

VIEW FROM THE ZOO & THE PARK *

Poems, Impressions & Sketches.

by Robert Angus,

*'And through Wall's chink, poor souls,
they are content to whisper, At the which
let no man wonder...'*

Quince splendidly describes the persons in the play – Moonshine (represented by dog, bush & lantern) , Wall, two Lovers & a Lion - but obviously these would fit better into a zoo than a park.

* Park originally meant 'paradise' (a pleasure-ground, an oriental enclosure in which wild beasts for the chase were kept).

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OLD MEN STARING

The number of these old men increases daily. They hobble about on sticks, their hair whitens. Their calculating eyes (dead now as frogs') no longer jump, shiver
computerising intricate stock prices ...

The struggle's at last over – sword 's in scabbard – pens are lodged on inkstand – ledgers are in locker – horse (charger) has escaped his stable, is out mumbling, awaiting the final bullet in his pasture.

All these old men – *having lost their goods – boots – The sum of their chattels* – can expect lumps of sand (a few wasps) & **scarcely a hint of jam on their buns!**

So let them freely stare at your fine bosoms, your Tanned & oiled legs, your slithering swaggering bottoms, As carefully (toothless) they exhibit their **return** – But to destinations unreadable ! – **tickets**, girls.

Note.

These old men (their numbers are rapidly increasing)Are whittled away, physically & mentally, to practically nothing. Although they have lost their other interests & sources of comfort, & have little positively to congratulate themselves about, they are still deeply stirred by sex & beauty. They stand on the station platform (overlooking a nearby beach) showing tickets to destinations which can no longer be read, but these are perhaps the places they hailed from originally.

99 JUST PERSONS

All these are my father's friends.
They've hurried to see me, but I'm sorry they've come.
(Every one of them a church pillar & prop to the law.)
Why have they come?

Yesterday I kissed him.
I understood what to say, what to do.

Now

I stand here cold as a block, perfectly dumb.
I say to the hills (do I say it?) '**FALL ON ME !**'

Better, much better, rooting with pigs, fingering
with harlots - *fumbling & starving.*

He

(the old man) staring under my skin, says:
'The guests
are at table. They're delighted to see you.
Here is your chair'
(there's nothing to say.)

I sit down. The whole
99 are around me.

They have hot hands (all of them) & cold wives.
They live in the hills.

I raise my glass to my dad who
has tears in his eyes.

' SKOL ' I say to him
totally ignoring them.

Note.

The lad of course arrived yesterday, & this is the scene at the feast.
The prodigal must surely be very deeply attached to his Dad, &
confident that the attachment is mutual. St. Luke (in the AV) says
that Jesus concluded the parable: 'It was meet that we should make
merry, & be glad: for this thy brother was dead, & is alive again; &
was lost , & is found'. He doesn't say the prodigal has changed
entirely, has forgotten the harlots, & is now the 100th just person. Our
own conclusion is surely that he'll be upright; but his righteousness
will be solidly new - very like his Dad's, perhaps!

TINTORETTO'S SUSANNA

His Susanna is fat but beautiful.
His elders are frail ghosts - *bloodless*.

Tintoretto curls Susanna's hair, spreads
her large but fascinating legs carelessly
within a few feet of the ignored ancients.

She towels her right foot, questions her mirror,
casually dangles the left in the pond. The artist
has no interest in the story of the intended rape, the shouting
& weeping, the threat of stoning & the interrogation...

Lovingly Tintoretto inserts, to the left, a stag, & to the right
2 ducks with ducklings, framed delightfully in a space
(an open window) lightly & delicately surrounded with thin trees...

Tintoretto is **fixed** *fascinated*, lost in the beauty of the scene;
he sits Joyfully In his garden, while the wretched old men
creep to the valley, are dragged protesting to the stoning.

.

Note .

The writer in the Apocrypha says that Susanna was **a very fair woman**, & having stated that the 2 elders every day watched her going into her rich husband's garden he declares the elders **perverted their minds, failed to remember just judgments, & were inflamed with love for her**. To the artist the ancients are merely a part of the garden, 2 ghosts vaguely associated with 2 other ghosts - **Daniel? & the youth supposed to have fled from the garden?** Perhaps Tintoretto suggests there is a problem but ignores it: he lights up the attractiveness of the woman, the richness of her possessions, & the beauty of her garden.

DEAD

Yesterday this creature pranced here & there,
laughed , played
(romped about on the grass)
enjoyed the sun , the dandelions
- unseeing & unknowing **waited**
till the man with the gun , stalking him warily
had arrived.

.
BANG . He lay there (all the light
had gone out of his eyes)
dead .

It's entirely his own fault *he - the rabbit - shouldn't*
have frolicked & fooled should have quickly looked up
jerked his tail **hung out a flag**
warned his friends **by his friends been warned**
(watched the shadow of the gun on the ground)
& quicker than sound or the flash in the barrel
run like the devil !

Note.

What on earth can one say about the fun - fascination – of killing? Or the simple happiness of being alive? Or the quick glaze which comes over eyes suddenly dead? The silly ass, warned by his instinctive understanding of his situation, should have run like the devil.

TEN YEARS

Looking back
it seems impossible
I lived 10 years
in this shed here

- *no dog & no cat!*

A bed with 2 blankets
rumped & dirty.
Hard fuel stove (1)
a tin bath. 'Exterior'
wooden lavatory box
with cubed 6 ft squared-earth-
drop, slap under the seat !

*

*

*

Nobody came to this part of the estate.

I slunk to the village twice weekly
to buy bread. Saturdays there was meat
(*cheap*, pretending I had a dog)
**I wish to God I'd had at least a cat
or a caged-bird...**

Persons in the village
had faces, *maybe* they had children,
had mothers , lovers - *their lives rolled &
rolled !*

Outside my one window (*Noah's ark
perhaps, but with no Ararat to stick itself on!*)
the only certain faces were bird-faces,
bush-faces. Occasionally a family of frogs
(*foraging*, or going someplace) hopped up
business-like more than a furlong
from the fishpond.

A blackbird
(a white spot on its head - *evidently
a queer!*) appeared 3 years in a row
- *6 am.* - idly twittering, methodically
sitting (by appointment?) to mate up with some
similar ostracised odd thing!

Every year bulbs multiplied in my grass plot

[instead of black cat, yellow canary or white dog?] & fancifully a wild pear threw up its confetti & matched itself off [ridiculously?] with a double cherry!

* * *

Nothing noteworthy else happened here (in 10 years) except that I grew sick - my guts griped me - & emptily old.

People (whom I never touched & who couldn't touch me) took my temperature, brought me soup, & pictured themselves heroically roping me .
-is this unkind?-. like a bogged cow from a swamp.

In hospital I matched my nothing with their **by God** EVERYTHING. I prayed to be taken to a place where nobody plans anything for anyone. Where millions of bodies can fit comfortably - *happily* - into a single box.*

- Where **my** hopes & **her** hopes, **my** thoughts & **his** thoughts are one thought & one hope.

* * *

'The fight OUT THERE' (the announcer has just announced) 'progresses unfavourably'.

Both sides are short of something. *Maybe it's helicopters . . . or tents. . . or it's cereals possibly or rice . . .*

The surgeon, I think, though
I can hardly see him, has just entered.

He discusses
the problem with the physician.

Probably
they've decided there's nothing for it but
forthwith to strip down & begin

at some
lost point in time when hopefully
I might have come in.

Good luck to them!

* It used to be said that a box (base one square mile,
height half a mile) would contain the earth's
population & could be thrown into the Grand Canyon
& forgotten.

