

1973

The Canon, [1972-73]: Volume 3, Number 5

Dordt College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/dordt_canon

Recommended Citation

Dordt College, "The Canon, [1972-73]: Volume 3, Number 5" (1973). *Dordt Canon*. 67.
https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/dordt_canon/67

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Dordt Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dordt Canon by an authorized administrator of Dordt Digital Collections. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.

The Poet and His Bridge

by Hugh Cook

Because I am a college instructor, my hands have a tendency to get soft (as does my belly). You pay a toll for pushing a pencil all year. The last sentence, as it turned out, was prophetic, for last summer I decided to join the world of manual laborers and managed to find a job in bridge building.

Now, you've got to understand that my bridge was nothing in the height of the Golden Gate; rather, it was fairly little span on a highway running through the cornfields of northwest Iowa. Nevertheless, to a guy who gets queasy putting up second story storm windows, this bridge was high enough let me tell you.

As I was numbly flitting from girder to girder with the greatest of ease, I was unable to get rid of the teacher of literature in me, and I found my thoughts often going back to Hart Crane and the story of his bridge. Hart Crane was a poet who lived in the first part of our century, doing his most important work in the 1920s, and in order to tell his story adequately, I've got to do it in somewhat circuitous route. So let me give you a bit of background first.

The 1920s were a fantastic decade in America. It was the period now known as the Jazz Age, a time of flagpole sitters, silent films, gangsters, speak-easies, flappers, bootleggers, prohibition, the fix of the World Series (really!), the Charleston, Charlie Chaplin, and Charles Lindbergh—a time of high-living, fun-loving aristocratic rich, of fortunes made overnight on the stock exchange, and spent almost as quickly.

America had just gone through a World War, and the younger generation who had started the century with optimism, were disillusioned, were tired of great causes. They decided to live it up instead.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, an American novelist and participant in the revelry, has said,

Scarcely had the staid citizens of the republic caught their breaths when the wildest of all generations, the generation which had been adolescent during the confusion of the war . . . danced into the limelight. This was the generation whose girls dramatized themselves as flappers, the generation that corrupted its elders and eventually overreached itself less through lack of morals than through lack of taste. May one offer in exhibit the year 1922! That was the peak of the younger generation . . . and with a whoop the orgy began. A whole race going hedonistic, deciding on pleasure.

To the poet T. S. Eliot, slowly on his way to Christianity, the orgy was not exactly a pleasurable one. Struck by the spiritual sterility and emptiness of his age, Eliot characterized it as "The Wasteland," which was the title of his long

(Continued on page 5)

"They Say . . ."

*As long as he's up there looking down at Us
The World will carry on and We'll
Be able to have a great old time with Each other
(Friend and family) anywhere We
Please because god is Good and
Kind and
Nice and
Sweet and . . . he watches over Us
And We don't have to worry if Our
Money is low or if our
Cars need repair or if Our
Earth is full of poverty and
death and
suffering and
sickness and . . . We
don't have to worry or
Do anything special or
Get shook over it because
As long as he's in heaven
god will take care of the whole mess*
Barb Walvort

An Extremely Short Political History

*the original america was conquered
by the "all men are created equal" system
(except not all men were considered
to be quite men . . .
which was in time threatened
by the "white man's burden" system,
sometimes called the "some men are born superior" system
(except to prove it they had to
practice inferior forms of genocide . . .
but the world was made safe for democracy
by the great democracy
(except they needed the help
of the not-so-great communists who
eventually threatened the "all men etc." system
with a plot for sex education in public schools
(to destroy the moral fiber
that was overpopulating the nation which
had quietly been invaded by a native bunch
of silent dreamers
(who were threatened by everybody
but who had forgotten to formulate
a system to defend . . .*

Tina LaBrenz

Encounter With Love

by Jeff Boer

Thad increased his pace as he strode around the corner of the last barracks and the mail office came into sight. Gripping hands pulled inside his heart. His thoughts were a whirl of anxiety, flutters of hope growing stronger as he neared his destination. His joy was controlled only by thoughts of previous experience. It took exactly five days for a letter to reach from the states. Thad had written his fiancée twelve days ago. Usually he had received Teresa's reply within 10 days. Last Christmas he had gotten a letter four days late but that was understandable. However, there should be no mail tieups in May. Yet, this letter was two days late already and if it wasn't here today it would be three days late. Three days is a long time. Thad had been let down two mornings already.

