   the acting area (still surrounded by shadow) are turned on,
   and the spot lighting the position of the supposed corpse fades.
   The officials don their hats and speak directly to the audi­
   ence.

THE Notary. This is the second act.
METEOROLOGIST. The second act of charity we've performed this
   week.
THE TOPOGRAPHER. A good topographer scares away crickets and nocturnal butterflies from corpses.

THE NOTARY. A good notary reads dead men’s fortunes in their tea leaves and draws up a resumé.

THE METEOROLOGIST. A good meteorologist hangs himself from the weathervanes on bell towers.

THE NOTARY. (To the audience) Perhaps I shouldn’t say it, but we are incorruptible officials and we have much more serious problems than those of Rufo and these people.

THE METEOROLOGIST. The retirement funds . . .

THE TOPOGRAPHER. The five year plans . . .

THE NOTARY. The overtime. . .

THE METEOROLOGIST. The deductions. . .

THE TOPOGRAPHER. But in spite of it all, we’re going to put things in order so you will all feel secure.

THE METEOROLOGIST. There’s nothing like order.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. And security.

THE NOTARY. Second act of charity.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. Second corpse. . .

THE NOTARY. Is that of Sergeant San Lucas, an armed guardian angel.

THE METEOROLOGIST. They waited until the river flowed pregnant with sweet mud and startled animals.

THE NOTARY. When I came to identify him, I tried to remove a three-leaf clover he had clamped between his teeth. It was only then I discovered it wasn’t a three-leaf clover. His mouth was filled with fennel and hemlock.

THE METEOROLOGIST. Spring respects no one.

THE NOTARY. No. Spring is less cruel. His mouth was brutally stuffed with grass so he wouldn’t cry out.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. What a paradox! They used police methods on him.


THE NOTARY. Come in and we’ll finish the formalities once and for all. There isn’t much time left.

All the actors move slowly into the shaded area. They stand in groups.

THE NOTARY. (To the actors) Well . . . is he or isn’t he?

AN ACTOR. Who?

THE NOTARY. That Sergeant . . . the dead man. He must give us the facts. These things can’t be improvised.
SAN LUCAS. (From the darkness) What do you want?

THE NOTARY. To complete the prescribed formula and get it over with.

Sergeant San Lucas steps into the lighted area. He speaks serenely, almost routinely. Neither his face nor his voice evokes pity.

Center stage, the Notary notes down the facts.

SAN LUCAS. (To the Notary) Raphael San Lucas, thirty-eight, married. Two children. Born in Canete. Finished grade school, then twelve years in the service, first with the rural guard, then reassigned to the city...

(As if to himself)

Now I'll be thirty-eight for all time. It's a shame, because length of service is very important on your record if you want to be promoted; as important as ambition and toughness. But in spite of everything I could do, I wasn't like that. After questioning and beating poor Rufo, I fell apart and had to throw up in the wastebasket...

THE NOTARY. Thank you.

San Lucas disappears into the wings.

THE METEOROLOGIST. He was impressionable.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. Perhaps a little weak.

THE NOTARY. But a decent man.

THE METEOROLOGIST. The Rightist newspapers will say, "a martyr."

THE TOPOGRAPHER. The Leftist, "an executioner."

THE NOTARY. But we, who are truthful witnesses, can tell you confidentially:

(Lowering his voice)

He was just a man who threw up in the wastepaper basket.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. An official like us...

THE METEOROLOGIST. A public servant...

THE NOTARY. A friend, perhaps, if we'd known him...

THE TOPOGRAPHER. A good man, if we'd allowed him to be...

THE METEOROLOGIST. Let's accompany his body to the cemetery, then...

The three officials, keeping step, march in procession around the stage; their attitude reflects mourning; they talk among themselves like members of a funeral cortège. Very low, one hears a funeral march.

The slow movement continues; the false unction of these ceremonies dominates the stage.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. He will rest beneath these gentle, fermented hills.

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THE NOTARY. We are nothing; in truth, we are nothing.

THE Topographer. Time, my friends, is like an unsound barrel leaking good wine.

THE NOTARY. All this is painful, but natural. It reminds me of the first time I made love.

THE Meteorologist. Each of us carries within him a beast crouched to spring.

THE Topographer. And one cannot corner this beast without expecting it to attack.

THE NOTARY. Society will not remain indifferent.

THE Meteorologist. If it has been attacked...

THE NOTARY. (Hard) It will defend itself!

The three, forming a line, stand facing the audience. General White moves forward. White military uniform. Decorations. (A funeral address)

THE GENERAL. Today, in this place, we bury honor, valor, and public spirit. San Lucas, vengeance and punishment shall spring forth from the fertile earth in which we have placed you. Because a man like you, walking through life with evangelical step, cannot remain avenged. San Lucas, where you placed your foot, smiles will never again flower. Where you placed your hand, you left a caress in burning flesh! You were an uncompromising man, seamless, round and whole as an egg... Until today, our paternal eye only kept watch, but now, our hand will cause the cold edge of fear to be felt. We do not mourn, because avengers know no mourning. San Lucas, rest in peace, for we shall wage war in your name!

General White steps back a few paces, puts on dark glasses to hide his emotion, and stands rigidly at attention. One by one, the officials file before him and shake his hand as they lower their heads in a gesture of condolence. Some of the actors do the same.

The three officials converse in a low voice on one side of the stage as General White steps back into the shadow. The funeral music ceases.

THE NOTARY. I think our role in this investigation has been exaggerated. We should go.

THE Topographer. No one can reproach us for anything, can they?

THE Meteorologist. Perhaps our only fault has been to forget him too soon.

THE Topographer. Who?

THE Meteorologist. Rufo... and he died only yesterday.

THE NOTARY. And now we're beginning to forget Sergeant San
THE METEOROLOGIST. Permeated by the smell of cypress resin and furze.
Lucas . . . and he died only today.
THE TOPOGRAPHER. Tomorrow when we awake with a bitter taste in our mouths and we look at ourselves in the mirror, we will no longer remember either of them. And that’s the way it should be. No one wants to carry this matter any further.
THE NOTARY. Least of all us.
(ABEL steps forward)
ABEL. I do!
THE NOTARY. Unhealthy curiosity.
(General White also steps forward)
THE GENERAL. And I!
THE NOTARY. Dangerous resentment.
("The Nun" from the rear)
"THE NUN". So do I!
THE NOTARY. Vicious morbidity.
(DON CLEMENTE, from the rear)
DON CLEMENTE. Of course, we’ll have to go ahead with it.
THE NOTARY. We’d have liked to have spared you this.
THE TOPOGRAPHER. We’d have liked to turn out the lights leaving a few stars, and take off our make-up.
THE METEOROLOGIST. We’d have liked to leave. . .
THE TOPOGRAPHER. To have asked for a light from the first passerby and gone home puffing a cigarette.
THE NOTARY. But you are the ones who have wished it!
The three officials put on their hats and exit rapidly. The actors step back into the shadows till they almost disappear.
A violent voice offstage.
THE VOICE OF SAN LUCAS. Come on in here, we want to see your face!
Rufo is propelled onstage, violently pushed by someone offstage. He stands in the shadow.
Sergeant San Lucas enters and takes his position beneath the light. Two policemen watch from the shadows.
SAN LUCAS. Here! In the light, so we can see you!
Rufo fearfully approaches the lighted area.
Take off your shoes!
Rufo hesitates. The Sergeant hits him. Rufo, with difficulty, takes off his shoes, then remains standing, barefoot.
Silence.
Take off your belt!
Rufo takes it off and holds up his pants precariously.
Silence.
Empty your pockets!
   Rufo takes out his insignificant belongings and puts them on the floor.
Take off your jacket. Hurry, you bastard!
   Rufo takes it off and drops it on the floor. He shivers, San Lucas hands him a piece of paper.
Take this! Write down the names of all the political ringleaders in that thieves' district of yours.
   Rufo hesitates in taking the paper. San Lucas violently shoves him to his knees and throws the paper to him.
Write!
   Rufo begins to write but stops, an unfinished gesture suspended in the air, and looks, as if completely absorbed, at the piece of paper on the floor.

The Offstage Voice of Rufo. "Maybe this isn't the way things are. . . Maybe I'm dreaming. . . Perhaps the resentment of all these years makes me imagine things like this. . . Dead men have no memory."
   Rufo, still absorbed, does not write.
San Lucas. Write, you shitass, write! The place of the meetings. . . Where they hide their propaganda, everything. . . We have to put a little order into that crew of anarchists. You put those ideas in their heads.
   Rufo tries to say something, but his gestures and his words congeal in the air. San Lucas bangs Rufo's head on the floor and holds it there as he says:
Think about it, old man, think about it. . . ! It's all up. You're a stool pigeon and everyone knows it. They don't have anything more to do with you, and they'll end up by killing you. Think about what a pig you are, a driveling stool pigeon, and write! Write so we'll help you. . . We're all you've got left. You brought them all together and now you have to break it up.
   San Lucas releases his head. Rufo tries again to write, but can't. He shivers and looks around like a trapped animal.
The Offstage Voice of Rufo. I remember I suddenly felt cold and wanted to piss. Maybe it was then that I saw everything clear for the first time. Yes. . . it was then. I saw myself thrown to the floor like an animal, like I am now, and I understood. . . only then, I understood.
   San Lucas gives him a push that sprawls him flat on the floor.
San Lucas. What are you waiting for, Professor? Are you waiting until you remember your whole history: abandonment of your family, stealing, street fights, violation of a minor? You've had a lot of callings,
Professor: political agitator, thief . . . and now only one's left, the last, the one you yourself have chosen: stool pigeon!

You read a lot, Professor, and you're the only person around here who knows how to write, the only one who knows how to write the names of all the others on a filthy piece of paper.

Come on . . . what're you waiting for?

The pencil has fallen from Rufo's hand. He is stupified.
San Lucas grabs him by the collar and jerks him to his feet.
He speaks fiercely into Rufo's face.
Take off your clothes! All your clothes, you understand? You're going to that corner buck-naked. When you want to ask for something, or call me, you bark . . . understood? If you don't bark, no one will come.

San Lucas leads him to a corner of the stage. There Rufo removes his clothes. His back is to the audience. He stands hunched over, completely nude.

Very softly, Rufo's theme.

THE OFFSTAGE VOICE OF RUFO. Sergeant San Lucas no longer matters to me . . . nor anyone else. I was as alone as the first man . . . if there ever was one. At that moment, really, I was the first man. I'm not saying that out of bitterness, nor do I feel sorry for myself. Right this minute I see myself in that corner and I don't feel a thing except a terrible stupor . . .

Rufo, trembling in his corner, begins to bark timidly, insecurely at first, then progressively stronger until the barking becomes heart-rending, pathetic.
This should produce in the audience physical unease and discomfort.

San Lucas goes towards him.

SAN LUCAS. Do you need something, Professor? Perhaps you want to write. . . You used to like to write pamphlets. . . Well, nobody was making you do it, but if you volunteer . . .

San Lucas throws a kind of old army coat around Rufo, the kind from "mustering out" time that beggars and idiots wear. Rufo puts it on. He makes a pathetic figure.

San Lucas, across the stage, deliberately drops a piece of paper on the floor at his feet and stands motionless. Rufo hesitates, shivers, and after a long silence slowly approaches San Lucas, as if fascinated by the paper. He stares at it. He arrives at the place where San Lucas is standing; he slowly bends down until he is on his knees at the Sergeant's feet. After a last hesitation, he grabs the paper feverishly and still kneeling begins to write on the floor.