Note.

Here in this impression are some memories of a period of loneliness.
To be continually alone is an odd condition, likely to be accompanied
by odd ideas. The old lady clings to independence, but is deeply
afraid of loneliness; she fears, as she grows older, that presently she
will be instructed or directed. She suffers from a
terminal disease - possibly cancer - & she silently wishes good luck to
the physician & surgeon, who agree together to treat her trouble - or
so she thinks - as if it had just begun.

ASK HANS

What do you remember?

I remember the copper dog
with saucer eyes galloping furiously at night
- a princess sat on its back – **& all because of one
stroke on a tinderbox!**

What else do you remember?

I remember the witch said to the soldier: 'Give
me the box *immediately!*' He drew his sharp sword,
struck off her head - I saw it roll on the road!

Anything else?

Yes. A prentice-boy ran past the prison - kicked
his clog at the window - brought the tinderbox
& received (1 think) tuppence.

What did you see next?

I saw the King, Queen, Courtiers & some redcoated
buglers. The soldier (a rope round his neck) struck
One struck Two struck Three - & HUGE DOGS at once
(**I positively saw them!**) flung the Court in the air...

What next?!

I saw them sit 8 days at a feast.
They were happy as larks. I saw the princess
kissing & cuddling the soldier. I saw the huge
dogs glancing at the Courtiers & munching meat
& bones with glistening teeth...

(1 nearly said - **but I won't** –

'What else did you see?')

You're right about that!

There's no more to remember - unless I've missed
some of it somewhere. It's a very long time ago,
& who can tell?

Ask Hans!

Note.

If you doubt the truth of a fairy story you must question the author. Naturally such writers do not greatly concern themselves over incidents involving death or violence: they are deeply interested in astonishing details which they utter in tones which apparently sound - to children, at any rate - simple, natural & convincing.

MY MISERABLE HOUND

Two years ago this splendid dog was small – 6 ins.
He is now 2 ft.

For a fortnight I slept on the floor
with the pooch. 4 times a night he retired
very quickly (me with him) to piddle, etc,
in the backyard, close to the pig-bin,
bottle-bin or tin-bin.

At that time this lump
was altogether too bold. I remember how he once
jumped from a ledge 6 ft above the yard. *PLOP!*

For a second my heart I think stopped. I picked him
quickly up - *there was no squawk, & nothing was broken.*
Hallelujah!

Unfortunately he never does a thing
I command him to do. He needs nobody. He's invariably
Captain of his ship & Master of his fate, I suppose.

Cars in the street with visible dislike
rush hooting at him. A multitude of large dogs
contemptuously knock him over in the park.

(Fortunately he's thereupon humble & cringes easily.)

It's difficult to understand what there is to love
in such a creature. Sometimes, pushing onto my bed
he sprawls heavily over my legs or licks my nose.

His breeder described his colour as 'ruby'. His eyes,
she pointed out, were large & appealing. They recalled.,
she said, that excellent advertisement: ***'Don't forget
the gums, Mum!'***

This dog of mine attempts to be friends with everybody
& everything... He never bites & rarely barks. He aims
(feeble like me) at a ridiculous peace, an impossible
happiness - **TOTAL NIRVANA!**

Note.

All true English men & women are devoted to their pets - budgerigars, cats & particularly pooches - & the language they use to them reeks, their enemies insist, of quite appalling sentimentality. I don't agree. Dogs are kindly creatures; & like the British police they never or rarely carry loaded guns about. Sometimes naturally they go mad like us & bite their friends, but more usually they rescue us from the canal, dig us out of the snow, & continually greet us - dear hypocrites!- as if they genuinely & profoundly loved us.

SOMEBODY SOMEWHERE SOMETIME

Father has never managed to utter
a single word **to the point** on the subject.

Harassed/bothered (coming & going) he's involved
continually in tracking intractable figures lost
in his ledgers - or weakly forgiving his idiot
but shapely secretaries for unpardonable errors

& irrecoverable profits . . .

Mother - bemused - & polishing her mountains
of dishes & her mirrorlike pots ... or shinning
up beanstalks, or querying 'and Who Is the
Fairest Of Us All?'

. . . has equally lost us!

*What is this birdlime spread on the wall
has positively fixed them; lovingly
searching, scanning the maelstrom
we're giddy about in!*

Note.

It's apparently impossible - owing to the circumstances binding them -
for the father (evidently too hard at work to be helpful), or the mother
(desperately devoted to appearances & imaginary situations), to
rescue their children, however much they may love them, from the
difficulties which will soon engulf them.

CERAMIC
(Picasso, 1948)

His feet are elegant: enclosed flatly in gloves – *washleather*.
His legs are nonsupporting: **they lean backwards**: they're
overlong thin sticks...

He's an odd but lovely bird (WHITE
with rusty splashes & blobs - a slit
for a mouth & a greenstriped tail) . . .

He's most probably a robin
- possibly he's an alderman -
his eyes & ears are businesslike **sharp**.
He can easily hear
(*am I right Pablo?*)
worms crawling?
He listens thoughtfully.
Rigidly imprisoned on his dinnerplate .
intently watching
he's perpetually hopeful.

Note.

He stands delightedly but officially, stomach protruding. He's rustily
red, vaguely like a redbreast, & looks confidently important –
sharpeyed & listening attentively. He's roundly, finally fixed on his
plate. He's certainly not dead - *but why the hopefulness?*

AT THE SEASIDE
Happy Outing (a recollection)

Dragged *willynilly* like a ball in a pinmachine
I can see the promenade receding backwards
through a swirl of legs.

Presently we'll sit on the sand
like crabs burying ourselves.

Our Mum

will play ball with her boyfriend,
ignoring our shouts
that we need at once 40p
for ices & candyfloss.

She's a cow
but we were glad of this
when her big tits
were stuck in our mouths
& gratified us completely.

We don't mind *or I don't*
mind that she shows practically everything
she's got to that sleeked over swine who
grins *nonstop* voluptuously at her.

They'll hurry off
to the beachhut - always the same beachhut! –
while we (exchanging our newly given £ notes
for chocbars, gingerpop or rides on donkeys
& merry-go-rounds) will merrily wait
for the penitent return of our Mum
- who somehow managed to bring us up
husbandless.

& we'll mark off this day
as a redletter day to be stored up regardless
& recollected happily, God wot!

Note.

She's a cow but we're glad she can enjoy herself as easily & probably even more cheaply than we do. Certainly we don't like her friend or the thought of her beachhut; but she's all we've got - her great tits stand out like exclamation marks signifying the profoundest satisfaction for us -& God-willing she ought to be forgiven for grabbing something for herself sometimes, *what!*

I MYSELF SLIPPED THE CABLE

Tomorrow I'll depart *very early in the morning*
I prefer the morning. Yesterday my illness
(my cancer) pulled up the anchor, discarded
the mooringline, & I began to drift,
absently but very painfully, out through the
early mist (already a ghost?) from my
40 year home & delectable harbour. . .

My doctor says continually: *Maybe*
this, maybe that; but he's a wise
old so-&-so. He's off for a brief
holiday & has left a huge dose of pills.
('Be very careful', he said, without mentioning
it to my wife or to any of my children.)

I've hidden the bottle behind one of the Bibles
& covered by the other which for weeks I've kept
close by my bed. . .

I'm as excited as a lover (or
should I say *Bluebeard's wife* ?) who has
the key to a door - always locked - & is
waiting till past midnight, *till everything's*
quiet as the grave . . .