Not knowing was his agony. If he could be sure when the letter would arrive he could adjust his patience to the task but the build-up of hope accompanied by disappointment was hard on him. He dared not become too hopeful this time. He tried whistling but his concern checked his desired nonchalant attitude as he tightly gripped the handle on the rickety screen door and walked in.

Once again he let himself go and his hopes surged as he went to his mail box and defiantly flung open the door. His grey eyes pierced the little dark cavern, seeking out his treasure. At last! Thank-you-Lord! It's here!

Thad slipped the letter into his shirt pocket and headed back to his office where he could be alone. Suddenly the world came alive around him. He noticed that the sun was shining warmly through the clouds as if the doors of heaven had been opened wide. His stride relaxed a little as he returned to his office. It would be ten more days before he would get another letter so he wanted to prolong the pleasure as much as possible.

In three months his miserable duty would be over and he could return to his Teresa and they could get married and share everything together. God, how he loved her! Thank-you-Lord for Teresa! Maybe her shining black hair was longer by now. Thad took a worn picture of his Teresa out of his wallet and looked at it again. He had never seem anything so beautiful. Her big brown eyes were set deep in her smooth dark complexion. Thad knew that this was the girl for him. He smiled to himself, remembering her last words as he left, "Shoot up those goods real good so you can come home soon."

Teresa was wonderful. She didn't seem to mind waiting two years instead of getting married right away. Thad felt like king of all men to be able to claim her for his own. He was the envy of many young men who had dated Teresa before she dropped them. She had dropped them all for him! Thad grinned with satisfaction, imagining how the guys back home must be envying him as they

(Continued on page 5)

to Frannie as they take her back to The Retreat

good-bys
I will not say remember me for you
cannot,
did not know me while I tied your shoelaces,
tucked you into bunk, put food within
your grasp,
removed before you shoveled in too much,
abruptly ended the three times a day
meaningful happening.
but water touched you too, the up and down
and up
and down and up and down and splashy cool,
above all changed you into light and free.
more than enough of heavy in a life
taught you to sit immovable in sand
faced by a futile climb, not angry or
with stubbornness, only but surely there.
yet not just there, a rock, no, you can love
(grab).
chunky damp arms circle me neck, hands locked,
fists pound my head until I say enough,
Frannie,
enough,
you understand what else? does it matter to you
if I love you or how I feel so glad
to see you go?
a trying time unless it meant to one
of us
something.
what means to you? are you the happier
of us that is and mean are synonyms?
no why.
or is the ringing in my head, "buh-buh-
buh-guh," your question-answer? or just mine,
my intellect imposed on you? my question
for you but for me as well. oh
Frannie let me tell you what I think
I know .
oh Frannie let me
tell you
oh
Frannie . . .
Pat De Young

First Day

they were best of friends
Toby and Mom
they had just spent
five years and two months
together
and now the day came
Mom and Toby
walked the three and a half
blocks that ended their path
by the large red brick building
Mom pulled the huge green door open
while Toby jumped up and in
and looked and way up
somewhere there was a grey ceiling
red sign hanging down blinking
words that Toby couldn't read
Mom started up the steel stairs
with painted red tops
come on Toby whispered Mom's heart
they say its for your own good
Toby followed Mom step by big step
Hanging on to the black steel bars
topped with a role of wood
Toby got to the top
where Mom was standing
next to a younger woman
who looked like Mom did
on those wedding pictures
that Mom showed him
the woman with a big smile
put her hand on his shoulder
to lead him to another smaller door
he looked back trying
to run with mom
but she waved with a lined face
so he went like many others
has been done before and
she went like many mothers
had been done before and
cried in her house work
wondering how education
would solve this problem
Kay De Jong

the visionary

i'd be a priest a thousand years ago,
and prefer anemonies to corn fields.
Half a century beyond would i, perhaps,
stretch my length in dahlias and overcome
this listlessness. i'd wax melancholic.
i would paint signs in beach sand, point sea-ward
and sigh as the letters and forms dissolved
and think myself a paragon of truth.
there would be a fedual lord to flee from,
to dart into thickets to die hunted
and starving, berriden with plague, perhaps?
and my tongue would be too large for my mouth
so i'd suffocate myself. No need of sheriffs.
but, instead of this escape, this epic,
i lapse into fatigues of fact and matter
and see again the good old cornerroom.
yet i can't forget i might have been a priest
a thousand years ago
and would've preferred anemonies to corn fields.
Tina LaBrenz



The Locust

by Tina LaBrenz

Its pincer-like jaws grinding and rending the green leaf upon which it clung, a fat brown locust proceeded to devour what was possibly the last healthy plant in once a prosperous tomato patch. His thousands of brothers and cousins were, at that very moment, chewing the same destruction among the cucumbers, peppers, carrots and beans—all contributing in their jerky, screeching way to the collective destruction of old Heather McAllister's sole means of support.