Brief blackout.

A long loud laugh from San Lucas.
Almost immediately the lights come back on.
Rufo is standing before a group of seven or eight characters, among them, "The Nun." They are all poor, residents of the dump. They are listening suspiciously to Rufo. They do not speak.

Noise of the turbulent river.

RUFO. It isn't that I'm more important than anybody else. I'm just an old man, and sometimes I talk more than I ought to. I don't have any more lice than the rest of you. Why do you look at me that way when I'm speaking? I'm not afraid of you. . . Not you or any stinking policeman. When you're old, you're not afraid of anything except the cold and getting beat up. Especially the cold. When you're stiff with cold you don't think about anything, or anyone anymore. We've always lived like rats. Biting at each other, stealing garbage from each other. . . That's the thing I've always talked to you about. We've been risking our lives and trying to organize for nothing. . .

(One of the men spits on the ground and walks away with an expression of indifference and disgust)

That's the best way for us all to go down. They don't have to persecute us and take advantage of us. We make sure we stomp each others' guts out.

We have to stand up against them one more time!

Another of the men spits with disgust and exits.

I've just come from the Police Station. They had me there almost all night. I understood at last that everything depended on us. They stripped me there in jail . . . I . . . I couldn't do anything except. . .

Two of the men exit. One of them spits on the ground before he leaves.

RUFO. I know what can be done. I know all their traps. I've thought about it. I've prepared myself for this moment. . . I hadn't dared before, but now I'm sure. Yes, I'm sure. . . Justice must be taken by force.

Another man exits. He spits.

But first, you must know something. . . I have to confess to you that tonight at the Police Station. . . I . . . they made me . . . they gave me a piece of paper . . . my friends, I . . .

The last remaining man slowly approaches Rufo and spits noisily in his face. Rufo neither turns away from him nor wipes his face. The man exits. Only "The Nun" remains facing Rufo.

RUFO. . . . Friends . . . I . . . I'm a stool pigeon!

Long silence.

"The Nun" and Rufo, motionless.

"THE NUN". We've got to get out of here.

RUFO. (Absorbed) Whaaa. . . ?
"The Nun". Get out of here . . . right now!
Rufo. (Distant) Get out. . . ?
"The Nun". You shouldn't have spoken like that.
Rufo. No.
"The Nun". What's the matter with you? Wipe your face!
    Only now does Rufo wipe his face, mechanically, his
    thoughts far away.
Rufo. I don't understand.
"The Nun". There's nothing to understand. Even God doesn't under-
stand.
Rufo. It's useless.
"The Nun". It will be the same anywhere . . . but we'll be alive!
Rufo. Are we alive. . . ?
"The Nun". I'll look for another place.
Rufo. Another trash-littered shore where the miserable go to die. . .
Another elephant graveyard.
"The Nun". You think a lot about things, Rufo. I don't like quitters.
I'm not going to change things all by myself, but at least I want to
speak up when I feel like it.
    Juanelo approaches them. He seems excited.
Juanelo. They're starting to fence in the dump with barbed wire!
"The Nun". Rounding up the cattle.
Rufo. We've lived like animals, and as it turns out it's our own fault.
"The Nun". Of course it's our own fault. People like us have one
great fault: we reproduce ourselves.
    The noise of the river ceases.
    General White and Don Clemente have moved forward to
    form another small group on the opposite side of the stage.
    Their dialogues alternate, interweaving in a curious way, as
    the light increases over the group speaking and dims over the
    silent one.
General White. Did you say they reproduce themselves, Don
Clemente? (laughs) Well, that seems natural to me, eh?
Clemente. Not very, if you consider the fact that for every child
you or I have, twenty of them are born. Remember, they have no sense
of responsibility.
General White. Maybe you're exaggerating.
Don Clemente. What was once just a garbage dump on the outskirts
of town has become a solid ring that endangers the city.
General White. All I've ever seen are spindly children and old
epileptics.
Don Clemente. (Smiling ironically) Yes, of course, my dear Gen-
eral. It was surely one of those poor spindly children who felled Ser­
gent San Lucas with one shot.

GENERAL WHITE. (Dryly) What do you mean? Who do you think killed the Sergeant?

(The light dims. The other group is illuminated)

RUFIO. Who killed Sergeant San Lucas?

"THE NUN". And who killed you, Rufo?

RUFIO. That's different.

"THE NUN". It's the same thing.

RUFIO. I don't think it was any of us from the dump who shot at San
Lucas.

"THE NUN". None of those lousy bums has a revolver; they would have sold it, or hocked it.

JUANELO. (Absorbed in thought) All of us have something on our
conscience. I killed someone years ago, but I did it to his face, in a
knife fight.

(Light on the other group)

GENERAL WHITE. I know that every one of those wretches has a
death on his conscience, but Sergeant San Lucas also had enemies in
other places.

DON CLEMENTE. I have proof, General, that they liquidated the
Sergeant to avenge Rufo's death.

GENERAL WHITE. Proof?

DON CLEMENTE. More than proof: a witness.

GENERAL WHITE. Who?

DON CLEMENTE. Juanelo, that beggar who lives with them. He can
swear to it.

GENERAL WHITE. (In a voice filled with hatred) Cowardly rats!

DON CLEMENTE. And other policemen will go on dying this way,

General. It is unavoidable.

GENERAL WHITE. It certainly is avoidable! And I'll show you how!

DON CLEMENTE. Yes. Something has to be done, General.

(Light upon the other group)

"THE NUN". Something has to be done, Rufo.

RUFIO. I don't have any influence any more. You've seen that.

"THE NUN". There's Juanelo and the others.

RUFIO. For what?

"THE NUN". First, to see that those poor devils understand they're in
danger, and, then, to see that they get ready to defend themselves.

RUFIO. Defend themselves? That would be hard. They're stronger
than we are. They have God on their side. They are the just.
“The Nun”. Someone will listen to me. They’ll believe me.

Rufo. You? Isabel, “the Nun”...

“The Nun”. It’s true, I’m a whore. Whores always lie.

(After a pause)

Juanelo. Maybe I can do something...

(Light on the other group)

General White. Did you say that Juanelo is on our side?

Don Clemente. Yes.

General White. Then Juanelo himself can do something.

Don Clemente. What?

General White. Call a meeting of the leaders, of all those involved politically... We already have a list of all the dangerous elements. They are few, but active. He could promise them something. It would be easy to surprise them. There’s the river on one side, and the barbed wire on the other.

Don Clemente. (Fearful) Recommend prudence to your men, General. A warning isn’t the same as extermination. I only wanted to aid the authorities, but naturally I don’t want to have any responsibility for what could happen, especially if there’s violence.

General White. I understand, and I thank you for your help.

Don Clemente. It was my obligation. I couldn’t remain silent.

(A light on the other group)

“The Nun”. We can’t remain silent! That would be cowardly.

Juanelo. Talk... but who to?

Rufo. Talk... cowardice... Words, Isabel, just words. I can tell you what happens when you’re old, naked, and as lonely as death.

Juanelo. We can’t count on you.

Rufo. Do you think you can count on anyone?

“The Nun”. Abel, for example, the newspaperman.

Juanelo. He’s always sucking up to someone.

“The Nun”. But even if it’s no more than reporting what happens, he can help us.

Rufo. He’d write a funny story about our low funds.

“The Nun”. He wouldn’t do that. It’s a matter of life or death.

(Light on the other group)

General White. When all’s said and done we’re talking about a matter of life or death. I’ll explain everything to the Governor.

Don Clemente. He’ll smile.

General White. He won’t do that.

Don Clemente. If it were a matter of his life...

General White. But it does involve him. A State that has this
plague hanging over it is a disgrace. He himself bears the danger of being relieved of his position because of all this. Political subversion, corruption, and now organized crime. There's only one solution: round them all up. The Governor will approve. He has a clean and spotless career.

**DON CLEMENTE.** I have six children, General. A great responsibility. I came to speak to you about this matter very much against my will. It was my obligation.

*Light on the other group*

**RUFIO.** I'll speak to Abel.

**JUAN LO.** Whatever you all want. It was my duty to warn you that he's a blackmailer.

Stage left, Rufio turns towards the audience. General White does the same stage right.

"The Nun," Juanelo, and Don Clemente have returned to the shaded area.

**GENERAL WHITE.** (To the audience) I spoke with the Governor. He told me he would help us.

**RUFIO.** (To the audience) I spoke with Abel. He told me he would help us.

Both Rufio and the General, leaving the acting zone, return to the shaded area. Then Abel moves forward and speaks to an actor seated in the shadow, isolated at one side. During the first part of the dialogue he will not leave the shaded area.

**ABEL.** Mister Governor...?

**GOVERNOR.** Yes.

**ABEL.** You do not know me, of course. I am Abelardo Linares, reporter and editor of the newspaper owned by Don Clemente Serrano.

**GOVERNOR.** (Indifferent) Ah.

**ABEL.** I guess you have already spoken with him.

**GOVERNOR.** (Coldly) No.

**ABEL.** It's about the San Lazarus dump... You must have heard of that...

*He hesitates*

**GOVERNOR.** I've heard nothing.

**ABEL.** Well, several rather strange things have happened there and I thought...

**GOVERNOR.** (Interrupting coldly) What do you want, Linares?

**ABEL.** I want you to know the truth.

**GOVERNOR.** I know it. (Ironically) Furthermore, I usually read your reports in the newspapers.

**ABEL.** There are many things I can't write about.
GOVERNOR. What, for example?
ABEL. About Rufo’s death.
GOVERNOR. Rufo? Who is he?
ABEL. Or about what they’re planning to do.
GOVERNOR. I am unaware that they’re planning to do anything.
ABEL. A big roundup.
GOVERNOR. Oh, that . . . a roundup of delinquents, traffickers, thieves and prostitutes.
ABEL. A roundup of men.
GOVERNOR. A routine job.
ABEL. That will be the end of them.
GOVERNOR. That will be the end of misery, of license, and of corruption. Are these your “revelations”?
ABEL. (Raising his voice) Don’t you understand, Mr. Governor, that they’re planning an injustice?
GOVERNOR. You’re imagining things, Linares.
ABEL. I’m not imagining Don Clemente Serrano’s plans.
GOVERNOR. I know about them, and I approve of them. We’ll construct a modern residential area on the site of the dump.
ABEL. Mister Governor, do you know what measures the police will take?
GOVERNOR. They must have been taken often before.
ABEL. (Abandoning the tone of a subordinate) All right. Then you will be accomplice to an act of inhumanity. You are permitting the unleashing of violence. The only thing left for me to do is to make a full accounting of this situation. I still have access to certain independent newspapers. Good night.

Abel starts to exit, but the Governor stops him with a word.

Now the Governor leaves the shadow and steps into the illuminated area.

GOVERNOR. Wait.
ABEL stops, but doesn’t turn to face the governor.
I think that what’s worrying you is simply a matter of conjecture. Perhaps you’ve received a mistaken impression about all this.
ABEL. These are the facts: two men have been killed already, and before them many more disappeared. More may disappear tonight.
GOVERNOR. You sound as if an extermination were being planned. That’s pure nonsense, Linares. We are living in a civilized and democratic country, not under a terrorist regime. They simply requested my authorization for stricter control over a corrupt and dangerous area. I am personally interested that you report anything that happens with
complete freedom. These are my principles. In addition, I would like to request as a special service that you draw up a complete report on this matter and see that my promise of aid reaches all those who may be damaged, if there are any damaged.

ABEL. (After a silence) In that case, and since the offer comes from you, I must impose certain conditions.

