

C A P R I C E

REDD BOGGS

Editor

A REDLANCE PUBLICATION

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This slight pamphlet of odds and bits, mostly fantastical, is the realization of a dream, six years long, of the publication of a magazine, however slender, in the fantasy fan field. Yet, paradoxically, Caprice is (as its title indicates) at yeanning, the result of a whim.

For Caprice, more than half a decade a-borning, was called forth at last (and prematurely, even now) by the imminent appearance of another fan publication, upon whose masthead this writer will appear as co-editor. It was a mere capricious twist of decision that caused this magazine to appear abruptly ahead of that collaborative effort, in order that the dreamed-of "first magazine" shall indeed be the first to appear under the aegis indicated at the top of this page.

Caprice, then, is a token publication, a small shadow of what the long-planned-for fanzine was to be. It contains some off-trail material carefully hoarded for the first golden issue, as well as other items thought unsuitable for publication either in other fan magazines or in magazines of general circulation.

This publication, of course, bears a family resemblance to those issued by FAPA and VAPA, and, while acknowledging their influence, this writer hopes that Caprice is merely the result of virgin-birth, the fertilization of the germ-cell through a mere pin-prick or some such slight physical shock. An attempt has been made, at any rate, to exclude the too-too precious cleverness, the pretentious egotism which are staples of such affairs.

True to tradition, it appears that duplication for this initial effort will be illegible in places. Improvement is promised for subsequent publications.

Letters of comment will be appreciated.

OPEN DOORS

I could not sleep with doors thrown wide,  
The strong bolts all withdrawn;  
I lay awake with aching eyes  
And waited for the dawn.

Through open doors strange winds were blowing,  
Winds I never heard before;  
The winds that howled and winds that wailed  
Came through the opened door.

autobiography of i

i.

the stars faltered in their orbits...worlds ceased whirling...  
suns turned their faces outward and the earth was dark...and when  
the one that was i met the one of innumerable millions that was  
also i...i came to be...

ii.

waves washed over me and through me...moons shone and waned...  
and the warm waves fed me and caressed me and the surge of the  
waves was mine and i was the rhythm of the waves and the waves  
and i were one...

iii.

when the blank moon rose for the ninth evening the waters became  
troubled...the waves fought with one another...lightning slithered  
across the void and struck me five times...five wounds I re-  
ceived before the storm abated...

iv.

tossed high in a desert place i sought to return to the warm sea  
and vague loneliness possessed me...and on the wind sometimes i  
heard the sounds of waters...but when i followed and gazed around  
only sand met my eyes and my eyes filled with tears and the echo  
of waves was but the drip of my tears on the sands...

v.

the desert was deep with loneliness...silent with strange tongues  
and sounds...dark with lightless flares that flickered black  
in the atramentous night...yet i stumbled along forever seeking  
...forever hoping...the wind flung sand over me and the earth  
heaved and threw me down roughly into the sand and i was unclean.

vi.

unclean i was and i longed for the cleanliness of the sea...and  
babel of gibberish smote my ears when i freed them of sand and  
aching with fear i held great handfuls of sand to my ears...black-  
er than the black were lights burning in the desert...unseeing...  
unhearing...i wailed alone upon the wastelands...

vii.

once i came upon a great mouth perched on the crotch of a geo-  
metric tree...where is the sea i seek...i asked...where is peace  
and sanctuary...where is understanding and oneness with me...and  
the great mouth opened and spoke...and out of strange gibberish  
struck two words...have faith...have faith it said have faith...  
and though i trudged worlds on it kept repeating have faith have  
faith have faith have faith...

viii.

another time i came upon a signpost of bricks and fingers pointing wildly in all directions even upon themselves ... blind were the fingers...blanker than the sand of the desert...identical and monotonous were they. . .ululating in tongues known only to themselves...

ix.

aeons passed and still i sought...once again i heard from afar the beat of waves and i followed...i passed from the desert into a wilderness and thorns tore at my feet and slime oozed at my feet and tendrils coiled around my throat...snaky branches writhing against the bleak galaxies of glittering ice...

x.

i crawled despondently out of the wilderness morass and out again on the sere desert sand...leeches dropped from me and left gaping wounds in my body and the blood that poured forth poured in the rhythm of the waves...

xi.

i have found the sea i exulted...and i flung myself on the sand and fell asleep with the beat of my blood waves growing fainter...fainter...and i awoke knowing it was all a dream and the waves were not there...all was desert...and all is desert and nothing is but sand...and i ceased my search...

xii.

but in the quiet of darkness during my dreamings my fingers had scratched strange scrolls on the surface of the sand...strange and alien...strange and friendly...unintelligible were the marks and i gazed at them without understanding...

xiii.

through eternities i crouched there trying to conceive the meaning of the scratches...and suddenly i saw they were pieces of a map...numberless bits of a true chart... and some marks showed where i had already journeyed...and this piece marked where i was now...countless pieces of strange places...strange journeyings...

xiv.

i conceived this to be the ultimate map but i knew not how to join the indiscriminate bits...the marks scratched unknowing... and i sat upon my haunches trying to piece together the numberless pieces...and the stars grew dark in their orbits while i searched...suns consumed themselves in their own fire and the world grew cold...

forgotten now was the sea... forgotten the object of my search and the map was the final end... forgetful of all else i sought now for pieces to fit in the chart... of the innumerable numbers of pieces i had fitted together twenty-five... when i ceased to be...