Heather herself was standing at the gate to her garden, watching, one wrinkled brown hand resting on the gate-post, the other, gnarled from illness, gripping her oak cane for support and maybe also comfort. She had been studying the horde of insects all morning, knowing well that there was nothing more she could do to keep them away. She had simply lost the game with them, being too old and too tired to combat their persistent nibble. Being too "behind-the-times" had also contributed to her defeat, for her farmer neighbors had for years known the use of insecticide sprays and chemicals of technical names and functions with which to fight such scourges of nature as the locust. Leaving these death-coated fields to their owners, the insects had hopped, flown and been blown elsewhere in their relentless search for another green pasture. Eventually they discovered Heather's half acre of vegetables, tucked behind and between the miles and miles of protected alfalfa and corn.

Since that time three days ago, the locust had, with an almost mathematical and mechanical precision, stripped Heather's garden of its beauty and life—despite all the earnest energy Heather had expected to keep them away. Flailing them with a shovel or rug, kicking them with her tired, knotty legs, and even resorting to picking them up in her bare hands to crush the life from their hard crusty armor, were all to no avail in the end. Others took their place in a relentless battle which numbers would inevitably win.

To Heather, that had been long long ago. Still standing and gazing as the locust gorged their glistening, fat abdomens on the garden she had toiled many long hours to produce, Heather grew weary of the sight, and, with a resignation tempered by age and a determination fostered by hard work and simple goals, she turned and hobbled slowly over the dusty, worn path leading to her shack. Entering, she found Celia Laney, a nurse from the Preckett City Medical Center and friend of Heather's daughter Barbara who also lived in Preckett City. Miss Laney stopped to check on Heather two or three times a month to give attention to the woman's right hand and leg, partially handicapped by a stroke suffered the year before, and also to bring news about Barbara whom Heather had not seen for years though they lived but forty miles apart.

With the same clinical and efficient cheerfulness nurses everywhere learn to use, Miss Laney greeted the old woman, "Well, Heather, you never cease to amaze me, how you can look so good at your age and you taking care of yourself all alone out here." She smiled, her face youngish, but the telltale lines of worry already running their furrows across her brow and around her eyes. "Barabara sends her love and asked me to ask you if there is anything you need," she added, since Heather had remained silent.

"Miss Laney, I'm glad to see you here today. I been experiencin' some hard times and I want to tell you about myself," Heather stated abruptly.

Miss Laney instinctively masked her initial surprise at such a statement, for on previous visits, she had discovered that, unlike the many elderly people she cared for at the geriatric wing of her clinic, Heather apparently did not care to speak of her past life and never complained. Miss Laney had greeted this characteristic with gratitude for she had little time to hear the personal histories of the elderly who had, in her opinion, passed their stage of usefulness and influence in today's world. Nevertheless, now she was strangely interested in Heather's words. But fear that a launch into Heather's story might tie her up until late afternoon made Miss Laney hesitate as she tried to think of a way to change the subject without making her intent obvious.

Before she could do so, Heather motioned with her cane for Miss Laney to sit down in the rickety kitchen chair to her right. Meanwhile, Heather shuffled to her rocking chair sitting across from Miss Laney and carefully lowered her bones into it. She paused for a few moments and then began, "Miss Laney, I never had no soul to talk to but you for these many months, and though you're not kin, I got to speak to ya' on these matters. I ain't never had no children a' mine live but Barabara, an' she's been a stranger to me since she married her insurance fella an' left this house for the city. I know you got things to do an' I know you don't have no obligation to listen to an old woman gab, but somebody got to know what I aim to do."

Suddenly Heather stopped talking, her usually dim eyes have spotted an intruder. She stretched out her freckled, dry hand and swatted at a locust that had followed her indoors and clung to the arm of her chair. Her aim proved perfect, and the locust fell to the wooden floor, a heap of broken, twisted angles, with clear fluid draining from its body like gasoline from a wrecked tanker. "Them little devils!"