(A tense silence)
At this moment in the dialogue, both turn to face the audience to justify their conduct.
The light changes subtly.

GOVERNOR. You heard everything. He was blackmailing me. He’s an opportunist.

ABEL. You are witnesses. The bastard meant to bribe me.

GOVERNOR. Only because he had statements from some beggars which, according to him, compromised me...

ABEL. I asked him to prevent General White from carrying out his plans. Those were the conditions I imposed.

GOVERNOR. He was arrested on a charge of attempted blackmail. He made his living this way.

ABEL. I haven’t been a saint, it’s true; but this was different. This was really serious. He offered me a remunerative assignment. I rejected it with indignation. Then he called the police.

GOVERNOR. I refused to accept his proposals. He became violent and threatened me physically. Then I called the police.

The Governor steps back and returns to the shadow. Abel takes one step towards the audience; he seems bowed down under a great weight, his shoulders slumped.

ABEL. We are all guilty. I, as well. But when finally one wants to cry out, it is too late, and he hears his voice echoing in a vacuum.

A Voice FROM THE DARKNESS. (Harshly) Abelardo Linares!

ABEL. I am he. . . I’m coming.

ABEL turns and steps into the shadow with a tired step and defeated expression.

8. Projection of barbed wire. It should suggest a concentration camp.

Theo and Juanelo are conversing downstage, the image of the barbed wire behind them.

THEO. And why tonight, Juanelo?

JUANELO. It’s the only thing we can do.

THEO. Do the others know?

JUANELO. Some.

THEO. What do they say?

JUANELO. They agree.
THEO. Who?

JUANELO. Besides everyone on the Committee, the paper collector and his woman, the Celis Kid, "The Nun," el Quebracho, and several others.

THEO. They’d run away at the first sign of trouble.

JUANELO. No. Not this time.

THEO. I’ve never believed a thing you said, Juanelo.

JUANELO. I know.

THEO. (After a moment) Where’s the place?

JUANELO. On the other side of the train tracks.

THEO. Is it vacant land?

JUANELO. Yes.

THEO. Why?

JUANELO. They’re going to put up a factory there.

THEO. So?

JUANELO. It’s empty, unguarded land. We could settle there without anyone finding out.

THEO. And the cops?

JUANELO. The Station’s a long way away.

THEO. And how do we dig in?

JUANELO. Tin cans, rocks, cardboard boxes. ... With whatever we can.

THEO. And when they come to throw us off?

JUANELO. We defend ourselves.

THEO. Rocks against bullets?

JUANELO. They won’t dare.

THEO. They’ve dared other times.

JUANELO. And other times empty land’s been occupied, too.

THEO. Yeah. ... by others.

JUANELO. Yes. Others have done it.

THEO. Others less tired and less flea-bitten.

JUANELO. And why not us?

THEO. You haven’t taken a good look at us.

JUANELO. What do you mean?

THEO. Old men and pregnant women. ... That’s some army of occupation!

JUANELO. Just poor people. That’s not so bad.

THEO. More than poor. So poor that sometimes we’ve got nothing to crap.

JUANELO. (Impatient) Numbers are what matters. Everyone should be there ... don’t you agree?
THEO. I don’t know.

JUAN. We have to stand together now. It’s the only way it can work.

THEO. (Absent) If we had stood together...

JUAN. Tonight at ten we’ll leave the dump by way of the river. The other side is fenced in.

THEO. (Following his idea) ... But you never know.

JUAN. What? ...

THEO. Nothing.

JUAN. Will you be there?

THEO. I’ll be there.

JUAN. Until tonight, then.

(Juan exits)

THEO. (Stopping him) Juan. ... JUAN. What?

THEO. Do you know who killed Rufo?

JUAN. Rufo fell in the river while he was drunk.

THEO. (As if she hadn’t heard) Do you know who killed him?

JUAN. No.

THEO. (After a brief pause, staring at him fixedly) I do.

JUAN exits.

Theo remains a moment staring into space.

The sound of barking followed by two shots.

On the screen an image of Rufo’s dead face, his eyes open and staring.

Rufo silently appears behind Theo.

Theo does not turn around. She senses that it is Rufo who is behind her. An indefinable tenderness hovers in the air.

Rufo’s theme.

After a long silence.

THEO. (Without turning around) Rufo, now I know who killed you and why...

RUFO. (Speaking from behind her, almost sweetly) I knew it all the time, Theo.

THEO. (Without turning) Did you know it before you died?

RUFO. Yes, Theo.

THEO. You didn’t say anything to me.

RUFO. You wouldn’t have believed me.

THEO. Who knows?

RUFO. You were sick of me and rightly so. I was an old drunk who was mixed up with the police.

THEO. I was afraid. When I’m afraid I begin to yell at people. That’s why I threw you out.
Rufo. It happens to me, too. Only I begin to drink and to look for someone weaker than I am to insult.

(Silence)

Theo. We never talked about these things before.

Rufo. No, Theo.

Theo. Now it's too late, isn't it?

Rufo. I don't know, Theo.

Theo. It's just that we've always been running away. There was hardly time enough time to hate each other.

Rufo. Don't talk like that. You're still alive.

Theo. My father was a filthy old man. I hated him. I swore to get so far away that I'd forget even the smell of people like him. It was no use. After running all my life, I ended up living in a dump heap with an old man just like him. And you are that old man, Rufo.

Rufo. That's how it goes. Lots of times I beat women to make them give me money. But the other night I cried, begging you not to throw me out.

Theo. Thank you, Rufo. You were a good man.

Rufo. Thank you, Theo. You are a good woman.

(Theo walks to one side, preparing to leave)

Theo. (Without looking at Rufo) Am I going to die with the others tonight, Rufo?

Rufo. Yes, Theo.

Theo. There's nothing that can be done?

Rufo. No.

Theo. Are you sure?

Rufo. Yes. Anything that can be done will be done by those who come after us.

Theo. Just the same, I don't want to die.

Rufo's theme ceases.

The projector is shut off.

Theo, before exiting, as if moved by one last hope, turns towards the actors who stand in the shadow surrounding the acting area. When she approaches each of them asking for help, one by one they turn their backs until all are standing backs to the audience.

Theo. (Speaking to them in a tone of humble supplication) Mister Linares...!

(The newspaperman turns his back)

Don Clemente...!

(Clemente turns his back)

General...!
(The General turns his back)

Juanelo. . . !

(Juanelo turns his back)

Mister Governor. . . !

(The Governor turns his back)

Friends. . . !

(The remaining actors turn their backs. Now she speaks directly to the audience with a final desolate gesture. Begging: And you. . . ?)

(A great silence)

The tense tone of desolation is broken by the brusque and agitated entrance of Juanelo and the noise of the menacing river.

Juanelo. Let's go, Theo, hurry! Everything's ready. We've gathered down by the shore. We're going to start living like human beings!

(Theo says nothing)

(Both exit)

The illuminated area remains empty. The entire cast is facing away from the audience. Absolute silence. Suddenly a man's suffocated cry. A kind of death rattle. As if this were a signal, the lights on the acting area are shut off.

Third F.S. A filmed sequence projected on the entire back screen. (This filmed sequence is accompanied by a sound track—hopefully incorporated into the film—noises, shouts, shots, mechanical noises, and as a background, the water of the river)

This sequence will show a montage of blurred images, the actors not necessarily recognizable: fleeting faces showing fear. Darkness; hands; running feet; weapons; firearms, compact groups of confused people. The image as well as the development should suggest progressively more intense horror and violence. The filmed projection can be combined with actors on the stage moving about confusedly, silhouetted against the screen, parts of the projection itself playing on their bodies. Some of the stage spots flash like sparks. All of this violent, confused and deafening whole reaches a final crescendo and stops suddenly.

All stand motionless.

The projector is shut off.

Absolute silence.

The acting area is again illuminated. The three officials enter and stand motionless, speaking from their individual positions. Rufo, on the other extreme of the stage, barely lighted, will act as a kind of counterpoint to the chorus of the officials. The voices of the officials are natural to the point of being routine. That of Rufo is muffled and absorbed.

The Notary. Midnight.

The Meteorologist. A cloudy sky.
THE TOPOGRAPHER. Silence.
RUFO. The great roundup is over.
THE NOTARY. They didn't leave any witnesses.
THE TOPOGRAPHER. Nor traces.
THE METEOROLOGIST. Nor guilty.
RUFO. They could scarcely defend themselves in the darkness.
THE NOTARY. Only the sound of the river.
THE METEOROLOGIST. Only the viscous trail.
THE TOPOGRAPHER. Of the sewer rats.
RUFO. They surrounded them, they beat them, and threw them in the river.
THE NOTARY. Someone is returning late to his house.
THE METEOROLOGIST. Drunk and singing.
THE TOPOGRAPHER. Trying to find the keyhole with his key.
RUFO. No one saw anything. Thirty beggars vanished. Thirty dead.
THE NOTARY. Someone awakens in the night.
THE METEOROLOGIST. And feels terror in his guts.
THE TOPOGRAPHER. Without knowing why.
RUFO. Their dying agonies were swift and quiet in the river. Tired old men, and women with swollen bellies. . . Dead.
THE NOTARY. It's beginning to dawn.
THE TOPOGRAPHER. Night.
THE METEOROLOGIST. Is completely over.
RUFO. Some survivor dragged himself to the shore, but he was thrown back into the water.
THE NOTARY. The first sounds of the stirring city: milkmen, streetcars. . .
THE TOPOGRAPHER. A butcher is putting on his apron and hanging out great slabs of bloody meat.
THE METEOROLOGIST. A mailman is coming out of a doorway, his hands empty now.
THE NOTARY. The first smoke from the morning coffee . . . the first signs of life above the rooftops.
RUFO. Everything has not been said.
DON CLEMENTE. Almost everything.
RUFO. Who killed Sergeant San Lucas?
DON CLEMENTE. Everyone knows that.
RUFO. Who?
DON CLEMENTE. One of those beggars.
RUFO. Did you make the accusation?
Don Clemente. I don’t know who made it.
Rufo. Yes, you made it.
Don Clemente. It’s possible.
Rufo. You lied.
Don Clemente. No.
Rufo. You lied!
Don Clemente. That’s enough!
Rufo. You wanted to provoke a reprisal by the police. . . And you succeeded.
Don Clemente. Something had to be done.
Rufo. Yes, something had to be done . . . and it was.
Rufo grabs Don Clemente by his lapels.
Don Clemente. (Frightened) Let go!
Rufo. Who killed Sergeant San Lucas?
Don Clemente. I don’t know.
Rufo. (Shaking him) It was you, you bastard!
Don Clemente. (Seizing his neck) Assassin!
Don Clemente defends himself. A violent struggle in which Clemente knocks Rufo down by a blow to the throat and then strangles him into lifelessness.
Don Clemente. (Panting, in a spiteful voice) I know you’re already dead. . . But I’d kill you again if necessary!
Rufo. (Hoarse) All dead. . .
The Notary. It is ten o’clock in the evening of the fifteenth of July, 1961. The sky is covered with low, unstable clouds, and our solar system moves irresistibly towards the constellation of Hercules.
The Topographer. There are no appreciable changes in the crust of the earth.
The Meteorologist. In spite of the fact that the solstice makes the sap in the trees recede, there are no symptoms of anything extraordinary.
Rufo. (Hoarse) All dead. . .
The Notary. And as they do every night decent people yawn their insomnia and urinate their remorse. . .
Rufo. (Hoarse) . . . dead!
The Three Officials. (Raising one hand) We testify to this! We swear it!