Very early in the morning
my family will enter. My wife, suddenly waking,
will say to the children, '*he's deeply asleep*. . .
The doctor says it's essential he rests: **let us**
leave him in peace!'

I've now sailed far out to sea . . .
I'm anxious to call out goodbye & blow her a kiss . . .
I lean from my boat, happily shouting my thanks to her
- how clever she is!

Note.

The problem in this situation is whether to live or die. The doctor,
leaving the decision to me, provides the means for departure. I am
very glad, & deeply grateful to him - especially also to my wife - for
helping me to escape from my misery.

WHALES
playing & singing

Hosts of people (*thank the lord!*) make speeches

SHOUT ANGRILY

*10.000 at a time carryng rubber
whales & banners*

OTHERS inspired for action TRAVEL

QUICKLY

*in tiny dinghies **Jacks in a Box***

BETWEEN GUN & QUARRY

I myself say nothing do nothing think
nothing ...

greasing my boots & lighting a lamp or candle.

Occasionally I imagine these magnificent creatures

singing chattering leaping dancing

Note.

The Blue Whale, twice the size of a dinosaur, is the largest animal on earth. The Gray Whale, when pressed, travels at 25 mph. The Sperm Whale can stay below for two hours & dive more than a mile. They, or some of them, provide cosmetics, pet food & shoe polish. Whales in the past were harpooned, they dragged the hunter's boat, & finally lances were thrust into them & the bodies were towed ashore. Today the ship's gunner fires a charge which explodes in the target, & the carcasses are processed in factory ships. Whales are cooperative & friendly. Many of them live & play in family groups. One of the great whales - the Humpback - communicating at an astonishing distance, sings eerily & beautifully.

CANCAN
(Lautrec at the Moulin Rouge)

There must surely *somewhere*
Be a painting **Cancan** by Lautrec
(as brilliant as his acrobats flying
& booming, with huge muscles & double somersaults!

Or his horse & jockey prancing & leaping,
Tearing paper space to bits
& scattering the bits).

Toulouse reclines tophatted
(a black beadyeyed mouse on an overstuffed couch)
in an elegant brothel.

Huge women – *very fat*
With legs like oaks – sprawl warmly around him.

The aristocratic midget is happy: his goldenknobbed
brandyfilled stick lies comfortably to hand.

Delightedly he sketches these ladies
(goodhearted peasants pleasantly enjoying
a brief break from a farm).

With satirical poster forgotten
He captures each detail with kindly intensity,
& brilliant accuracy.

Note.

The name immediately brings to mind a mouse with a black hat & beard or a heavy-browed shortlegged beetle sitting at a saloon table busily sketching dancers or in a brothel painting absentminded friendly whores who scarcely notice him. He's probably drunk & looks comfortable & happy. But somewhere at the back of his mind he sees several muscular acrobats & a horse & rider(himself or his dad?) bounding violently & splendidly.(In my book one can easily fail to find his inconspicuous Cancan poster (*troupe de mlle Eglantine.*)

I REMEMBER VERY WELL

I remember very well the day my mother engaged the girl. Her bedroom was a converted stone stable conveniently close to the kitchen.

I myself slept in the attic (close under the eaves too near to the everpresent God I was afraid of!) where the tiled midsummer heat was terrific.

Adolescent (16) I at once noticed her sudden smile, her lively eyes, splendid figure & bright red hair.

She was granted a small weekly sum (enough for the pictures or for a few sweets) on the Tuesday - after 2.30 - outing.

Passionately she employed the evening, I supposed, stirring up some idle, aimless & pimply lecher!

This idea grew & grew: I continually saw her (imagined I saw her) dreaming & tumbling, eager for other hands & lips, longing for something, somebody.

Certainly, but without greediness, she had childish hopes & mercenary visions, dreamt she owned a house, a cat, a dog, a comfortable bed & a husband!

I lay in the attic, terrified at the thought, meditating in my bed by the watertank, counting step by step every step I might so easily & carelessly have trod, with that child - *spiderlike* - cleverly clinging to her web, good God!

Note.

A youth in an overheated attic paints confused pictures of the powerfully sexed & crudely possessive, lowly paid servant girl. His portrait of her paralyzes him. Stirred, frightened & hopelessly divided, he feverishly Imagines how disastrous the end might have been. (This boy & girl live of course in a distant past difficult for liberated persons to imagine.)

POND

Monet after fifty years has managed to disappear like the invisible person in the summer suit behind the flowerbed,* who stares (the critic says) at the woman in white with the parasol.

GUNS FIRE. BOMBS BURST. GRAVES ARE DUG.

Monet also digs. He rearranges & brilliantly enlarges his centerpiece lilypond.

He paints continually
(year in, year out - *in red green pink mauve yellow*)
streams of amazingly colourful nothings - **vividly**
& **permanently marvellous !**

* The figure of a man originally stood behind the flowerbed in the background.

Note.

He's a very solid, practical-looking person. But he crosses & recrosses his bridge: he stares fascinated continually at his lilypond. He perennially concentrates on it vividly, perfectly. (I like to think that at this time he imagines he can hear the '14 - '18 war proceeding distantly.)

CHARITY (Face to face)

He is a bold & brave man. He has virtually rejected prophecy, understanding, words, knowledge, & even the faith he once lived by, which *surely*, I thought, was all in all to him.

It is clear however that words are still music to him . They resound, they thunder, they quiver in his head like the brass gongs he bitterly rejects .

Listen to them!

I cannot repeat them. But read them in his letter. In effect he says: 'Without charity (**but what is charity?**) faith is nothing'.

He contemplates , but sees not a jot of profit in them : 'Feeding the Poor', 'Giving his Body to be Burned', 'Removing Mountains' .

He looks to the time when he will no longer play on the beach in the dark like a child . He will stand (but who else can so stand?) - **foursquare**: knowing what he is, what he was , what he could be - *face to face* with his God!

I will go out quickly now;
I will attempt to obey his instructions; & maybe a crumb or two will fall for you & for me (**for the both of us**) from his so-loaded table.

Note.

St. Paul rates charity - he means of course **love** - so highly that he rejects various outstanding virtues, drained of charity, as unprofitable or worthless. He speaks (in magnificent phrases) of life without love as Moses may very well have spoken of life without God. But humble & obedient dogs patiently prowling around his table loaded with this rich food may surely hope to profit by prowling there .

EVE

Adam *instantly fascinated by the apple*
agreed
with the snake.

Dumb, perhaps - but not
ignorant - he signalled to Eve
'YOU EAT!'
Good & Evil were not in the apple
(to the wanton)
... obviously they were
in the snake.

Covering her thighs coquettish with her yellow hair
she approached the disguised prince
& without doubt
must have enthralled him.

But God & Adam (combined force)
whipt heaven from her dismayed
grasp

Installed her in four walls
gave her a suitably mottled two-tone car
a white horse

Instructed her (God the supervisor, Adam the midwife)
in childbirth

which she learnt rapidly (*better
from them than from the snake*)

TO STOCK TO THE BRIM

first with Cain

followed by a host of them
THE WIDE EARTH.

Note.

Adam is here simple but sufficiently awake to direct Eve, who needs very little persuasion, to lead the way. She imagines she will fascinate Satan, but she is immediately confined by God & her husband to her proper role. She has many children, of whom the first is Cain. He begins a long line of Cains.

Note.

The father has a clear & unflattering view of his spiv-like son. He is sad but not surprised at what he sees. His most serious complaint is that this rootless boy is not willing to face the uncertainty everyone faces, or to endure - forgetting his own comfort for a while - whatever has to be endured.