Surprised at her own violent outburst, Heather felt a need to explain, "Miss Laney, it's the darndest thing I ever did see, the way I like killin' them little

bugs. I ain't the vi'lent kind, my Barbie'll tell ya' that, and I ain't got nothin' pers'nal 'gainst these little critters, but land, them things are like little demons to me. They click their legs together like locomotive wheels a' trunin', and their eyes is bugged out and big like they was doin' all that eatin' out of a fear of Lucifer himself."

Heather paused and looked genuinely puzzled—her expression foreign to a normally placid face.

"Never mind, Heather, they're making a lot of extra work for you here. It's only right that you should hate them," Miss Laney said, attempting to console Heather and hide her own embarrassment at the same time.

"No . . . no, that ain't no excuse to hate. My children all gave me more work too and I never once hated them," Heather replied slowly. "Livin' things is Livin' things. They all got their purpose, but sometimes I don't see why they got to do the things they do. I try to accept, but it gets harder ever' day."

"Now Heather, you mustn't feel that way," Miss Laney began again. "They're all just little insects. They'll go away soon, I'm sure." But even as she said this, Miss Laney had to admit she felt a terrible revulsion to the little spot on the floor.

There was a long pause now as Heather rocked her chair slowly and unevenly while Miss Laney sat uneasy and speechless across from her. Heather looked almost peaceful at first glance, but her rheumy, aged eyes were glazed not from contentment or absent-mindedness, but from the private memories running behind them in Heather's eighty-year-old mind.

"You know, Miss Laney," Heather said as she became conscious once more of her guest, "I been here on this land for nigh onto sixty years. My man and I cleared these woods and built this house with a lot of sweat and toil. He grew callouses thicker than a thimble and near' broke his back a' plowin' and shovelin' and fightin' the snow and drought an' tryin' to scratch out a livin' from the earth. And me, I almos' scrubbed my skin off cleanin' and cookin' and lookin' after my man. When my children were borned, I nursed and raised ever' one of 'em as best I could and I watched 'em grow to be just little tykes, and I watched 'em die. Out a' four little babes, two died a tet'nus that winter they cut themselves playin' on Sam Jennings rusty plow and one was killed when Mac Flannigan's new-fangled tractor accidentally ran over him."

"When my old man Tom died, I near' starved that first winter, but me and little Barbie made it through, and I sold most a' the land 'cause it was too much for me. You know, Miss Laney, with all the torubles and hard times I seen in my life these eighty years, I never lost faith that I could overcome them. I al'as lept right back in and worked them out. But now . . . Miss Laney . . . now I don't know. I feel tired and wore down. I think I am gonna have to quit this place. I can't do it no more."

Miss Laney took advantage of the lull in Heather's speech to say what she thought was appropriate. She leaned forward in her chair and said in an earnest tone, "Maybe it's God's will that you go to live with your daughter in Preckett City, Heather. Maybe the locust aren't your enemies, but your sign that it is time you gave up your life here and--"

"I'm goin. to leave here, Miss Laney. I have to. I ain't got no food nor no means of acquirin' any, since them locusts done ate my whole summer's work. But I don't want to go. I don't see how I can live without my garden and my house. They been a part a' me so long, I feel like I growned on to them or them on me. And I can't see how God could will that I should move out a' here. Maybe that's what he wants, but I feel like the devil's forcin' me out."

Miss Laney sat back in her chair. Once again she thought how senseless it had been to introduce God into the situation. She had wanted to console but had succeeded in only making the old woman blame her troubles on the devil when it was really the fault of a bunch of little bugs. She resolved to herself that next time she would know better and stick to her profession as a nurse—healing the body—and not branch out into theology or psychology.