The three officials remain in the position from which they have spoken.
Rufo moves towards the remaining cast in the shaded area and calls:
Rufo. Don Clemente!
Clemente answers him without moving from the shaded area.

CLEMENTE. What do you want?
RUFIO. To ask one more thing.
CLEMENTE. Everything's been said.
RUFIO. Not everything.
DON CLEMENTE. Too much, really.
RUFIO. Not everything.
DON CLEMENTE. One ends up forgetting the details.

With difficulty he drags the body towards the place it lay at the beginning of the play. The sprawling body adjusts to the chalk outline.

Don Clemente composes his features and speaks directly to the audience with dignified and bountiful serenity.

DON CLEMENTE. I'm very sorry. I, too, despise violence.

Don Clemente exits.

Some actor wakens the priest who has been asleep throughout the play. He shakes him. The priest awakes, slightly startled.

ACTOR. Wake up, Father, ... there's a corpse...

THE PRIEST. Oh... Oh, yes!

The priest approaches Rufio, who is stretched out on the ground, kneels beside him, blesses him (as if giving a post-mortem benediction) then rises and returns to where he had been sitting and begins to nod once more. Happy and playful organ-grinder music bursts forth.

The three officials recover their mobility and move about, speaking jovially and brightly.

THE NOTARY. My friends, yesterday the last of the buildings was completed and a nursery was opened.

THE METEOROLOGIST. The lawn was cut and the hedges trimmed.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. This model residential area is now called San Lazarus Park City.

THE NOTARY. There are still a few residents—not many—who remember when all this was a dump.

THE TOPOGRAPHER. It was inevitable. The landscape changes, and with the landscape, the people.

THE METEOROLOGIST. The air carries only the rustling of birch leaves. Fear has disappeared.

DON CLEMENTE. (Stepping forward) All over the country there are plans for similar undertakings. It's simply a question of high-level planning.

GENERAL WHITE. (Stepping forward) I have here some facts. It was proved in the last census that beggary has been reduced some sixty percent.
The Governor. (Stepping forward) I only want to add that within a short time we shall have effected the complete disappearance of promiscuity, poverty, and injustice from this country. No one can deny that we have done everything within our power to achieve this state.

10. An image of a nude, half surreal, half pathetic. A photograph taken at such close range that the planes of the body form disconcerting black-white abstractions.

The Notary. It is six o'clock on the morning of the sixteenth of July, 1961. Leo opens his yawning jaws towards the cold of August, but the river no longer flows swollen.

The Meteorologist. It flows within its normal channel but now it is alive with bodies as green as the reeds of the shore.

The Topographer. They travel sleeping towards the sea, beyond the last horizon.

The Notary. And Rufo?

The Topographer. Who was Rufo?

The Notary points to the fallen body of Rufo. The Meteorologist approaches the corpse.

The Meteorologist. It’s very possible that if he hadn’t died the way he did, he would have died very soon from natural causes as a result of the generally poor state of his health. That’s what the coroner’s report says.

The Topographer. The only disquieting thing, perhaps, is that the corpse has open eyes.

The Meteorologist. When the natural thing would be to have them closed.

The Notary. Although our duty was only to identify the topography of a nude. . .

The Topographer. . . . we have testified, verified, considered, analyzed and probed the facts. . .

The Meteorologist. (To the audience) . . . but we know almost as little as you!

The projector has been shut off. The lights decrease in intensity until they return to the cold light of dawn of the first scene. As the lights decrease, a spot picks out Rufo’s body. Barking, and then Rufo’s theme. Now there is only Rufo’s body and the music accompanying his solitude.

Slowly, tight and music fade. The curtains slowly close.
"Forked Hybrid"
Cast Bronze
Richard Hunt
"Flight Section"
Welded Steel
83" x 60" x 65"
Richard Hunt
"No Title"
Richard Hunt
“Natural Form I” (1968)
Welded Steel
13” High x 29” Wide
Richard Hunt
Jane Katselas

FRAGMENT

I lift fragile ashes of the past
with small whispers
come, surround this
plain column
lay by me and
watch freshly dug fires
radiant, inexhaustible
filled with sacred wind
I will find for you
poking in the embers
(with my index finger)
a smouldering cause
for all this
paradox

Jane Katselas

AEROFLOT

The ocean below me
(a slate grey carpet
buffed by revolving
moons and suns
where embroideries of
land are fringed
the distant glistenings
of orange heat melting
with clouds in rows
above vapors floating)
is slit
by one boat


Jane Katselas

ERIC

Suspended smiles
laughing particles like
oceans foam

we walked
sometimes ran
leaving burning footprints
with tiny shadows

you said,
"Don't speak in platitudes"
I ask
"What is flying out of
your heart"
and you said
"Unknown birds"

we went to the edge
of friendship
never reached beyond
Michael Bullock

CRIME

The mouths in the wall whisper as I pass
words to which I do my best to close my ears
evil messages enticing me to crime
in the darkness lit by lamps strangled by fog
A knife drops down out of a window into my hand
and a throat presents itself at the very next corner
Who was it that lifted my arm
and drew my hand sideways in a lightning movement?
I hear my footsteps running off into the night
and stand here paralysed waiting for silence
but the walls continue to whisper and I cannot close my ears
to my fleeing footsteps and the walls' echoing laughter
as I wait in the innermost compartment
of the Chinese lacquer box of blackness

Michael Bullock

POEM ON TWO LEVELS

A wooden horse disintegrates
at the touch of a pink wind
Roses crumble to ash and drift through the hair
of a blond girl naked among trees
Evolving stubbornly
in a contrary direction
weasels and stoats
become masters of the forest
The dwellers on hill tops
are forced to beg for bread
from the angels who own a boot factory
in the depths of the valley
where a river meanders wearily
in search of its lost purse

**Michael Bullock**

**THE ROPE**

There is a rope around the world
being pulled slowly tighter
Gradually the upper half of the world is turning white
the lower half black
as the centre is pulled in tighter and tighter

Soon there will be two worlds
one white one black
The white world will float up into the sky
and vanish
the black world will sink down into deep water
and vanish
and there will be no world
but only the rope
dangling its empty noose
in empty space
It was late in the afternoon and Harry Adler was standing idly in the plaza huddled around his upturned collar, cringing from the drizzle. Harry was an American traveller. That morning he had gone down from his room to the hotel lobby for the usual breakfast. Coffee, soft-boiled egg, and rolls. Knocking the top of the egg, Harry would invariably mix it with shells. Every morning he took his breakfast on the far side of the lobby where no one sat. It was easier than quibbling out in the city and in a language that he neither understood nor cared for.

This morning he sipped with deliberation the strong black coffee then lifted his spoon and cracked the egg shell with a whack. He was thinking how he could avoid getting something to bring back to his cousin, Sheila. She expected whatever Harry brought her or her father, Harry's boss, would know about it. Customs was such a nuisance these
days. But Harry couldn't conjure up the solution. So he would walk over to the old quarter. At least he could bargain there.

It was late in the afternoon when he stood idly in the plaza huddled around his upturned collar, cringing at the thought of climbing up the dingy streets. When he was in London Sheila settled for lemon soap, but now he was sure she wanted jewelry. Last month before she left for school, she dragged Harry around looking at necklaces and pins. Harry had done that for two weeks. So she expected jewelry.

He climbed up the cobbled stones toward the shops. At least it was out of season, he thought. In this, Harry was correct. The proprietor at number six was waiting, ever so patiently, for Harry. The business had been poor for the proprietor—in fact, so poor, that he was still wearing the same shoes from last season. But then there had always been slow times. If he waited long enough things would change. He could plan to buy some of the things his son needed with this sale—maybe all of them. He watched Harry coming up the street poking his head in and out of shops, while trying desperately to avoid the noise of the trailing children. It was more like stalking instead of watching. The eyes fell on Harry's face, concentrating on the twitch of his mouth, or the darting of Harry's look.

The proprietor thought how the Americans hated the children, always trailing behind. He stepped out in front of Harry as he was passing by number six. "You. You children. Go. Do not bother this gentleman." One of the dirty ones yelled back in their language. "You. You stop bothering us. We'll never get money."

"Go home, you foolish children. Go home." The proprietor stepped toward the children and swished at them with his arms as they ran away.

Harry half-smiled at the proprietor. It was not even a smile, though. At least he was glad to get rid of the kids. But what the proprietor would want for this Harry could only imagine. He was standing in front of Harry, sort of blocking his way.

"Such a nuisance. And such a fine day."

Harry said nothing but instead side-stepped him and continued walking. The proprietor turned and followed.

"Ah. Such a fine day to shop. No one is here."

Harry just kept walking. The proprietor walked around him and grabbed Harry's arm. "Would you like to see my shop?" he pleaded.

"No. No, thanks." Harry pulled away and thrust his hands in the pockets of his raincoat so that his arms hugged close to his sides.
“Ah. I have very special price. For you, special price.” The proprietor was walking and talking quickly after Harry.

Harry said nervously, “No. I hafto see somebody. Don’t bother me.”

The proprietor joined his fingers together, “I will take 100, no 200, maybe 250 off all prices.”

Harry stopped. That would be about $4.50, he thought. That plus a little bargaining could bring it down nicely for him. Yes. And he would save a good long climb. Besides, the bar at the hotel wouldn’t be so crowded if he hurried back. Harry turned toward the proprietor. He dropped his voice and said firmly, “Look. Do you have any jewelry? I don’t want to see anything else, you understand? Just jewelry.”

The proprietor kept nodding his head, “Oh, yes. Yes, of course. I have many fine pieces. For you I have a special price.” He guided Harry back toward number six all the time assuring him of a special price. As they started toward the door of the shop Harry said, “Bracelets. No, a pin. I want to see a pin. That’s all, you understand?”

“Yes, yes, of course.” The proprietor shut the door tightly beyond him as they both went in.

Once he got Harry inside the proprietor thought he could show off the other things of his shop. But he must be careful not to frighten him away. Quizzically he said to Harry, “You don’t want to see paintings? Lovely paintings.”

“Look. Don’t start. Just jewelry.”

The proprietor threw up his hands. “Yes, of course. Of course.”

Harry looked at the proprietor as he went around the counter. “I know you fellas like a book. Yah, I do.”

The proprietor was pulling out a soft velvet tray filled with pins and rings. He smiled at Harry. “Beautiful pins. This is where they were fabricated. This is my factory,” he said, pointing to a small room laid out with machines and little tools.

“Yah. I know.” Harry looked but didn’t touch. Touching created the bargaining and he wasn’t just ready yet.

The proprietor picked up a piece. “Lovely piece. I made only this week.” Harry kept silent. The proprietor quoted no price since Harry didn’t bite. He watched Harry’s eyes, looking for the corner they were going. In his mind his eyes trailed Harry’s eyes. Then they stopped. The proprietor lifted a large round pin from the lower left corner of the tray.

“Very beautiful, lovely pin.” The proprietor waited.
Harry looked at it. "What's wrong with that stone?"


The proprietor smiled. "It is nothing. Only from tray. I wipe off." He wiped it clean with his soft jeweler's cloth. Harry didn't ask the price.

"Let's see the pin in back," He handed it to Harry. "Looks O.K."

The proprietor smiled. He kept his hand behind the counter so Harry just stood there holding it.

Then he asked Harry, ever so carefully, "Do you like it?"

"It's not bad." Harry pursed his lips. "How much?"

Oh, he was ready for this. He took the pin from Harry. The tension loosened from his back. There would be no problem. It was all downhill. Yes, all downhill now.