NOT A THING, BUSH, TO BOTHER ABOUT

There was more excitement (**electric**) in the house
- *more than for any other, Dr Bush* –
when I - *Albert* - was born.

I remember (*but how do I remember?*) there was a swinging
party at the time; & mostly the guests (GIN
WHISKY & CHAMPAGNE) **were stoned as the dead** ,
Bush!

I reclined over their heads *soberly* in the sweating
belly of my ma, gulping & reaching (I've been told)
for the air & the light....

* * * *

Ma has communicated to me *umbilically*
that I shall be a print of perfection.

But not to worry, Bush!

with your aid I'll soon (with pa) be on the rump
of some original whirligig
absently whirling & whirling

Note.

This is an impression of the unique occasion when I was born, & of all
the excitement & hope of outstanding success which would naturally
accompany the birth. But the good old doctor need feel no concern: I
shall soon be safely seated on the customary whirligig.

DEATH ROW

I get up once in a while & peer
out of the grilled window . *

On a piece
of wellkept lawn 5 sparrows cheekily
(not a thought between them) squabble- making
jabbing darts at each other over a lump of bread
the governor's wife yesterday graciously threw them.

I've been many years in this cell: *or is it
a couple of weeks? or hours? minutes?*

I cannot remember whether it's me or
the warder will shortly be hanged

& when

the governor the priest & the fat man with
the calculating black & beady eyes enter

I shout angrily to the guards: '**These are the 3!**

Truss them & gag them. Hurry them onto the trap.

This instant death will be much too quick for them!

I remember how the murderers taunted the victim,
made him dig his own grave,

swung knives & cutlasses at him,
chipping bits as if he were a pig or an ox,
& when he was semiconscious having lost 4 pints of blood
they pushed him flat & shovelled a huge heap of earth
heavily on him.

(There was a loud knock on the door :
'This is the Tuesday I mentioned last Thursday,'
the hangman shouted sharply thru the grill at me.

It's 7.30

Get up quickly & wash.

Your presence is instantly required **at once**
in the cell at the far end of the block!)

The procession of 3
the governor, priest & warder marched unsteadily
2 or 3 paces ahead of me. **I laughed** noting the beady
eye of the hangman professionally measuring them...

Note.

This man is obviously confused & probably mad. His period of confinement, he thinks, could equally be years or minutes. He's now convinced his crime was committed in fact by the prison governor, the priest, & either the hangman or one of the warders. When he sees the hangman 'measuring' the others, he believes very happily that this observation has clearly resolved the problem.

* Ritual murderer.

A GLIMPSE OF THE PARK

A centuries-old wall
solidly in granite
surrounds
the park.

Pheasants stalk happily through coverts.
Partridges saunter in root-fields.
Salmon & trout splash dart or lurk
in river & lake.

A note tacked to the magnificent oak door
reads:

'All letters parcels
communications
of any description
will NOT
from Dec 23rd*
BE REQUIRED.'

It's easy to picture the owner
furiously in a dogcart
driving
pursued by creditors
feverishly through the night.

* * *

*'Will the estate dwindle & the house
crumble?*

or will the park be
*(March 21st**)*
brighter than a new pin
- all embezzlers departed –
A 2ND EDEN?'

* Winter begins today.

** Spring begins.

Note.

Except for tourists most of these parks (once richly stuffed with hundreds of game-birds & with river & lake marvellously alive with salmon & trout) have largely disintegrated, their grasping & crooked owners chased at the onset of a desperate winter rapidly out of them. **The happy return in an unimaginable spring of a renovated owner to a refurbished estate is no doubt distinctly questionable.**

('All the world's a stage, & all the men & women...')

IN BITS

Evidently this is a mad house SHE CAME CONFIDENTLY
IN (I'll swear) **COMPLETE IN ALL HER PARTS.**

I watched the trolley pushed up the passage,
dumped into the lift, disappear into the bowels
- *to be fussily greeted by an aide in a mask* –
of the theatre.

& 8 FUTILE HOURS LATER

[I was sipping my 3rd gift of tea] this selfsame
chipped-green vehicle hurriedly passed down
the tunnel, vanished backwards into the lift
... there was a whirr - **it was gone!**

* * *

I've searched in the past 36 hours each public
ward & private cell in the entire building. . .
surely they couldn't (*without informing me*)
have already buried the infant?

I asked at the office:
the superintendent himself pleaded TOTAL
ignorance of any such op.

* * *

I think possibly this was a major experiment
backfired!.. It may be that when one part
was removed there was trouble in some other
(which was instantly sliced extracted replaced)
... & so on ... & so on.

I'm frightened *honestly* now
of meeting the child: had she been my wife
I might have enjoyed the change if they'd given her
gratis a new top middle or bottom
but this infant **originally**
was my own kid **exactly**. . . I cannot conceive myself
shaking hands politely with an unknown counterfeit
creature they've botched up (& for whose benefit?)
in their bloody theatre - good God! - **AS IF** *dear child*
SHE WERE A 'BIT-PART' PLAYACTRESS!

Note .

Here is a person who imagines that his daughter's identity has been changed by means of an operation in a very large hospital, & he is unable to trace where she now is or what has occurred. His thoughts induce a kind of hysteria in which he assumes that changes might have been made in his child which are unacceptable & futile.

POSTER

*Very clear, perfectly understandable. **

The ingredients are set out very clearly.
I suppose Lautrec would easily with a poster
give a simple *understandable* account of them.

The central figure would be a grey donkey
carrying a naked man, with fresh blood
running redly into the dust at the roadside.

The master leading the animal would be caught
staring with deep compassion at the body
balanced, face down, carefully on its back.

He wears a purse round his neck & in his hands
he carries bottles which have recently been emptied.
One, in yellow, is marked 'OIL', the other (vermillion
letters) 'WINE'.

Two figures, wretched & bent, pass a stone
points to the city...

I always thought that my neighbour was the man
living next door, bolted up on either side of me.

Whenever I look at the donkey or the body on it
I say 'hullo! - how are you? – can I help you?'
while Lautrec, that drunken & crippled manikin,
shouts obscenities at me.

* But he, willing to justify himself, said ...
'and who is my neighbour?'

Note.

Surely Toulouse-Lautrec could have made a splendid, convincing
poster of the Samaritan & the victim? The bright colours, the action, &
no doubt even the compassion would have appealed strongly to him if
he'd considered such a work - but I guess his probable attitude
towards anyone as vaguely religious as myself would have turned
him contemptuously & bitterly against it.

ZOO GARDEN

No sooner has the sun peered redly
over the wall than a thousand faces, *white*
& *hairless*, enter my garden.

I sit silent
(it's impossible to hide) WATCHING, **anticipating**,
preparing...

Presently a horde, multicoloured,
will approach my house & stare through the window.
Years of experience have taught me (I pace updown
updown) never - *whatever* - to notice them.

Nonetheless
I'm afraid of them... They laugh, they make friendly
signs.

Some of these creatures offer me *heaven*
knows what - **a bribe** from the bags they carry.

When
It grows dark they vanish into primeval forests
which - as my keeper, I think, has frequently
told me - were at one-time **mine**
& *are now THEIRS*
god help them!

Note.

I'm forever on show to these fantastic creatures who daily enter my garden & stare inquisitively through the window of my cage. *What do they want?* They laugh & look friendly, but I avoid noticing them. At nightfall they vanish; & my keeper tells me they've taken possession of a forest which was once mine but which apparently they now regard as theirs.