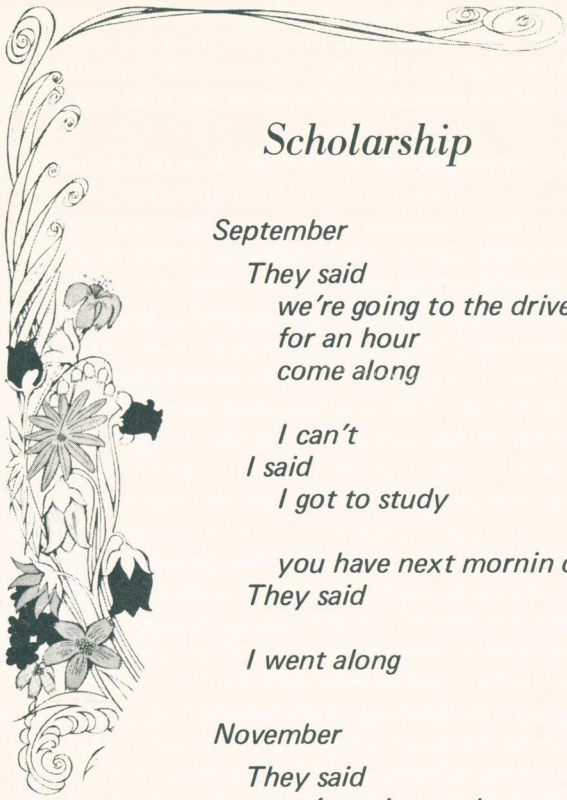
Seeing that Heather was preoccupied with her thoughts and realizing that she was a full nine minutes late already, Miss Laney stood up and crossed over to Heather, saying good-bye and touching Heather's hand simultaneously, knowing as she did so that Heather noticed neither. She searched Heather's face once more, and finding nothing there of depression or physical ailment but age, she turned and left.

Heather did not stir from her chair until the sun was low in the sky, burning the western clouds deep shades of orange and red. Stiffly and slowly, she rose from her rocking chair and limped to the dresser in her bedroom to begin packing for her trip to Preckett City and Barabara. With the meticulous care of an economy born from want, she folded each piece of clothing neatly and placed them in the ancient brown suitcase she kept under her bed. When she was finished with this, she carried and pushed the suitcase to the opposite side of the house, near the front door, ready to be picked up when she left.

Then she painstakingly scooped up the remains of the dead locust and threw it outside in the dirt beyond the porch, swept the old wooden floor, dusted the sparse pieces of furniture and lit the gray oil lamp on the kitchen table since the sun had now set and all daylight had gone with it.

Heather once more sank into her rocker to rest a moment. While she rocked, she murmured to herself that perhaps it would be best to leave for Preckett City tonight instead of waiting for morning. "I'm ready now and I ain't particular fond a' seein' them little devils anymore nor my ruined garden," she whispered

(Continued on page 5)



Scholarship

September

*They said
we're going to the drive-in
for an hour
come along*

*I can't
I said
I got to study*

*you have next mornin off
They said*

I went along

November

*They said
we're going to the movies
for the evening
come along*

*I said
its not that I don't have time
but
I got to study*

I went along

February

*They said
we're going to the city
for the day
come along*

(I had to study)

I went along

April

*They said
we're going to the lake
for the weekend*

I went along

May

*He said
I'm going to my office
for a moment
come along*

*He looked at my transcript
looked over his glasses
over his desk
over at me*

*young man
He said
you should have studied
so-(uh) long*

Allen Vander Pol



Yawn Sun Song

*Shine early morning
Light in this cave place
Don't waste no sunshine
Don't waste no blue sky
Warm that north wind and
Let me be in it*