"Well, it is handmade, you know. The stone is from the North. They bring it down to my shop only." The proprietor studied his stone from arm's length.


"680? You're crazy."

The proprietor feigned surprise, "It is not enough? Yes, it is very beautiful."

Harry snapped back, "350. Take it or leave it."

The proprietor smiled as though he could only feel sorry for Harry's lack of taste. "350! Sir, this took many hours to create. Look. Look at the color. Feel how smooth. Is this not so?" He pushed the pin toward Harry.

"I don't care what color or how smooth. It's not worth more than 375."

"375?" He laughed—a laugh feigning embarrassment. "Oh, sir. This cannot be. If you said 640 perhaps . . ."

"400 and that's it."

The proprietor raised his head, "This is an insult."

Harry frowned. "An insult? What the hell do you mean?" Harry's voice carried out beyond the door of the shop to where several men were standing.

"Yes. An insult. You do not know the great time I spent making this." The proprietor's voice strained. He did not often argue with Americans. "You do not know. . . ."
Harry quickly interrupted. "Why, part of this junk was made in Japan. You never paid more than 100, you filthy little thief."

When he heard these words the proprietor opened his eyes in anger. "Thief? Who is thief? Why... you... leave my shop at once. Go. Go." The proprietor started to go around the counter toward Harry.

Harry raised his hand to stop him. He smiled sarcastically. "Go? Are you serious, Pop? You’re telling me to go?"

The proprietor placed his hand flat on the counter directly in front of Harry. "Yes. Leave my shop at once." He pointed toward the door. "Why, you stupid old fool. I'll go when I damn well please." Harry leaned across the counter and put his finger on the man’s lapel. "I could buy this little rat trap if I wanted to."

"Pig! I will call the police." The proprietor turned to go to a back room, but then Armand, the old guide, came in.

He was wearing a heavy faded corduroy jacket. His brightly-colored ascot hugged his throat. He removed the sport hat, American-made, as he came through the door.

He walked up to Harry. "Excuse me. I couldn't help overhearing. I was just outside. Perhaps the proprietor would not mind dropping down 150 or so."

Harry stared at him. "Who the hell are you?"

"Oh. Bolac, sir. Armand Bolac. I used to be a guide for the Americans." He smiled at Harry. "We do business quite often. Ah, I see the look. No, I assure you, no scheme on our part."

The proprietor folded his arms across his chest. "Nothing less than 625, Armand. Though I have the greatest respect for you. No. He has insulted me."

"Oh, I have?" Armand raised his hand to quiet Harry.

"Let us see for a moment." Armand picked up the pin. He turned it over. On the small metal rim were the words: 'Made in Japan.' He looked at the proprietor. "He was right. It was made in Japan."

"Yes, Armand. Only the metal. I did the stone work, Armand, the carving, the polishing. It took so long."

Armand smiled faintly. "Yes. I know. Of course. Perhaps Mr. ah... Mr. . . ."

"Adler," Harry said annoyedly.

"Yes. Perhaps Mr. Adler would pay... Well, what would you pay?" He pointed at Harry. "Keep in mind, sir, the time spent. And the work. Only in this city do they use this color. Nowhere else. Nowhere in the country."
The proprietor hastily added. “Don’t forget, Armand. It took two ... no, three days to fit the stone properly.”

“Yes, of course. Three days.”

“Look. I’m making one last offer. That’s it.” Harry was pointing toward the proprietor while staring at Armand. Armand handed him the pin.

You could not see all the work. It was smooth, very plain. What it looked like before it reached the proprietor’s bench only he knew. Harry didn’t. Harry pursed his lips, waited several moments, then said coolly “425.”

The proprietor threw up his hands. “Oh, what a stupid American! Must I listen to this foolishness, Armand?”

Harry looked at him angrily. “425 is what you’d get in a month, stupid. You better take what you can get.”

The proprietor backed away as if he were ready to spring on Harry. “I would rather starve than take your money.”

“Well, suit yourself,” Harry said. He took the pin and tossed it carefully on the tray and walked out. Armand followed him. The proprietor spit after Harry left.

When they were away from the shop, Armand took his sleeve, “You were right, sir. It was far too much.”

Harry didn’t bother looking at him, but continued to walk. “Sure I was right. Damn thing was not worth a 1000.”

Armand followed alongside Harry. “Let me see. He wanted perhaps $12.00, yes. More or less, no?”


“Yes. It’s quite a bit for something not worth half the price.” Armand stopped and placed his hand gently on Harry to wait. Harry turned. “You walk too fast or perhaps I am too old.” He smiled, “My friend, I am truly sorry this happened. May I ask if you are in a hurry?”

“Well, yah. Why?” Harry had a look of surprise on his face.

“Perhaps you would allow me to buy you a drink. To mend things. Perhaps?” Armand said coaxingly, “There is a small place just up the street.”

“Look, if you think I’m going to buy that pin...”

“No, no.” Armand insisted. “I ... well ... I’ve met so many Americans I think someone should make amends. And it will cost you nothing.”
Harry wasn’t too concerned about anyone making amends, but the last six words caught his attention. He shrugged, “Well, it must be kind of late for the bar. Yah. Let’s go.”

“Ah, excellent.” Armand smiled. “Very good.”

When they got to the bar the tables in the outside cafe were just emptying and the owner was getting ready to close. When he saw Armand Bolac coming he shouted. “Armand. My friend Armand. The days have been too long.”

Armand smiled and grabbed his hand. “I’ve been away. You know I never get down here. And your wife, she is fine? And the daughter?”

“Everyone is fine.”

Armand frowned, “You are closing?”

“No. No, my friend. What is your want?”

“My companion, Mr. Adler.” Harry nodded. “Two cognac?” He looked at Harry when he said this. Harry nodded. “Two cognac,” he repeated to the owner.

Armand sat down across from Harry. The owner went inside. In a little while he came out with two small glasses shimmering with cognac.

Armand toasted Harry, “Your health, sir.” Harry nodded. Armand put down the glass. “Ah, this street. Do you know what they call it?” Harry didn’t know. “The Street of Thieves. It has been called this for a long time. So you see my country has had its problems for a long time. And many Americans come here.”

Harry stared at him with a blank expression.

“Thieves. Struggling with everyone, even among themselves. You know... May I call you by your first name?”

“Harry.”

Armand continued, “You know... Harry, you were right. The $12.00 would have been the most he could make in at least 2 or 3 weeks. And it would have been his largest sale. You were right.”

Harry smiled sarcastically, “Of course I was right. These guys can’t handle a buck. He should have grabbed the sale.”

Armand looked at him, “Tell me, Harry, this $12.00. An American can make this in a day, yes?”

“Oh, 12 bucks. I make that in less than 2 hours.”

“Ah, that is good.” Armand nodded. “Twelve dollars. That reminds me of something. May I tell you?” Harry nodded. “Once my father and I crossed the border. It was a Saturday.” Armand protruded his lip. “Yes, Saturday. Because we took our car. We only used it on
Saturdays.” Armand waved his hand, “Anyway, we crossed and went to the nearest town to get a coat for me because my brother didn’t outgrow it as fast as my parents thought.” Harry stared at him with another expressionless look then took his cognac to the finish. Armand waved the owner for another. Harry didn’t object.

“So,” Armand continued, “we bought the coat. And I remember it well because it was one-half the price of my country’s—$12.00 or thereabout. But, when I put it on, my father told me to say nothing to the border guards. That it was a gift from my aunt in London. You see they would not have permitted me to re-enter without paying a tax—they would fine my father another $12.00.” Armand smiled. Harry curled the sides of his mouth up quickly.

“But,” Armand went on, “I told my father I was frightened and that the guards would never believe me. I said I would tell them it was a gift when I went to visit my uncle in the south of my country. But my father did not like this story.”

Armand drank his cognac and ordered another. “You know, I really thought we could get away with such a story. But one of the soldiers had an observing eye. When we got to the border one of the guards put his hand upon my coat and felt it.” Armand touched Harry’s sleeve. “‘It is new,’ the guard said, ‘Come with me.’ So my father stayed while I went into the guard house. They asked me where I got it and I said . . . oh, I laugh when I think of it . . . I said from my aunt in London. And then the guard told me to stay where I was. He then went out and asked my father where I got the coat and my father told them about the uncle in the South.” Armand was smiling and shaking his head. “And they fined my father $12.00 and they kept the coat for 30 days.”

“Ah, well, enough now.” Armand waved his hand as if to dismiss the matter.

Harry looked at him as if to criticize Armand’s stupidity, “You should have got everything straightened out before you got there.”

“Oh,” Armand raised his voice. “We could not think so fast. We should have . . . ah, I don’t know what we should have done.”

Harry frowned. “I know I would’ve had another coat on your back and maybe put the coat somewhere in a bag and put it under the car. They didn’t look under the car, I’ll bet?”

“Oh . . . no, they did not.”

“I thought so.” Harry raised his glass.

“Well, that is very good.” Armand was looking straight at him.
“But we cannot always be so successful. For instance, let us take you.” Armand touched a small ring on Harry’s finger. “Do you intend paying for this?”

Harry put his glass on the table. “What?”
“I said, do you intend paying for this?”
“Hey, you gotta be crazy! That belongs to me!” Harry pulled his hand away.

Armand was still looking straight at him, “I saw you slip it on your finger when you were looking at the tray, my friend.”

Harry said nothing. Instead he squeezed the finger holding the ring. Harry had thought how he could remove the stone and maybe make it into something better. Something at least expensive looking—and it would have cost him only half the price. So Harry was holding onto the ring.

Armand looked at Harry with disgust. “My friend, when you were arguing with the proprietor would it have mattered if you lost $12.00? Would it have been a triumph for you to outsmart a man who must scheme and connive for two hours of your pay, something he earns in two, maybe three weeks? You argue over pennies you throw away but which feed his family.”

“Look, I don’t know what the hell you’re talking about. This ring was bought in the States . . . Connecticut. And . . . well . . . the ring is mine.”

Armand was shaking his head. “No, my friend. It is not yours. But you will keep it.” Armand smiled. “It does not matter though?”
“Oh, for Christ’s sake.” Harry got up from his seat.
“No, it does not matter.” Armand pointed at Harry’s finger. “That ring, . . . you were correct . . . was made in Japan. But that is only the metal. The stone is no stone. It is plastic.”

When Harry heard this he took off the ring and studied it carefully.

Bolac continued, “Yes. It is plastic. Believe me, my friend, I would not have permitted him to get away with such a sale.” Armand frowned at the ring. “It is such an inexpensive piece of junk. What a pity. And for this you have become a thief.”

Harry threw the ring on the table and started to leave. He said nothing to Armand, but instead started walking down the street. Bolac stared at the empty chair, then finished off his cognac. He looked at the proprietor who had been standing near the doorway. Armand stretched a hand full of coins toward the proprietor who took them and placed
them in his apron pocket. Bolac got up, waved at the proprietor and left. The proprietor stared at Harry.

It was a minute or two after when the proprietor caught up to Harry. He put his hand on Harry’s sleeve. The proprietor had to run all the way. His breath came out into the misty air like heavy snorts.

“Sir, you must pay for the cognac—four, sir, and you had two café.”

“What?” Harry turned toward him.

“You must pay the bill.”

Harry shrugged. “Didn’t that old man pay?”

To himself the proprietor asked forgiveness before he lied to Harry.

“No, he did not. He is a poor man.” The proprietor stretched out his hand. “300, please.”

Harry looked at him in surprise. “300. That’s almost six bucks!”