CRANACH'S EDEN

If you trace the here & the now back to the then,
you'll arrive at the prototype egg:

EDEN.

In essence this place contains an explanation
of all you enjoy & suffer:

Creation, Birth,
Temptation, Sin,
Damnation & Death.

To Cranach it's a green & odd spot, blanketed
in a muted happiness.

He's retired -obviously - into his private scene,
raised the drawbridge, bolted
the portcullis

& **fixed it** for personal use
with naked - a dozen - figures
(crimsoncloaked, *in triplicate*, compassionate God;
white stallion; fiery archangel; colourful
birds & beasts; green lake and bundle of rocks)

& has lost himself – *where is he?* – in its greenery
for an eternity.

Note.

The loss of paradise surely was due to the sin of disobedience
vaguely illustrated by the artist. But Cranach – except for the detail in
the top-left corner - has managed to shut out the sense of disaster to
be expected in Eden. There is in fact so much peace, colour,
simplicity & compassion in the picture one has the impression that
the artist, having taken personal possession of the place, has
disappeared into it & intends to remain there.

SEAL PUP

The pup stares wonderingly
roundeyed at the hunter
 bumbling on the ice-floe
swaddled in bearskins.

He staggers near
 balancing awkwardly
& inquiringly glares at the pup.

The hunter calculates the position
 mumbles.

He raises his pickaxe
 - he's maybe defending his fishcatch.

He swoops & strikes the pup twice on the head.
The seal rolls shuts his eyes lies still
 - he's cunning for an infant -
pretending at first stroke
 (proving it? by reddening the ice)
to be immediately dead.

* * *

Ship's gone hunters seals (a group
 of protesters)
 everyone's gone!

The VAST blue meets the VAST white
 both of them empty.
Hallelujah!

Note.

I suppose the pup – wide-eyed, trusting, simpleminded -will perhaps maybe disturb the fishcatch (will provide with his silky fur splendid boots gloves & hats) will necessarily be clubbed skinned & quickly whisked to a civilised place from this frozen emptiness (**God be praised for this emptiness!)**

PORTRAIT
(Van Gogh, 1887)

He has staring (accusingly meditative)
introspective eyes

a bristly beard, a blue-
striped coat, & a gaily-cocked **line-splodged**
(*green yellow & ochre* - similar to his nose & ears) **hat**.

Under bright sun in a cornfield with
larks crows he wanders
backwards & forwards
excitedly over the canvas

BRILLIANTLY.

He's **thus** very rich.

[Vincent lives on crusts
on something from a bottle in a brothel
continually on rejections].

Mostly he's angry or mad
but he sings & shouts . . .

Everyday he lollops off into the fields.

Very quickly he paints for himself a new sky:
he walks instantly on a never-before-seen earth:
& immediately inhabits -- *startled* --
an astonishing heaven!

Note.

Ochre perhaps is not entirely right for his hat, & *gaily cocked* is an exaggeration, but his nose is strikingly in tune with his eyes & there's a twirl in his ear correctly balancing the beard & hat. This mixed-up carefully sculptured person obviously was frequently angry & mad; but surely not so the other one, the artist, out in the fields happily astonished, singing & shouting?

JONAH PENITENT

Jonah sets sail for Tarshish. Is presently swallowed by a whale. Jehovah, observing him firmly locked in its mouth, mercifully forgives him. He commands the fish to vomit him ashore. **Penitent** Jonah sets out as quickly as he can for Nineveh.

They whirled me like a dart through the hurricane. Cutting the water sharply I sank 3 fathoms into it. At once a **prepared fish** (bigger than the ship, with an eye like a cannonball) **zoomed under me & sucked me in**

(where darkly I lay in a cave **terrified** – he evidently thought me a crab or a squid).

Urgently from the depths
(with the teeth of the sea about me forever?)
I prayed to God. I REMEMBERED JEHOVAH!

Compassionately looking from heaven he forgot my wickedness. **This man is frightened foolish & stupid:** 'I FORGIVE HIM,' he said.

As if a bolt had been flung
THE VAST FISH heard the command from above.
He cut his way through the sea like a black knife to the shore.
HE RESTORED ME TO THE EARTH
& in 3 days **PENITENT; I set out for Nineveh.**

Note.

Jonah takes ship 'to the farthest port in the world' to avoid Jehovah. **In a hurricane J chases j.** With the ship about to sink the sailors fling Jonah into the turbulence. **A great fish prepared by Jehovah** swallows Jonah. They rest for 3 days on the mud at the bottom of the sea. Then the GREAT FISH at J's command tosses him ashore.

Note .

Ecclesiastes stresses that **now** – while young - is the time to remember God . He describes 'Evil days' vividly: it will no longer be possible to be happy , to have any pleasure in such days. 'Remember God, the Creator,' the preacher commands, 'before the sun, moon & stars are darkened, & before the clouds return.' In such days the keepers of the house will tremble & strong men (defeated) will bow themselves . He describes the weaknesses of an old man: he has few teeth & they no longer grind ; his eyes are feeble (the windows are darkened) ; even a low sound , the song of a bird , startles him . . . Fears are in the way , the almond tree whitens (grows old) , a grasshopper is a burden & desire fails . . . mankind goes to his long (his last) home. 'Remember your creator,' the preacher commands , 'before the silver cord is loosed , the golden bowl broken , the pitcher broken at the fountain & the wheel at the cistern; before the dust returns to dust , & the spirit returns to God who gave it . '

ALLAH BUDDHA & JEHOVAH

Allah Buddha Jehovah & every single other God I desperately invoke refuses, without offering the vestige of an explanation, even so much as to peer through a window (or appear to nod or smile at me), & certainly not one of them has ever, whatever the occasion, rung the bell or hammered the knocker.

How
can this be? What have I done, or **not** done?

Perhaps the house is in the wrong street or maybe the entire neighbourhood's totally unacceptable.

I think
the people here rarely wash, can scarcely clink 2 thoughts together, & have so befouled this area that the idea of any such visit has become ridiculous
& must without question be permanently
& instantly abandoned.

Note.

I look desperately to any God who will take an interest - wish, even be anxious, to visit me - willing to show friendliness. What have I omitted, or how offended? There is too much here wrong: practically the whole of it? A conviction has grown up - or has it?- that such visits **today** are impossible, laughable.

TUB

He has 4 arms & 4 legs: he's as fat
& round as a tub .

*He urges himself **crablike** to who knows where!*

Plato says grandly: 'He's the fulfilment
of androgynous love.'

But he's vain & intemperate.

With no regard for any religion he's intolerably insolent.

Jupiter informs an assembly of the gods: '**This fat man
will presently climb into heaven & dethrone us!**

We must split him in 2 like a log.'

The new sections are now positively all the rage.

Each part has 2 arms 2 legs & 1 so-&-so . . .

They no longer roll. They run breathlessly.

They search for each other.

Plato is angry. '*Empty halves*' He says '*are ridiculous!*

Hoop them together & fill them with wine.

They'll then be **one** again – *complete, perfect!*

Note.

This is derived from The Banquet (Plato) in which wellknown characters discuss the nature of love. Aristophanes describes how each human being was once both male & female, with various parts duplicate; - two heads, four arms & four legs, etc. But when these creatures became too proud & insolent, the gods had them cut into two separate sections: one half male, the other female. One part therefore obviously needs the other in order to join perfectly with it. (The Gospels, speaking of a man & his wife, say: '... & the twain shall be one flesh.')