THE END

\* \* \* \* \*

THERE IS ALSO TODAY...

Go

plunk down your quarter  
riffle through 162 pages  
enjoy

an evening of black and white dreams.

But realize

that regardless of kimball kinndson, the  
gasbill will be a little higher next month,

that regardless of atomic tomorrows, you will  
have to stand all the way to work tomorrow,

that regardless of the nick-of-time invention  
that prevails in the end, you'll get a cold  
next week.

Remember

it is raining outside, and in the morning you  
will have to trudge down gray damp streets;  
don channing can do nothing about it;

the dirty dishes are still waiting in the sink;  
lewis paggett has no solution for a cheaper  
washing-machine.

Go

settle down in your chair  
shut today out of your mind  
and resume

your perusal of a. e. van vogt.

## TWO IN A GARDEN

It was in the midst of a vast garden that they sprang into being, in the common, beautiful heart of a garden. It was not that he chanced across her or that she somehow came upon him. It was simply that there they were, in the glorious garden. They discovered each other, and were.

It was as if they did not have to smile and become acquainted and say a few things at first that they did not care about. It was just that they saw and accepted and were happy and walked together there in the garden, not touching one another. They did not speak, for the silence was a continuance of their long, unconscious self-knowledge. In the heart of the garden they walked about, locking up and smiling and not wondering, but knowing for a time. For a while which did not seem long at all they wandered, never getting lost, for they had started from nowhere and never planned upon reaching a destination. It was the heart of a garden and they were of its beating.

But once he touched her and they stopped suddenly. "Did you hear something?" he asked.

And she said softly, using her speech delicately with her first words, "I heard a bird singing. What did you hear?"

"I, too, heard a bird," he said. And after that they ran and heard birds singing and saw bright plumage flashing through many bending green trees, high in the lithe young branches where long leaves wove in and out among short leaves. There was not much sky to be seen for leaves in their twining, but the sky and the leaves were a bright weaving. Below, where it was shaded and cool and stray winds played just beyond reach, and before they grew weary of walking and looking and knowing, they fell asleep in the ecstasy of desire unattained.

When they awoke they were rested, but time had not passed, for it had lain by their sides in their dreaming. And so their faces were fresh and their bodies were young, and they sprang up to release themselves of the joy gathered in them. They danced bird songs and wind songs and star songs, though the stars were not shining. Night did not need to come. This was a day worthy to be night.

Somewhere a tree fell, and she threw herself on the tender grass and pondered, forgetting. "Did you hear something?" she said, anxiously.

But he laughed and took a world from her hands and told her, "I hear only what I want to hear: the wild birds caroling and the blue winds calling and fair green silences drifting down through the trees into moss and cool earth and white stones. Without us there is no sound, and so hear only what you will, for anything else will cease to exist. Do not hear these other sounds, for we are not of the garden and we shall take only what we wish."

And so she heard no more, only streams flowing, leaves stirring, time standing and singing. There was just an occasional tree fall, for sometimes she forgot until it was too late. But once she lay dreaming and she opened her eyes and spoke: "If we are not of the forest, what may we be of? If we take of the garden, are they gifts we take, for as we are not of the garden, neither is the garden of us?"

"The garden gives gladly, so long as we are beautiful together," he thought.

"What is beauty?" she asked, at the same time knowing.

"It is the things that we leave alone," he answered, and his words came not from his lips and not from her heart, but out of a beauty itself.

"But where do we come from?" she persisted, for in all time and all worlds it is so with women. "What creature am I?"

"Do not trouble us with that," he said. "Ignorance is the secret of our existence. Do not try to discover us, or you attempt our death."

But when he was silent, she fell to wondering again. "Are you a philosopher?" she whispered, and the creatures of the woods crept by, unseen. "A philosopher, a poet, or a shepherd lad?"

"I do not know the strange words you speak," he said, but he trembled at the mention of these things.

"Your name is Reginald," she told him, "for that means king-ly."

"And your name is Felicia, for that means happiness."

"Your name is Silvanus, a forester."

"And your name is Sonora, for that is a beautiful sound."

So they told themselves in this way but they did not ask each other what their names might be, for each knew his own, and knowing it, feared to know that of the other. And the garden changed, and the birds sang less and trees fell more, stealing closer about the heart of the garden, as if to surround and keep them there. And then the frost crept upon them as they sat by a tree. It stole down from the heavens and curled about waiting leaves. It drifted in silence on paths softly white. And the beauty took them suddenly with a oneness that was strange. It was as if they had known it some time long ago.

"I had forgotten," she faltered.

And he: "I did not remember. Pray, who are we? And who were we? And who have we become?"

(Concluded on next page)

"My name. . .it is Norah. . ." she said slowly.

"And my name. . .is. . .William," he said weakly, as their strength waned.

A tree fell in the heart of the garden. But there was no sound. The splintering, shivering pain of the garden did not shriek in its taut dismay. A tree fell, a world blew off lightly and there was no sound to be heard, for there was no being to hear.

THE END

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VANESSA

You are an arrogant argument  
for the existence of the female.

No wonder  
a spring wind snarls  
as it tosses your black hair.

My fingers ache to claw your throat  
that is a cobra sleeping.

Penetrating your black eyes  
which are fathomless dimensions  
I kiss you.

And my soul snarls.

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Caprice (Redd Boggs)  
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