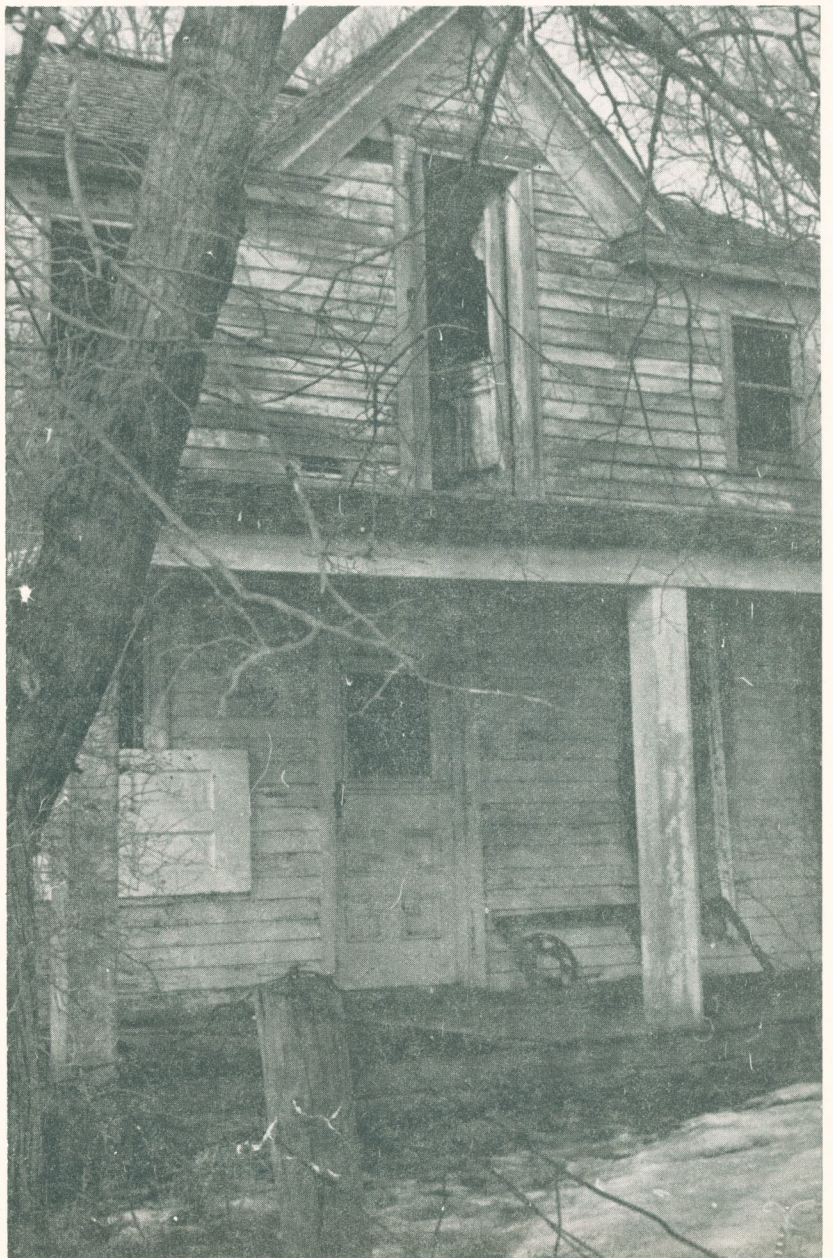
*Florescent lighting
Illumination
Topping thin windows
Fly three white pigeons
Black dots in blue sky
Black in white sunshine*

*Don't waste no sunshine
Let me be in it
Drowning farm acres
Illuminated
Wring out sponge acres
Sunny warm blue day*

*Thousands of volumes
Illumination
Outside blue sunshine
Inside it's class time
What if I miss mine
Yawning and nodding*

*Hey
Dreamer
Wake up
Live!!*

Ron Rupke



THE POET AND HIS BRIDGE — (Continued from page 1)

poem published in that same year, 1922. Using imagery from Ecclesiastes, the book describing vanity of vanities, Eliot characterized his generation in these words:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water.

To the neo-Romantic poet Hart Crane, Eliot's bleak picture was too harsh a judgement. When Crane read Eliot's indictment of the 1920s in *The Wasteland*, he resolved to answer the pessimism of Eliot's poem with a long epic saluting America's limitless past, present, and future. Out of that resolve came Crane's major work, *The Bridge*.

America at the time was a rapidly emerging industrial power, flexing its steel muscles, and Crane wanted to sing a visionary, apocalyptic song of America's resplendent future, taking into account the industrial character of the machine age. As Crane himself said, "Unless poetry can absorb the machine . . . then poetry has failed of its full contemporary function." Crane began a search for the proper symbol for his visionary celebration of Industrial America, and he soon found his symbol in the Brooklyn Bridge.

Admittedly, to us today that Bridge may not be a particularly romantic symbol of technology, for the Bridge is now an old structure, reminding Vancouverites, perhaps, of the now defunct Georgia Viaduct, or Sarnians of the Blue Water bridge. But we have to see the Brooklyn Bridge as it was then. As Margaret Foster Le Clair has written,

To understand even in part what Brooklyn Bridge meant to Hart Crane, we must travel backward through many springs to the 1870's when . . . Washington Roebling, paralyzed, his sight and hearing impaired, supervised the building of the bridge. He was the son of John Roebling, who designed the bridge and whose persistence over a decade had gradually convinced skeptical business men and incredulous state senators that a suspension bridge one mile and 709 feet long was not an impossible dream—that it was feasible to sink supports 75 feet deep in the sticky mud of the East River to bear a weight of 80,000 tons. We must remember, as his son must have remembered, the accident that took the life of John Roebling in the early days of the project. We must hear the screams of men permanently paralyzed as they returned to the normal air from the pressurized caissons in which they had to work under the river—among them Washington Roebling himself. We must see his wife, equipping herself with the necessary technological knowledge, become her husband's hands and feet. We must hear a disastrous explosion and watch the flame of a careless torch all but destroy the work of months. We must see a breaking cable lash 900 feet through the air to kill two men; we must watch eighteen others die during the thirteen years it took to translate John Roebling's dream into reality through the toil of many hands and the strength of will in a paralyzed body.