“I do not know this. Please. The money, sir. It was the best cognac in this country—40 years in wood.”

Harry stood motionless.

The proprietor continued, “If you do not I shall call that guard over there.” He pointed to one of the civil police standing in the square.

Harry reached into his pocket and gave the proprietor what he wanted. He sort of tossed it quickly into the proprietor’s hand and walked away. The proprietor took the money and put it in his apron pocket. He would not tell Armand because he would be very angry. Perhaps he would take the walk with the pilgrims down to the sea and ask the patriarch for forgiveness. It would not be too bad, he thought, because he would not keep it for himself but give it to his young brother’s son with the twisted foot.

Harry was a little speck by now. The proprietor could hardly see his head huddled around his upturned collar. He hoped he would not see him again. He would not think about it, seeing him again, knowing that he lied. The proprietor turned to go back. He looked back once to see if Harry had gone. He saw him make a sharp turn and then disappear. So Harry Adler had walked off the street, the street of thieves.
Dámaso Alonso

SUEÑO DE LAS DOS CIERVAS

¡Oh terso claroscuro del durmiente!
Derribadas las lindes, fluyó el sueño.
Sólo el espacio.

Luz y sombra, dos ciervas velocísimas,
huyen hacia la hontana de aguas frescas,
centro de todo.

¿Vivir no es más que el roce de su viento?
Fuga del viento, angustia, luz y sombra:
forma de todo.

Y las ciervas, las ciervas incansables,
flechas emparejadas hacia el hito,
huyen y huyen.

El árbol del espacio. (Duerme el hombre.)
Al fin de cada rama hay una estrella.
Noche: los siglos.
Dámaso Alonso

tr. Dora M. Pettinella

THE DREAM OF TWO DEER

O clear half-light of the sleeper!
Beyond boundaries, sleep vanished.
Only the void.
  Light and shadow, two agile deer,
flee toward the fresh water spring,
focus of all.
  Is living no more than brushing of wind?
Flight of wind, anxiety, light and shadow;
form of all.
  And the deer, the tireless deer,
arrows pointing toward a landmark,
flee and flee.
  (Man sleeps.) The tree of space.
A star at the tip of each bough.
Night; the centuries.
Dámaso Alonso

¿COMO ERA?

La puerta, franca.

Vino queda y suave

Ni materia ni espíritu Traía
una ligera inclinación de nave
y una luz matinal de claro día.

No era de ritmo, no era de armonía
ni de color. El corazón la sabe,
pero decir cómo era no podría
porque no es forma ni en la forma cabe.

Lengua, barro mortal, cincel inepto,
deja la flor intacta del concepto
en esta clara noche de mi boda,
y canta mansamente, humildemente,
la sensación, la sombra, el accidente,
¡mientras Ella me llena el alma toda!
WHAT WAS SHE LIKE?

The door was open.

Quiet and gentle she came,
neither flesh nor soul, deftly gliding
like a ship in the clear light of dawn.

She moved without rhythm, harmony
or color. The heart knows
but could not say how she was
since she was shapeless and fitted no form.

Tongue, mortal clay, inept moulder,
leave the flower of conception untouched
in this clear nuptial night,
and sing softly, meekly,
of sensation, shadow and chance,
while She takes over my soul!
REPOSO

Una tristeza del tamaño de un pájaro.
Un aro limpio, una oquedad, un siglo.
Este pasar despacio sin sonido,
esperando el gemido de lo oscuro.
Oh tú, mármol de carne soberana.
Resplandor que traspasas los encantos,
partiendo en dos la piedra derribada.
Oh sangre, oh sangre, oh ese reloj que pulsa
los cardos cuando crecen, cuando arañan
las gargantas partidas por el beso.

Oh esa luz sin espinas que acaricia
la postrer ignorancia que es la muerte.
Vicente Aleixandre

tr. Louis M. Bourne

REPOSE

A sadness the size of a bird.
A clean hoop, a hollow, a century.
This slow passing without a sound,
Awaiting the moan of darkness.
Oh you, marble of sovereign flesh.
Splendour that penetrates charms,
Splitting in two the fallen stone.
Oh blood, oh blood, oh that clock that spurs
The thistles as they grow, when they scratch
Throats split open by a kiss.

Oh that thornless light that caresses
The ultimate ignorance that is death.
Vicente Aleixandre

IDEA

Hay un temblor de aguas en la frente.
Y va emergiendo, exacta,
la limpia imagen, pensamiento,
marino casco, barca.
Arriba ideas en bandada,
albeantes. Pero abajo la intacta
nave secreta surge,
de un fondo submarino
botado invento, gracia.

Un momento detiene
su firmeza balanceada
en la suave plenitud de la onda.
Polariza los hilos de los vientos
en su mástil agudo,
y los rasga
de un tirón violento, mar afuera,
inflamada de marcha,
de ciencia, de victoria.

Hasta el confín externo—lengua—,
cuchilla que la exime
de su marina entraña,
y del total paisaje, profundo y retrasado,
la desgarra.
Vicente Aleixandre

IDEA

There's a tremor of water in the brow.
And it starts emerging, exact,
The clean image, thought,
Floating hull, boat.
Ideas above in a flock,
All white. But below, intact,
The secret ship surges,
From a submarine depth
Invention launched, grace.

For a moment it holds
Its rocking poise
On the smooth fullness of a wave.
It joins the threads of winds
To its pointed mast,
And snatches them
With a violent stroke, towards the sea,
Fired with progress,
Knowledge and victory.

To the external limit—speech—,
Knife that frees it
From its watery entrails,
And tears it from the total seascape,
Behind and deep.
Vicente Aleixandre

LA MUERTE
O ANTESALA DE CONSULTA

Iban entrando uno a uno y las paredes desangradas no eran de mármol frio.Entraban innumerables y se saludaban con los sombreros. Demonios de corta vista visitaban los corazones. Se miraban con desconfianza. Estropajos yacían sobre los suelos y las avispas los ignoraban. Un sabor a tierra reseca descargaba de pronto sobre las lenguas y se hablaba de todo con conocimiento. Aquella dama, aquella señora argumentaba con su sombrero y los pechos de todos se hundían muy lentamente. Aguas. Naufragio. Equilibrio de las miradas. El cielo permanecía a su nivel, y un humo de lejanía salvaba todas las cosas. Los dedos de la mano del más viejo tenían tanta tristeza que el pasillo se acercaba lentamente, a la deriva, recargado de historias. Todos pasaban íntegramente a sí mismos y un telón de humo se hacía sangre todo. Sin remediarlo, las camisas temblaban bajo las chaquetas y las marcas de ropa estaban bordadas sobre la carne. “¿Me amas, sí?” La más joven sonreía llena de anuncios. Brisas, brisas de abajo resolvían toda la niebla, y ella quedaba desnuda, irisada de acentos, hecha pura prosodia. “Te amo, sí”—y las paredes deliciosenteces casi se deshacían en vaho. “Te amo, sí, temblorosa, aunque te deshagas como un helado.” La abrazó como a música. Le silbaban los oídos. Ecos, sueños de melodía se detenían, vacilaban en las gargantas como un agua muy triste. “Tienes los ojos tan claros que se te transparentan los sesos.” Una lágrima. Moscas blancas bordoneaban sin entusiasmo. La luz de percal barato se amontonaba por los rincones. Todos los señores sentados sobre sus inocencias bostezaban sin desconfianza. El amor es una razón de Estado. Nos hacemos cargo de que los besos no son de biscuit glacé. Pero si ahora se abriese esa puerta todos nos besaríamos en la boca. ¡Qué asco que
Vicente Aleixandre

DEATH OR
THE DOCTOR’S WAITING ROOM

They entered one by one and the bloodless walls were not made of cold marble. The innumerable people entered and tipped their hats. Near-sighted demons visited their hearts. They looked at one another with mistrust. Scouring pads lay on the floors and wasps ignored them. A taste of very dry earth suddenly discharged on their tongues and they spoke of everything knowledgeably. That matron, that lady argued with her hat and the breasts of all of them sank very slowly. Water. Shipwreck. Equilibrium of looks. The sky remained at its level, and a smoke from the distance saved everything. The fingers of the oldest one’s hand had such sadness that the corridor slowly approached, drifting, laden with stories. Everyone passed by entirely to himself and a curtain of smoke became completely blood. Shirts trembled uncontrollably beneath jackets and the clothes labels were embroidered on their flesh. “Tell me, do you love me?” The youngest girl smiled meaningfully. Breezes, breezes from below cleared away all the mist, and she remained bare, rainbowed with accents, become pure prosody. “Yes, I love you”—and the melting walls almost dissolved in steam. “Yes, I love you, trembling girl, though you melt like an ice cream.” He embraced her like music. His ears whistled. Echoes, dreams of melody paused, wavered in their throats like very sad water. “You have such clear eyes that your brains show through.” A tear. White flies buzzed about lazily. The light of cheap percale gathered in the corners. All the gentlemen seated upon their innocences yawned openly. Love is a cause of State. We are aware that kisses are not made of biscuit glacé. But if that door opened now we would all kiss one another on the lips. How disgusting that the world doesn’t turn on its hinges!
el mundo no gire sobre sus goznes! Voy a dar media vuelta a mis penas para que los canarios flautas puedan amarme. Ellos, los amantes, faltaban a su deber y se fatigaban como los pájaros. Sobre las sillas las formas no son de metal. Te beso, pero tus pestañas... Las agujas del aire estaban sobre las frentes: qué oscura misión la mía de amarte. Las paredes de níquel no consentían el crepúsculo, lo devolvían herido. Los amantes volaban masticando la luz. Permítame que te diga. Las viejas contaban muertes, muertes y respiraban por sus encajes. Las barbas de los demás crecían hacia el espanto: la hora final las segará sin dolor. Abanicos de tela paraban, acariciaban escrúpulos. Ternura de presentirse horizontal. Fronteras.

La hora grande se acercaba en la bruma. La sala cabeceaba sobre el mar de cáscaras de naranja. Remaríamos sin entrañas si los pulsos no estuvieran en las muñecas. El mar es amargo. Tu beso me ha sentado mal al estómago. Se acerca la hora.

La puerta, presta a abrirse, se teñía de amarillo lóbrego lamentándose de su torpeza. Dónde encontrarte, oh sentido de la vida, si ya no hay tiempo. Todos los seres esperaban la voz de Jehová refulgente de metal blanco. Los amantes se besaban sobre los nombres. Los pañuelos eran narcóticos y restañaban la carne exangüe. Las siete y diez. La puerta volaba sin plumas y el ángel del Señor anunció a María. Puede pasar el primero.
I am going to do an about face to my griefs so that flute canaries may
love me. They, the lovers, failed in their duty and grew tired like birds.
The forms on the chairs are not made of metal. I am kissing you, but
your eyelashes... Needles of air were on their brows: how dark is my
task of loving you. The walls made of nickel did not let in the dusk,
they returned it wounded. The lovers soared chewing the light. Let
me tell you. The old women talked about deaths, deaths and they sighed
through their lace. The beards of the rest grew long with terror: the
final hour will crop them painlessly. Cloth fans stopped, they cherished
scruples. Tenderness of foreseeing themselves horizontal. Frontiers.

The grand hour drew near in the mist. The room pitched upon
the sea of orange peels. We would row without guts if pulses were not
in the dolls. The sea is bitter. Your kiss has upset my stomach. The
hour draws near.