THIS HOUSE THIS LIFE THIS GARDEN

I 've got it all planned. I'll spend 30 years
Working like hell to make the cash to buy
the land (sited on a hilltop by the sea's edge)

& with my own hands like a navy
build stone by stone or brick by brick
in acres of gorse & heather the house
(& very specifically the garden) which year in
year out - sitting cooped in this unspeakable
city - I've particularly designed for it.

The garden will be a strip of lawn together with
a small pond.(brilliant with a few fish
& some lilies) surrounded - spring summer
& autumn – with Hydrangeas camellias
azaleas rhododendrons etc for shrubs
& cherries peaches plums magnolias
crabs & *whatever* for trees.

My dog who
also loves peace will sit happily thinking
(*observing hundreds of rabbits to roar around
after*) that a similar tomorrow will undoubtedly
follow a brilliantly similar tomorrow.

I'll then be 70 & not so certain of tomorrow
as that ignorant & goodnatured oaf is...

Reconsidering the house my life & this garden
I'll think as he does precisely detailing one detail
after another detail

Joyful & hopeful (almost) as he is.

Note.

Surely everyone has the right to build what he wants *exactly as he
wants it* (subject of course to planning permission) & so live his last
days happily like his dog ***joyfully & hopefully.***

PERSONAL JUNGLE

I sit at my window **everyday** delightedly staring
at my thickly overcrowded garden

plants trees shrubs **solidly elbowing**.

The earliest to brighten an open space of course
are the bulbs

purple white yellow & red

in clumps

circles or busily marching.

Next to arrive

the almonds crabs cherries

throw

a pink haze over the entire area.

Hopefully the magnolias

Remembering the frost bitterly

light their candles quickly.

THANK GOD FOR THE ROSES!

Huddling in small groups they colour brightly

orange vermilion yellow & blue

blank spaces...

Suddenly the autumn inhabitants

many of them striped like cats

stir & blossom.

MIDWINTER NOW

snow silence peace.

The skeleton trees shrubs & frozen bulbs

with gods assisting

are deeply seeking the essential bits

VITAL for the repeat miracle.

Note.

200 shrubs, closely packed, elbow & jostle. On the outer rim, ignoring frost & snow, the bulbs, gathering strength to march brightly, stir & swell. Behind the shrubs a row of trees flower brilliantly. The blossom falls & before the roses arrive the garden darkens. *Thank God for the roses!* In autumn the heaviest plants prowl colourfully. The long winter works deeply, continually preparing for tomorrow's miracle.

AQUA SHOW

(fish-park)

'There she blows!'

Dear boy, how wrong
can you be? This tiny creature is a porpoise
or dolphin. It has (*heavens!*) a bikinied girl
on its back. Presently she'll stick (*or will
she?*) her head in its mouth.

[I see myself in my
whale-ship: a gale blows: there's ice
in the rigging. There'll be a grand fight:
perhaps we shall lose him. Even without the money
there's no other (*how could there be?*) life for me.]

He springs 20 feet UP to get the fish. He has
no legs ... Certainly no trampoline! HOW THE
DEVIL DOES HE DO IT? The keeper pats him
on the head, kisses him on the mouth.

He seems somehow like a lap-creature
sits on a cushion

[Close by my ship, as the sun sets,
blood spreads widely over the sea.
Part sun, part fish.

It's been a hard day, hard
for man, hard for fish. **But who'll
complain?**

(I'm no Jonah: he's
no monster: this is no
fish-park)

**- JEHOVAH
perhaps?]**

Note.

The whaler is fascinated by the fish-park. The striking differences,
which he sees between his own desperate & dangerous life & these
friendly games with deepsea creatures, disturb & bewilder him. The
vitality of a captured whale (& even of a porpoise or dolphin) is
enormous; but does anyone - except Jehovah - worry about the
desperate struggles to survive some of these almost mythical
creatures need to make?

PRIMARY PARK SCENE

3 elephants stretch their trunks
between iron bars to retrieve buns.

On a square of lawn in the hot sun
(by the pond close to the parrot-house)

Nanny offers me

- thanks Nanny ! -

a chocolate titbit.

I smear my face.

With wizened looks 4 gorillas waddle
with long arms & bent legs

threatening glaring menacing

Eagles glower

. . . parrots squawk & squawk.

Wolves bears lions tigers

- grey brown yellow & red -

pad & pad.

Monkeys snatch at the nuts

I throw them...

Sealions

catch & gobble the fish a keeper

flings them.. .

I rock my pram.

When I shout

even the startled wolves gallop...

*

*

*

SPRING'S HERE!

Every single one of them grows & grows
bigger & bigger

BETTER?

Note .

These inmates (*even in my pram I'm a private investigator*) I've studied frequently & closely. I never hear or see their hearts & minds, merely their noises & movements. I've constantly bemused & amazed myself in this marvellous extraordinary prison – *busily hopefully*.

MONKEY

Maybe this head belongs to an old man
sadly reconsidering past errors
or a once-loved treasure
peering bodiless from a toybox.

He could of course be an imprisoned enemy
clamped to a wall & fed on scraps.
Or is he a circus clown
watching the antics of another
on a ladder-top?

More than likely
encased in his box
but never cut by the swords piercing it
he's a music-hall trick.

His eyes are widely remembering. . .
His nose is pinched & flattened. . .
His compressed mouth is thinly stringlike. . .

Presently *discarded* USELESS
he'll fling himself
(bag of bones - but happily grinning shouting)
headlong into his forest again!

Note.

He rests, pondering. Evidently he's a prisoner but he's convinced he'll soon, happily shaking off his pains & miseries, suddenly spring back to the place he came from. A lab note suggests that sudden randomly repeated tensions will in the end explain this monkey's stress reactions. It will then perhaps be possible to correct similar human reactions.

MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

Midwinter

Josephus has failed to notice the massacre.

(The persons are few & the result negligible.)

But here - somewhere lost in the scene - Bruegel is present.

Snow covers the tiles covers the ground deadens
the cries absorbs the blood.

The prophet Jeremy observes:

'Voices *everywhere* are heard lamentation & mourning:
Rachel bitterly weeping for her children . . . '

High in his tree a crow peers from his nest.

The blacksuited commander counts the bodies

(5 or 6 dead *the rest **struggling** about to be dead*).

Horses noticing nothing paw the ground.

Dogs excitedly sniffing blood bark.

Silently the troop

patiently grouped in a block

wait for the end of the hunt the killing

* * *

Herod no longer mocked

(another crow in another tree)

also hopes & waits.

Note.

Small killings were frequent & likely to pass unnoticed; but the artist (looking apparently from a point above them) observes the details vividly. He sees (& hears with Jeremiah) the mothers begging for the lives of their children & he clearly illustrates the butchery. He blankets the village in snow, introduces some dogs & aristocratic huntsmen & hunt servants. He observes a nest in a tree to the right. Herod & the crow are absent, but one can imagine them counting & waiting.

CORRIDA *The Preparation*

Bulls, like cows, are reared on farms.
Unlike Ferdinand * they're soon - 5 years old –
fierce HUGE with wide heads & upturned horns.
Twisting about they charge like rhinos!

The Entry

The procession is in 3 ranks.
1 **The Espadas** (the matadors)
2 **The Banderilleros** (they place the darts)
3 **The Pickadors** (pikemen on horses)

The Fight Begins

The president ceremoniously throws the key to an official.
He opens the toril with a flourish, & the bull
surprised at the brilliance
gloriously tears *slides* to the centre.
He takes stock of the nearest picador
& decides to demolish him.
The surviving picadors retire.
The bull (breathing heavily with head hanging)
angrily charges a flourished cape.
Grazing a banderillero he receives 2 darts in his neck.