And so for Crane, the Bridge became a symbol for man's mastery over material through technology and vision, a symbol for man's ability to shape steel and cement for his use. As Samuel Hazo says in his book about Crane, "As ancient man left pyramids as his testament and as medieval man strove to realize his vision in the great Gothic cathedrals, so did the inventiveness of modern man make possible the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge in the twentieth century." At least, that is how Crane saw it.

Crane's epic poem (it is much too long to quote in its entirety) is not only a hymn to American industry, however, Crane's epic wants to do more than celebrate the Bridge as a symbol of man's timeless and universal attempt to use the material world for his purposes. And here, Crane's basic humanism appears.

For the Absolute, for God, even though Crane rejected Him. It is a humanist's grasp for a substitute. That Crane is on a spiritual quest is clear. As he himself has said, the "very idea of a bridge, of course, is a form peculiarly dependent on . . . spiritual convictions. It is an act of faith besides being a communication." For that reason, the Bridge is described in the poem as a Mary-figure, for Roman Catholics the "bridge" between man and God.

Or, as the poem puts it, as Crane addresses the Bridge:

O sleepless as the river under thee,
Vaulting the sea, the prairies' dreaming sod,
Unto us lowliest sometime sweep, descend
And of the curviship lend a myth to God.

For Crane, then, the Bridge covers all of reality, for it spans the world of concrete reality and, ultimately, the divine. It is a symbol for Crane of man's inclination to communicate with some idea that he has of perfection, of the Absolute.

That poem, although written in the 1920's, is still very timely, very contemporary. Crane's "bridge" is not Christ, but human vision and creative energy. And that idol is still with us, perhaps in even greater power than in

Crane's day, for that same human vision of man's mastery over God's creation (let's not forget that) has created our present industrial, mechanized monster.

I'm not intending to fall into the trap that many fall into of letting art or poetry be modern man's saviour from the impersonality of technology. Only Christ can be our "bridge."

Perhaps Crane came to realize the falseness of his idol. Two years after publication of *The Bridge*, Crane took a trip to Mexico. On an appeal from his family to return home, Crane boarded the steamship "Orizaba." On the second night out, the night watch had to prevent Crane from jumping overboard, but on the next morning, the morning of April 26, 1932, Crane calmly walked to the stern of the boat, and, in the sight of a number of passengers, leaped into the sea. The boat stopped and searched for an hour, but futilely. Hart Crane was never seen again.

ENCOUNTER WITH LOVE — (Continued from page 1)

watched Teresa drive around in the beautiful new car which he let her use. God had blessed him with a sizeable income while he was back home. It was a great comfort knowing that he had money in the bank to get started with when he returned. God, you're wonderful!

Thad found himself sitting at his desk with the letter in his hand. This was the moment he lived for while he was away. Reading Teresa's letters was like devouring a delicious meal after a long day. He opened the letter slowly and carefully, savoring the experience in full. He unfolded the letter and read its short message.

"Dear Thad, I am so very sorry to have to tell you this. You mean a great deal to me and I don't like hurting you. I'm sorry but I have fallen in love with another man. I don't know what to say. I'm sorry. Please understand. Please forgive me. Teresa."

Thad could not believe the words he had just read. Sitting back in his chair he stared blankly at the single page in front of him. A half hour went by before Thad realized fully what had just happened to him. A feeling of sickness and despair swept through him. His frustration soon turned to anger. He got up from his chair and slammed his way outside. And then he ran. He ran till he could run no more and then he flung himself down on the grass. He gave the sky a defiant look and shouted "I-hate-you-God!"

THE LOCUST — (Continued from page 1)

to no one in particular, "Besides, them little bugs don't work at night so's I won't have 'em hoppin' all over my clothes and shoes if I leave now." With that in mind, Heather creaked to her feet, eased herself to the door and looked out.

With the moon not yet up and clouds obscuring the stars, the night was coal black but warm. There was no wind, Heather was pleased to note, but she did not really care for the wuist stillness either. Extinguishing the oil lamp she had carried to the door, she carefully placed it on the floor, picked up her suitcase and stepped out, closing the door behind her.