The door, ready to open, was tinged with murky yellow, regretting
its dullness. Where to find you, oh meaning of life, if there is no time
now. All beings awaited the voice of Jehovah radiant with bright metal.
The lovers kissed one another on their names. The handkerchiefs were
narcotic and stanchied the bloodless flesh. Ten past seven. The door flew
open without feathers and the angel of the Lord announced to Mary.
The first can pass.
“Massacre”
Oil on Canvas
Murray P. Stern
"The Innocents"
Acrylic on Canvas
Murray P. Stern
“Study for Massacre”
Drawing
Murray P. Stern
“Study for Massacre”
Drawing
*Murray P. Stern*
Jean Follain

L’HISTOIRE

Comme l’histoire au monde
par moments apparaît triste
le dîner lourd refroidit
le tribun ne revient pas
sa maîtresse suit ses rêves
plus tard
c’est l’arrachement
la fusillade étouffée
les cloches d’un grand congrès
sur lequel la nuit tombe
alors que dans les champs
de son enfance éternelle
le poète se promène
qui ne veut rien oublier.

Jean Follain

LES ACCIDENTS

Poser un soir son pied nu
sur un clou
tomber des branches
boire à même une eau trop froide
sont les accidents mortels
qu’impose le vieux destin
le monde alors n’a plus d’âge
le ciel reste intact et bleu
les murs sèchent inexorables
Jean Follain

tr. David Heaton

HISTORY

History appears to the world
almost pathetic at times
the heavy dinner grows cold
the leader does not return
his mistress follows in dreams
later
it is the rupture
the stifled rifles’ charge
the bells of a great congress
upon which night falls
when in the lands
of his endless infancy
the poet strolls
who wishes to forget nothing.

Jean Follain

ACCIDENTS

Catching your foot one evening
on a nail
tumbling off branches
drinking from water too cold
are the mortal accidents
which impose the old destiny
the world has no age
the sky rests, static and blue,
inexorable walls wither.
Eleni Vakalo

tr. John Constantine Stathatos

THE MEANING OF THE BLIND

The First Hours Spent In the Poem by the Blind
From the journal of the poem

They place me in a room

From the volume of silence I can hear that it is not yet boundless night
when I shall go out through this house's door with no one to fore­stall my footstep
Once I shall find this house's door wide open, I shall discover where it is,
as when I touch things one by one along the wall, it is through changing their dimensions that I grow to know them

Mostly I suppose that before the bird comes like a clock sounding their completed name
—the bird remains a shape recording itself in their matter, in iron or in wood—
I suppose that perhaps this time the way out may be somewhere near me

Is it fear or what I knew as pride that desperately calls upon the empty bird which only comes when I am quieted?

It will leave first
and when it finds itself spread out in night, its wings will take on flesh, its wings will be rooted inside her, the warmest weight will be lodged in its breast,
its neck stretched out to form those two true tautened skins travelling once again with the voice of other birds, of the swift blood
then will it fill among night's flooding
Their Legend

Armour coming in with the new wind, gonfalons with the old, the seeds of necrophiliac plants
From the river, from the sea
The fisherman with the stone death of Assyria greater in years than his city, beyond the city, on the sand
And when his fishes leap how can they turn, they cease
That coolness which is inhabited is always different from that of the grave
Great sleepwalking youths escape
They guess the poems, they dream their branches without the tread of the tree
in their branches
in the month of the bird crossings they hunt the bird of poetry
With every branch they cool themselves, with every bird they thirst
On their voice a shimmering landscape will rest above all colours

He who counts in the alphabet of that cry floated by the passing of peoples through the desert

* * * *

Danger sinking my voice like a standing rod before I slip, it has been heard, it shall be heard each night through the openings of the air
and not the cypress tree is clasped as tightly by shade’s body
it stays in that plain opposite
whose settling after the great green lawn
brings slowly round earth’s other face

* * * * *
And if this poem of mine is filled by the beating of wings
It is because birds can be heard
Not merely seen

* * * * *

But there was
once
a time
when the bones, great skeletons
of birds and beasts glowed throughout their entire length spread
out to the points of the wings
stable and suspended
like spacious chariots rising high over the fighting of invasions
And the age was in pain
Whirling of ash and dust
The salt dry
Jointed heaps sinking their compact weight
Slowly into the clay

I can recall it,
Suspended, the great birds
crossing their bodies at the time
Sorties of deer passed by travelling at great speed
The burials
—how many—
trees and dark animals
and as they chased them fledglings abandoned at their root
The whole air shook itself
Hours like shaken leaves
Smelling like leaves
And underneath were locked with it into the earth
The nests and souls of numerous small animals

* * * * *
With its plucked head and its small piping voice
Coming quick from the throat
Crossing—how fast—the zones of time
It gradually fought me,
Bored nests throughout my body for its fellows
And I became a dwelling for wild birds
In the midst of a desolation

The lovely bird shall dwell there now
Whilst the rodent in the foundations
Lies curled in a tangle of respiration

What Word the Scratch Carved On My Lips

The birds were traps and nets for souls,
they left no clear sky.
James Ragan

ETHER ROOM

I awake within your breathing, catching my breath; it belongs to you for a moment, rehearsed in voices, by art, by habit.

I learn my legs, how to lose all sense of lift or fall, to hang by my toes from a rope, spinning while all your voices scream

then stop too soon to collect the body catching up; it arrives long after my own body heals, stands still, caught up in its beginning flesh and odor.

I try to breathe through gauze, through the cure, and feel the collision, flesh against bone, the mind’s falling out, the anonymity of nose cutting windshield like diamond.

And know finally what it means to lose a face, your face, arranged in sheets, white like ether rolling around my eyes to hold you still, at your center, while all the other dark bone forms

spin, slip by.
James Ragan

CANCELLING MY TWENTY-SIXTH YEAR

Let's hope this year goes with you,
a lasting death, dark as flesh
to enter, loving still its waste,
the sperm that never rooted.

I could be many men at once,
changing wardrobes in my sleep
to lose a face, claiming hats are ties
to hang a head on.

I would cancel years to study knives,
how the bone begets an edge at birth,
how my body dreams each night
to cut the rope, to fall
deeper into sleep. I have hung
myself in beds. Hats become my ledges.
Even now a knife carves your face
into the moon. A rope roots in my head.
Nothing was left to do
in that time, in that room,
but crutch my shoulders to your feet,
gloss the jute of skin until the blood-
rush of clean white soles
staled within their sacks.

In this room the candle
stinks of black crepe,
opium for pall-bearers,
lace to tie your shoes. You knew
the preparations, all the mirrors
I’d have to break
to lose your final face.

But still you pose, gums caulked with teeth,
deceive the mourners by your grave
indifference to a hand or lip
pressed against your veins, ignore
the sunwalk on your wreath.

I want you painted to the toes,
gessoed by the brush of light
breaking through, a portrait
in this gallery
where no still-life hangs.
The feathers are good, gray . . . soundless—and everywhere from here to all the horizons.
One could wish to be alone with them.
Quite alone.

He doesn’t care for these metallic and wooden engines eternally smelling of solvent, light-weight machine oil, and linseed. Always they’re cold to the touch. Its temperature intrudes upon the occasional physical warmth of the room.

There are so many disagreeable means. One wants the ends exclusively, without the encumberance of means. No one really wishes to impose upon others with means. All too often others become the
means. Why is it that means and ends are never truly compatible, never truly synonymous?

The need for means is the ugliest face of la condition.

But there it is in his huge and uselessly powerful hands.

It is quiet as parlors and studies often are, but not truly quiet, for a muffled world is still passing outside the panes of window-glass, and now and then there arrives the gauzy muffle of voices from a yonder room. It is quiet only in that sense of the world which has emerged through the compromise of both silence and noise.

Nothing here belongs to him, not even this last means, although it was his purchase and the salesman taught him its proper operation. Nothing. Not his books, nor the more-than-familiar desk, nor the pencils splaying skyward from their round container, nor the reams of blank paper, nor the full notebooks, nor the vase of flowers on the side-table, nor the over-stuffed leather chair in which he now sits.

He has arrived from a distant country which was his youth and to which there is no returning, even if he desired to, and he does not. He has arrived at this station, at this hotel, so to speak, with no baggage. And now, because he has decided, it is time to depart.

He turns the rifle somewhat clumsily and self-consciously in his very strong hands, examining it tactilely as one would a work of sculpture. His gaze drifts from the weapon to his hands. The backs of them are without liver-spots. He is too young. Later there would be liver-spots.

He places a cartridge in the chamber and closes the bolt softly, not without fleeting appreciation of the well-machined surfaces and the excellent depth-illusion created by blueing of the steel. He has always preferred well-made things, especially fountain-pens and other writing implements. In this context of lifelong proclivities, it seemed fitting that the rifle be the best available. It is.

He muses that much of the greatest craftsmanship in all history has been devoted to the construction of weapons and their ornamentation.

The salesman was terribly bewildered when he refused to consider any of the various precision sights developed especially for this rifle. It has, therefore, no sights whatsoever.

He places the butt of the stock quietly on the carpet, leans forward almost to the very edge of the chair-seat, and places his mouth over the barrel-crown. It tastes of petroleum. He doesn’t like it, and so with-
draws the barrel from his mouth. At such times, nothing should be allowed to injure the mood.

Under the chin is perhaps a better idea, but one must take care to align the brain area with the trajectory of the projectile. As he goes about this, he thinks with mild horror of the noise and concussion, of the scene which shall doubtless ensue... but, finally, what can it all matter?

Will he hear the explosion, he wonders. The salesman assured him that the bullet moves faster from this rifle than from any other ever devised by ballistics people. He would like to hear his own explosion, he decides (he has always possessed a great aversion to loud sound). He finds this paradox a little amusing and admits to himself that it is possible to love while hating—anything, animate or mechanical.

Concentration is required and memory of the salesman’s proud remarks concerning the hair-trigger of the rifle.

Concentration is doubly difficult when the concentrator is relaxed.

Something comes to pass.

Something has happened.

The world has experienced a stop—or an abrupt change of gears. Something, perhaps, like an eclipse. The ambiance is not unlike that of a pillow-fight among children when a seam bursts and suddenly feathers are raining through the room. The laughter ceases and dread of punishment shadows the faces of the combatants, if only for a few seconds. They might decide to continue; a spanking is, after all, only a spanking. One surely won’t be beaten more for the destruction of two pillows than for one.

There is no noise.

No pain. Only slow-motion collapse into the depths of the chair.

And then the feathers whirling in wonderful circles, arabesques, and helixes. Feathers loosed from somewhere, as if the form which held them together had given way. And settling, almost endless settling of feathers, their delicate shapes finding place among others. A magnificent purity of silence superintending.

He attempts to concentrate on his plain of feathers. But somehow the chair is still with him. He can feel it receiving his back, and feel his long muscular arms draped toward the floor over the arm-rests. He can’t raise his head to look around; his sight is fixed on the carpet before the chair. The rifle has probably fallen to the floor too close to his feet for him to see it.
The eye with which he completes his limited survey of the carpet (which is now all he has of the room) is not the eye which registers the situation of feathers.

The room goes away and the feathers return. Only now and then does a feather float through his vision to settle softly among the rest.

The sound of voices and the opening door alienates him from his contemplation of feathers once more. Voices spilling dismay, urgency, and excitement surround him, but he pays little attention, so eager is he to return to the feathers. Like records being played both faster and slower than their designated speeds, the voices meld into a roar of confusion. But trouser-legs and skirts full of nyloned legs clutter his small area of carpet and distract him from his beloved feathers. Strange that the rasp of nylon stockings should come through the commotion with such distinctness.