The Espada Greets the President (A Trumpet Sounds)

The bull
thinking of his farm perhaps
stares at the matador.
3 times
at each wave of the muleta
he passes & repasses him.
the matador smiles confidently & the crowd roars.

The curved blade
passing close to several obstructions
cuts an artery or enters the heart.

Coup de Grâce

A chulo
with dagger if the sword is misplaced
quickly severs the animal's spine.

Immediately 3 mules drag the bull from the ring.

A second espada with entourage enters . . .

* A magnificent bull (in the story by Munro Leaf) who pointblank refuses to flight.

Note.

The bullfight (except to the bull) is a ceremony, & can be pictured as a dance, a ballet. One ought to be able to see it as the bull - carefully trained on the farm sees it. Picasso expresses with a few dots & strokes (looking through the disillusioned animal's eyes) the contrast between a grand **even** contest & the contrived superiority of matadors. Even the frequent distasteful sight of a rag-&-bone furiously gored horse - his vocal chords muted - can be accepted as an unfortunate part of the action or ignored.

COCKEREL
(Picasso, 1938)

This double-eyed creature
with wide mouth & sharp tongue
is SURELY, Picasso, NO COCKEREL
flatfootedly strutting on a dunghill

but splendidly a cock
glittering & lightning-struck
dizzily defying his creator
on a dome-top.

Note.

The words are intended to reflect something of the odd style of the drawing. 'Here is no tiny earthbound cockerel, but a fierce & defiant beast splendidly fit - stuck high in heaven right next to Jehovah - for a dome-top.' (But maybe this is an exaggeration - he merely struts, puzzled & startled, in his farmyard.)

HUNTING FISHING LAUGHING

A wonderful life we had - *Bert, Ethel & I* –
70 years back. (Bert was 6, Ethel was 3,
I - fatty - was 4.)

* * *

An old man

frizzy haired negro

guarded & directed us.

(His name I remember was **Prince**. His grandfather
was the tribal chief.

His father - taken as a slave -
was merely a blur in his mind.)

Our family lived near the harbour - Sydney, Australia.

Here was a marvellous extraordinary place,
inhabited we thought by crocodiles & alligators,
surrounded by elephants & tigers.

We frequently fished

instructed by Prince

with strings

pins & sticks for piranhas

& often we captured

parrots under sieves

or in wire boxes.

Prince was a Zulu

able to run like a horse

(his muscles rippled as he ran).

We could see that this old man was an indomitable
Fighter, hunter, warrior.

From the day he arrived he lived in a hut
the other side of our lawn

but on April 1st 1910
he was moved by our Mum to the comfort
of the washhouse
next to the kitchen.

Presently we were led in

one by one

'Just for a moment' she said. . . .

'HE'S A SPLENDID OLD MAN

be nice to him!

He spoke most of the night
about all 3 of you.

He's
anxious to say goodbye to you.'

He didn't hear us when we said our thanks to him.

I brushed a tear

& muttered

'HE'S BACK IN HIS FOREST AGAIN

taking up where he left off

HUNTING FISHING LAUGHING'

Note.

Surely everyone looks back sometimes to somebody or something. I cannot speak for the others. But occasionally our negro nanny shines for myself *very enjoyably* **BRIGHTLY** in a depressed & dark place. I run for a second, quickly & happily back, aged 4, loudly shouting to the old chap busy with hook & line in his jungle by the fishpond.

CROWS
(*Van Gogh at Auvers*)

With his palette his brush a mass
of color (yellow) Vincent strides
shedding his seeds his daubs his pots
& portraits

~ the crows are sliding
over the field ~ ~ ~

VINCENT

SAID

I'll take my gun

(the crows
are in my blood
I loathe
these bloody birds!)

& when the first of them
darts over the top of the corn

BANG

I'll strike him down

directly in the stomach

**INSTANT
DEAD!**

'Some people'
he also said
'WALK
(they dodder towards it)
to the cemetery
- others take a bus or a train.'

THEO SPENT A LIFETIME

(he grew mad at it)

FAILING TO SELL HIM

- *poor Theo!*

Note .

One can imagine Vincent painting happily in a house or brothel or in the garden of an asylum, but more often he can be pictured peered at over the corn by a great yellow blistering sun lighting him up as he strides purposefully along pursued by crows. If he sometimes saw himself, surrounded by his paintings, as a mad failure, *what of Theo*, endlessly supporting him, describing him, marvelling at him?

FAT FRIEND WAVING

He's too fat now.
Rarely running he wobbles when he walks.

Whenever his eye catches mine he rattles
snakelike the tip of his tail.

Mostly he lies in a basket dreaming
(5 years ago the woods were heaven to him).

I again see him
- *rabbits & pheasants darting terrified!* -
- **rushing leaping swerving . . .**

* * *

HE'S NOW 12.
(I eat my breakfast.)
Catching a scent of bacon
he opens his eyes & dribbles hopefully.

There's maybe somewhere a clock striking.
He shouts for his carriage & horses
- *6 mice & a pumpkin?*

I SEE HIM RUN DOWN THE STAIRS
- *thin as a pup again* -
HURRIEDLY WAVING. . .

Note.

He's now fat & tired. Technically he's older than me but dreams he's perpetually young. (Stretching his nerves & muscles he roars through the woods again.) Perhaps at the end of the day he'll dash down the stairs like a pup, weaving & waving . . .

NIETZSCHE & THE CABHORSE

After the incident with the cabhorse
he sat - so his sister said - **hour after hour**
vegetating - eyes open – *staring at nothing*

‘This,’ the astonished landlord declared, ‘is exactly
what happened:

I observed a crowd in the street
(there was a great deal of shouting)
& behold! a member of my household - Friedrich Nietzsche
stood in the midst of them.’

What was the fuss about? *What was he doing?*
‘He was weeping. With his arms encircling
the neck of a terrified cabhorse
he rested his face on its face. ..
He turned & glared at the amazed owner
who instantly ceased beating the creature.

The crowd were screaming & laughing
I hurried him into the house,
put him to bed & sent for his sister.’

‘**From that moment,**’ she declared,
‘he was a child again
- theories, hopes, ideals lost & forgotten!’

* * *

BINSWANGER (personal physician) STATES:
‘The syphilitic infection has followed its customary pattern.’

FRIEDRICH’S SISTER ADDS:

‘Sometimes on entering a room he bows loftily
to everyone present.’

BINSWANGER EXPLAINS:

*‘The intensity of the dementia begins to control
his thoughts & movements,*

& the world he loved
- like a flower crushed by frost -
will inevitably vanish.’

Note:

Friedrich Nietzsche, mentally isolated & dreaming feverishly of the perfect creature in a perfect world, suddenly deteriorates. The incident of the cabhorse finally brings the dementia to a conclusion & his world dissolves & vanishes.

JOHN HERSEY'S HIROSHIMA

In 2 seconds the city
 (160 thousand persons)
 has collapsed to dust & ashes
... RUBBLE ...

Hersey walks round & around
 asking, searching.

Men women & children lie silent
 - burnt, with skin hanging
 (cut worms writhing?)
 recalling
 a forgotten god -

HOPING.

All these **now** dead were *once* people
 somebody's family *friends* *children*
brokenly wandering thru a brief book

. . . HERSEY'S **BOOK.**

Note.

Hersey succeeds marvellously in dragging his readers into the middle of the devastation. We can hear the cries he hears & see the struggle his witnesses describe. We feel - looking through his eyes at the immense number of the dead & dying - the sense of helplessness, anxiety & ignorance of the living.