Picking her way in the dark as best she could, Heather was panting and shaking by the time she reached the edge of the gravel road bordering her property. The strain of carrying such a heavy burden and the trickiness of finding her way in the black, foreign night forced Heather's heart to pound furiously inside her chest, but it was strong and she began to feel better after resting a few minutes. She had come this far in hopes of snagging a ride from her neighbor Arthur Podd, who often passed by her place in his truck on his way to the city or another farm. After standing there for several minutes, it occurred to Heather that her chances of flagging down his truck would be better if she stood on the opposite side of the road, so oncoming traffic would face her where she waited.

Still tired from her hike to the road and plagued by the darkness and her own weak eyesight, Heather stumbled when halfway across and could not catch herself in time to keep from falling. She landed on her side—the cane flying out of reach with the force of her fall. Attempting to sit up, Heather discovered that her entire right side ached with the pain of a broken bone, probably her hip as well as she could estimate. Lying there helpless in the middle of the road, Heather heard the rattle-roar of a motor coming over the hill and saw the big, bulging headlights and broad grinning front grill of a truck moving toward her with careless speed, but was spared seeing it leave Heather McAllister crumpled in the road as it sped away toward Preckett City.

Poet

*I saw a poet flying higher and higher and highest inside an eastern dawn
possessing four blood red walls of the yawn
closing him in the confines of a dying sun--a sun all too ready to die.
Against the choking walls lay the broken bonds
of fellowships forgotten and long-gone.
The poet was all too ready to die.*

Mark Okkema

Problems

Problems --

*I had all kinds of them
I would bury myself within myself
and ponder and wonder
and try to figure them out.*

*But I needed to know those of importance--
and otherwise.*

*I found myself with chaff and grain in hand
not disowning which was which;*

*Until I realized that there was
one*

who wanted to help---

*He knew the difference between the
chaff and grain better than I*

Joyce Moore

Prophet

*a guru in his blue jeans
waded through the water
out across the river
and all the people followed
laughing at reality
jumping up and down
splashing all the water
on each other's faces
they reached out for his wisdom
which he gave to them with love
and they swam off down the river
out into the ocean
yelling to their saviour
that they were one forever
while the sun shone brightly
on all the drowning followers.*

Tina LaBrenz

Ballad of Poochie, No. 12

*When Robert walked onto the court,
The crowd roared, "Poochie, ooOHH--
Six foot six and black as coal,
Just watch that nigger go!"*

*He rode the bench his freshman year
Until about game four.
He'd block a shot and we'd count five
Before he hit the floor.*

*His sophomore year he learned to shoot
From ten feet out or less.
His coach pulled "D" 's from Poochie's profs,
No trouble, fuss or mess.*

*Outscored them white boys three to one---
Some thirty points a game---
His senior year; all-state, all-south;
Sportswriters knew his name.*

*We did a graduation thing
That Poochie didn't do.
He'd done his four years' time for us.
And flunked. So he was through.*

Pat De Young



Untitled

*I met a boy in St. Paul
he was lonely
We talked by the rocky beach
his tanned face shadowed by the fire
Did anyone love him
he had a girl Marianne
she seemed to care about him
even if she was only sixteen
She loved him enough to give herself
and was supposed to have his
Mari didn't want it
she was fixed up
He wanted the baby to love--his own
and she took it
letting him go
His ma and pa never found out
until the law helped her mama accuse
The preacher tried to help
answering less questions and giving the wrong answers
The folks handed him a Bible
it was all in there
But somehow he was still lonely
I talked to him five hours
listening to hate for me, Ma, and Pa
I tried to answer his questions
to prove there is a God, life, and love
but I couldn't
I could only answer what I had learned
what we'd both been taught
only, he looked for his own different answers
to his own different questions
I left him with my thoughts
Six months later I saw him again
happy to see me
but he didn't remember my name
He was the same
and I never saw him again.*

Becky Maatman

Poem

*My mother has books on her library shelves
Books she has kept over the years
Their dog-eared pages opened her life
To Napoleon, Marx and the Cherokee.
Between me and the others the pages flipped shut
From history to stichery her living has shifted
Ginghams tweed plaids now clutter her room
Trimmed by dusty volumes.*

Jeanie Zinkand

CANNON STAFF

EDITORIAL STAFF

Sue Meyers
Gary Wondergem
Karl Neerhof
Wayne Farr
Becky Maatman
Wayne Brower

GENERAL STAFF

Mark Okkema
Syd Hielema
Wally Vande Kleut