They might be asking whether he's still alive. Someone might suggest an ambulance. Another, first-aid. Someone might be returning with paper-towels full of cold water to begin cleaning furniture and carpet. Women have, perhaps, fainted, and are just now being revived. Another might be busy ascertaining that all children have been removed from the premises.

But it is also possible that one person, of strong character and most persuasive, ushers out all the rest, locking the door behind them, assuring all that he or she will be responsible for everything. A friend? A wife? A trusted valet? Secret enemy? Grandmother? Such an identity is no great matter, surely.

It's better now: without the din, he finds his way back to the feathers with more frequent intermittence.

The person who remains: one more thing should be said. Rightly or wrongly, he or she seems to feel that medical help is not to the point. The algebra of Oberschreiberschriftstellermeister has been expressed and clearly.

The room is again quiet.
A hand-gun is produced from somewhere.
It is loaded.
The two clicks of the hammer being drawn back fill the room, then go away.
The gun is placed in the left hand of Oberschreiberschriftstellermeister (he is left-handed). Slowly, slowly, the massive hand closes
about the handle. Then, as slowly and determinedly as the great cranes atop tall buildings draw up their loads, the forearm rises, the wrist bends, and the barrel comes to rest against his temple where it remains for a long time while he watches the feathers.

The great hand begins to tighten and strain. It appears that the last strength burns as the index-finger depresses the trigger.

Again there is neither sound nor pain. Things seem to halt momentarily, but the wonderful feathers remain: their soft resting places have been rearranged a bit, but they’re settling even more quickly than before.

The feathers are good, gray . . . silent.

Everywhere.

One could wish to be alone with them.

Quite, quite alone.
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

VICENTE ALEIXANDRE is relatively unknown in the English speaking world, but together with Guillén, Alberti, Salinas, and Lorca he influenced and shaped the development of modern Spanish poetry. Born in 1900, Aleixandre spent his youth in Malaga where he began writing at the age of eighteen. His first poems were published in the Revista de Occident in 1926, and his first book of poems appeared in 1928. The only extensive English translation of Aleixandre’s poetry appeared in the Summer 1969 issue of Mundus Artium. He currently lives in Madrid.

DÁMASO ALONSO, a Spanish poet and critic, was born in Madrid in 1898. Two of his critical works, La lengua de Gongora and La poesía de San Juan de la Cruz, have received national literary prizes. His anthology of medieval Spanish poetry is a standard work in the field. His most original work is Hijos de la ira, a collection of religious and metaphysical poems written in 1944.

BENNY ANDERSEN was born in Denmark in 1929. His first book published was a collection of poems called The Musical Eel, which appeared in 1960. Five more volumes of poetry followed—Here in the Reserve (1971) is the most recent. He has also published collections of short fiction, several children’s books and numerous plays for radio and television.

MARY BAUERMEISTER was born in Frankfort in 1934 and is presently living in New York where she is represented by Galeria Bonino. Miss Bauermeister’s works have been exhibited extensively throughout the United States and Europe in both One Man and group exhibitions. Her works are a part of the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, The Guggenheim, and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. The Complete Works of Mary Bauermeister is forthcoming in the Abrams Modern Art Series.

BEN BELITT is an American poet and translator who is a professor in the Department of Literature and Language at Bennington College. He is the author of School of a Soldier, a prose work, and four volumes of poetry. He has translated Rimbaud, Lorca, Alberti, Machado, Guillén, and done extensive work in translating Pablo Neruda. This Fall Grove Press will publish a new volume of Belitt’s translations of Pablo Neruda selected from three of his most recent volumes—New Poems: 1968-1970. Farrar, Straus & Giroux will publish Belitt’s translation of Neruda’s play, “Splendor and Death of Joaquin Murieta,” later in 1972. Both of these forthcoming publications will contain introductory essays.
LOUIS M. BOURNE is a writer and translator who currently resides in Madrid. He is at work on a book-length manuscript of translations of the poetry of Vicente Aleixandre.

MICHAEL BULLOCK is a British poet, playwright, short-story writer and translator. He is the author of several books of poetry including *Zwei Stimmen in meinem Mund*, a bilingual volume published in Germany. He has published a collection of surreal fictions called *Sixteen Stories as they Happened*, and is the translator of two volumes of poems by Karl Krolow. In 1971 he published a book of fables, *Green Beginning, Black Ending*, with the Sono Nis Press. Mr. Bullock teaches in the Creative Writing Department at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

JORGE DÍAZ has written fourteen plays to date. In addition to the play translated in this issue, Díaz has published one other play in an American journal—“La orgásutla” in the Fall 1970 issue of *Latin American Theatre Review*. More recently, Díaz has been touring Spain, Chile and the United States with a small theater group, the “Teatro del nuevo mundo,” offering a varied program of theater and information on the new Chilean theater.

MASSUD FARZAN, a Persian writer of novels, short stories and poetry, has been in recent years writing in English and has contributed to American, British and Canadian journals. He has also been active in introducing contemporary Persian writers in America and England through translations, articles, and reviews. He writes regularly for *Books Abroad* and is co-editor of *Modern Persian Reader* (University of Michigan Press). At present he is teaching at Columbia University, New York.

JEAN FOLLAIN, 1903-1971, was born in Canisy, Normandy. He was admitted to the bar in 1928, at Paris, and became a district judge in the forties. He wrote eighteen books, nine of them volumes of poetry. The last, *D'Apres Tout*, was published in 1967. In 1969 Atheneum Press published W. S. Merwin’s translations of Follain in a volume titled *Transparence of the World*. The two poems in this issue are taken from Jean Follain’s collection *Exister*, Editions Gallimard, 1947.

ELOAH F. GIACOMELLI, a Brazilian, immigrated to Canada in 1969. She has a B.A. from the University of São Paulo, and an M.A. in English from Indiana University. At present she is a lecturer in English at the University of British Columbia. Her translations have appeared in many literary journals.
HANNE GLIESE-LEE was born in Denmark and studied there for several years at the University of Copenhagen before transferring to the University of British Columbia. Her translations from the Danish have appeared in several journals, and she is currently at work on an anthology of Contemporary Danish poetry in English translation.

DAVID HEATON has published translations of Follain’s poems in Contemporary Literature in Translation and Lotus. He has just finished an essay-review of Ted Hughes’ Crow for the Ohio Review. He is an Associate Professor of English at Ohio University.

ENRIQUE HUACO was an outstanding young Peruvian poet who died shortly after the publication of his first and only volume, Piel del tiempo, which carries a preface by Pablo Neruda. Neruda stated that he considered Huaco’s poetry “transparent and pure” and was sure that its “limpid and mysterious gravity, working without haste, is certain to survive.”

RICHARD HUNT is an American sculptor who was born in Chicago in 1935. A seminal influence on Hunt was the iron sculpture of the Spaniard, Julio González, whose work Hunt first saw in 1953. The base material for Hunt’s sculpture is discarded iron and broken machine-made parts, and the principle instrument he uses to achieve control over his medium is the torch. Hunt’s work has been exhibited throughout the United States and Europe, and he is represented by The Dorsky Gallery, New York. His most recent exhibition was in the Museum of Modern Art.

JANE KATSELAS is a painter and a poet. She has attended Parsons School of Design and Carnegie Institute of Technology. Her executed works include murals in several buildings and numerous graphic art works. She had been writing poetry for the past three years and now lives in Pittsburgh.

PAUL MASSARO is an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps assigned as defense counsel at Camp Le Jeune, North Carolina. After graduating from Fairleigh Dickinson University in 1967, he studied law at New York Law School, and was admitted to the practice of law in 1970. His previous publications include an article on legal education and some poetry.

JOÃO CABRAL DE MELO NETO (1920-) is considered one of the most influential Brazilian poets of the new generation. In 1954 he participated in the poetry section of the International Congress of Writers held in São Paulo, Brazil, where he was awarded the “José de Anchieta” prize. His volumes of poetry include: Pedra do Sono (1942), O Engenheiro (1945), Psicologia da Composição (1947), O Cão sem Plumas (1950), Terceira Feira (1961), and A Educação pela Pedra (1966).
VITĚZSLAV NEZVAL, one of the most influential Czech lyricists of the twentieth century, was born in 1900 in Biskoupy, Southern Moravia and died in Prague in 1958. His first volume of poems appeared in 1922. Together with the critic Karel Teige, Nezval played a decisive part in the development of “Poetism,” a specifically Czech precursor of Surrealism. His most important poetry books include: Pantomime (1924), Poems of the Night (1930), Good Bye and Waving (1934), Prague with the Fingers of Rain (1936).

JOYCE CAROL OATES has won numerous literary awards for her novels and short fiction. Both A Garden of Earthly Delights and Expensive People were nominated for the National Book Award before Miss Oates received this prize for her novel them. She was the first prize winner in the O. Henry Awards competition in 1967, and her short stories have appeared in this yearly volume five consecutive years. In 1970 she produced a second volume of poetry, Love and Its Derangements, as well as a play, Sunday Dinner, produced by the American Place Theater in New York. Miss Oates is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Windsor, Ontario.

MARGARET SAYERS PEDEN is Associate Professor of Spanish at the University of Missouri, Columbia. She has published articles on Latin-American drama and novels in Hispania, Modern Drama, Latin American Theater Review, and other journals. She has published two volumes of translations of plays by the Mexican dramatist Emilio Carballido: The Norther (University of Texas Press, 1968), and The Golden Thread and Other Plays (University of Texas Press, 1970). She is currently working (with Lysander Kemp) on a translation of twelve critical essays by Octavio Paz for the University of Texas Press.

DORA M. PETTINELLA is an American poet and translator whose work has appeared in many English and Italian publications including Chicago Review, Hudson Review, Nation, Cenobio, Fiera Letteraria and others. She has translated numerous works from the Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and French.

JAMES RAGAN has published poetry in many journals. He recently completed a book of poems, In the Talking Hours, and a play, Landlord, which was showcased at the Evergreen Stage Theater, Hollywood, California. He is also an editor of Lotus, a poetry and fiction journal. Ragan is presently teaching English and Creative Writing at Ohio University.

SOHRAB SEPEHRI was born in Kashan, Iran in 1928. In addition to being one of the leading modern Persian poets, he is also a highly-respected painter. He has held exhibitions in a number of European cities. Sepehri has published six volumes of poetry. His latest collection is Hajm-e Sabz (Green Space).
MARKETA GOETZ STANKIEWICZ, born in Czechoslovakia, is Associate Professor of German and Comparative Literature at the University of British Columbia, Canada. She has published articles on the German novel and contemporary theater, and her translations from Czech and German also have appeared in many journals. She is co-editor of Essays in German Literature.

JOHN CONSTANTINE STATHATOS is a Greek poet and translator who was born in Athens in 1947. He has translated Greek poets into English (Seferis, Sinopoulos, Ritsos and others), and several English and American poets into Greek (Lowell, Hughes, Durrell, Wallace Stevens). He recently collaborated on the translation of *Five Leningrad Poets* to be published by Doubleday in 1972.

MURRAY STERN has exhibited his drawings, paintings, watercolors and lithographs throughout the United States. He has also worked extensively in professional theater, television and motion pictures as a scenic designer. Recently, he has devoted his time to the teaching of drawing and painting in New York City.

ELENI VAKALO published her first volume of verse, *Themes and Variations*, in 1945. Since then she has published eight more volumes. Her latest work, *Genealogy*, is a long reconstruction of her childhood family life and immediate ancestors. In 1968 she was invited to lecture at the International Seminar at Harvard.

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