HIROSHIMA AT PEACE

This once derelict city
is twice as big as it was

10 TIMES AS RICH.

* * *

In the Park of Remembrance
crowds gather.
Pictures of the dead
surround them
- *burnt buildings*
& *massed graves.*

* * *

(August 6th 1945 .
Too far back to remember?)

children are running singing & playing
- with their former world
bitter with hatred
& finally buried –

LOST
vanished forever!

Note.

A Peace Museum now marks the epicentre of the atomic explosion. In this modern building grotesque pictures remind visitors of the misery & extent of the destruction & the instant disintegration of almost the whole of the city & its inhabitants. [It has been proposed that Japan should soon develop its own nuclear weapons.]

INFANT

The crown of her head
is a wire disjointed brush.

She grips the frightened infant
in a crooked grip
- *her hands clutching like claws.*

The 4 liquid eyes stare hugely.

Mother & child
(*Peering questioning wondering*)
DESPERATELY HOPING . . .

Note.

There's neither fear of the intruder nor hatred in the mother's eyes. She guesses some kind of violent disaster lies ahead of them. The safety of the child is obviously more than her life to her.

PATCHWORK MOUSE

He/she is carefully splendidly & precisely
wired (in rectangles squares loops) for a series
of required tests

today tomorrow the next tomorrow,
& so on!

He/she stands *humbly* **roundbacked**

with legs bent toes splayed
& bulbous eye absently thoughtful
vaguely reproachful .

she/he squeaks when the current strikes
squeak squeak squeak . . .
the tapering tail
swishes swishes
the pointed nose wrinkles
drips *.*

She/he has no knowledge of the survival
of the fittest

has written no paper on the subject
merely eats drinks lives

Note.

The tests, if successful, will be vital (they say) to somebody somewhere. One can merely look at the questioning eye of the mouse, at his/her bent back, legs, tail & wiring system, & hopefully pray for the ultimate happiness of researcher, patients & mouse. Experiments nowadays are more likely to be genetic. The description of one of them runs: '*... take a newborn germ-free mouse . . . infect it by dropping polyoma virus through the nose, ears & throat . . . the virus will replicate in the kidneys & other organs.*' [**playing God** by June Goodfield (page 142) .]

HARMAS

(Fabre in his laboratory)

Here's a city - *roars & rushes* -
CHICAGO

(place of hoodlums molls gangsters).

GOD in straw hat

(**BUDDHA** *crosslegged?*)

stares in contemplation.

Magnificent butterflies scurry in line with his eyebrows...
Darkly scarlet beetles crookedly make a T with his nose...
Ants triumphantly bundle nestward
wasps flies grubs . . .

He sits solid as a tree

- BAKED & half-blinded by the sun -

- ***watching, measuring*** . . .

Above his head

close to his ear

a dozen cicadas **

drum LOUD messages

importantly.

* The name given in Provence to an untilled, pebbly expanse ... a hunting-ground for bees, wasps & a huge population of insects.

** 'I see them [The cicadas] ranged in rows on the smooth bark of the plane-trees... Whether drinking or moving they never cease singing.'

Note .

Fabre says 'For forty years I longed to have a piece of rough ground; a sunscorched desolate bit, overgrown with thistles, a mass of weeds, & with plenty of boulders, small stones, sand, & crowded with wasps, bees, ants flies of all kinds - an oven-hot city, a miniature theatre & marketplace, endlessly fascinating...' It seems natural to suppose that in the next 40 years if Fabre failed to uncover any of their secrets the insects themselves must have hastened to inform him.

DICTIONARY OF BIRDS

(Any order)

ALBATROSS.

Widely flying over polar seas he's white
with black tips to wing & tail. He's rarely
landbased.

When the unending wind howls he glides
comfortably... Patiently on a quiet sea he captures
squid & cuttlefish...

He's supremely a pliant god to sailors.
With salt pork they snatch him hooked to a swung line
to guard & guide them.

* * *

A mariner - **terrified** (his ship trapped in the ice) - sings:
'Surely our god who walks our deck & eats our food
will crack the ice with lightningstrike & thunderroll
& set us free!..'

But all too soon – ***distraught*** - the sailor said:
**'THAT BLESSED BIRD WAS DEAF & DUMB - a useless ghost –
I SHOT HIM DEAD!'**

Note.

With apologies to the welknown Rime... Although this unfamiliar bird
is still the mariners' god, he's totally unpredictable, they say, & can
never be relied on to listen or answer. **(If he's now dead, some of
them declare, he deserves to be!)**

DICTIONARY OF BIRDS

(Any order)

JAY.

He has a reddish body. Half his wings are bright blue & the rest black. He has a quick eye & sharply curved beak.

*Critics say. he's a thieving sneak,
A scavenger.*

Preciously guarding his pheasants' eggs
Milord's keeper nailed him

*raggedly fluttering in the wind
to a treestump billboard.*

THIS ENDED HIS 2ND YEAR

For the 1st he flew wherever he wished..

He lived close to my house

(exchanged by a small boy for 6d)
warmly in a thick firtree.

HE WAS AS VAIN AS A COOT.

Once he fell

*preening & swaggering
cockily admiring himself
into a greenscum waterbutt.*

Sometimes running - **hide & seek** - among trees & shrubs

(with him swooping & searching)

I softly whistled. Loudly squawking he immediately found me.

YESTERDAY I WALKED IN THE PHEASANT WOOD.

Still blue/black & fluttering in the wind

**Spreadeagled & bedraggled
with dim eyes –**

he silently flung me *I think* a kind of greeting.

Note.

Birds are well regulated. (The environment regulates them.) They die off anonymously *here & there* by the thousands. But this particular one I knew & loved. Frequently cursing his ignorant enemy I gladly remember him.

DICTIONARY OF BIRDS
(Any order)

JACKDAW.

I was 9 when this miniature
grayheaded crow, aged 0, fell
from a tree with a *jack*
& sprawled at my feet.

Delighted I hurried him home.

Splendidly fattened, continually fed
he lived 2 years happily here.

In the spring Of the 3rd - *calling*
& *whirling* - he fled to the woods.

Next day he returned *jacking* & searching
- joyfully I held out my hand to him.

With a streak of blood, a groove in his head
(*a gift from his kin!*) he lay in my house.

He croaked when I fed him *More! more!*
- thinking perhaps he was back in his tree.

At the 5th croak he was dead.

Note .

This bird was a joy to me; but I think that somehow I split him in two & destroyed him.

DIGIONARY OF BIRDS

(Any order)

REDBREAST.

In my old age I find this pugnacious
lovely-red gamecock smartly attractive.

When I dig my garden he darts
perkily roundeyed to my boot's edge
hopping & bobbing. . .

This morning in fact he popped through the window
& perched close to my head.

Stealthily I spread
some cakecrumbs at the far end of the ledge.

Looking & pecking
nodding & nodding
he thoughtfully acknowledged me.

* * *

Stupidly when young I searched the hedgerows
(*satchel on back & rifle in hand*)
for the smartest birds I could find.

SUDDENLY I FOUND HIM!

He was perched on a twig
singing & throbbing. . .

Very soon he lay splayed in a ditch
- a xmas-red balloon
emptily staring. . .

Note.

We all know that our friend can fight like a bull *territory proud. . .* He's a beautiful but ignorant bird - evidently often unable to distinguish a friend from an enemy. **On this occasion (dimly in the past, *thank goodness!*) he failed, *poor devil*, utterly!**