

ÍBÍD

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1955/76

No, it isn't IBID, and I'll get around to that right away.

Let's call it BEN'S BEAT for now. It's nice to be part of FAPA after all these fannish years., including a few of waiting-listing. Funny I never thought about joining, but I was into other APAs, and one only has just so much time. Mostly my attention has been on The Esoteric Order of Dagon (EOD) for which I have done IBID, by which zine some of you know me. Over ten years of that. Indeed, the next issue will be 53 -- and therein lies the reason for THIS cover. I goofed, and tagged it 52!! Why waste it, when you could all see Don Herron's fine drawing for the chase scene in H. P. Lovecraft's The Shadow Over Innsmouth?

Oh, I could have used it anyway, I suppose...just one more goof in a long and illustrious history of egregious typos and go ofs (you have already seen my handiwork, including that "e" in the preceding word.) I could have blustered it out, with an explanation; I could have inked the individual sheets -- I tried one but it was not very good; I could have pasted on bits of paper! Any of these dodges would have been unfair to Don, so, I'll re-do the cover for IBID and give all of you this one as a gift. Hope you like it, and if you recall the HPL yarn, I think you'll admit Don did well by it.

Time to introduce myself: Ben P. Indick
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As I was saying, IBID has been my chief zine for a long time. However there have been others... Rappin', a small lifetime ago, for an APA no longer extant, RAPS....Ydmos for a brief but nice apa, The Hyperborean League, devoted to Robert E Howard. Also a zine for Rehupa, a very nice Howard = apa, to which I belonged twice, but did not remain. It is alive and well, and Brian Earl Brown can testify...I also do Onyx for the HPL/Necronomiconapa, but that is in abeyance while Randy Everts is away learning Minustani.

So much for some fan history, publishing division. The reason I have joined FAPA is to be found in the variety of your zines: I wanted a watering-hole, a schmoozing-place, unlike the other apas which have author or subject orientations. I'll probably talk a lot about Theatre, which I love -- I tried it out in IBID, summarizing the 100 plays I have been seeing, and I see quite a few. It was hardly appropriate in a Lovecraftian zine, but I do'd it anyway. Even here, very few of you will get to see the bulk of the shows, but I'll bear with your Things, and if you wish you can sample mine. Some personal thoughts, some boasting about my artist-wife Janet, who is great in both aspects. Some fantasy talk -- not too much about films, of which I see few, most being so bad. And anything else, not excluding the weather, which, today, is nice.

Myself, I'm a senior citizen. I used to gnash my teeth at the thought, but, at 62, I realized that it could be worse: I could have failed to reach 62, and that is no good at all! Think of all the shows I'd miss -- and my curiosity about what my kids will be doing, and all the books I should miss...n, better to acknowledge one's hoary years and keep moving. Also, I get into some movies for only 2 (hah! I even call my spouse a fellow-geriate, which she is far from being, and save another three clams! So, knowing some of you are even my seniors, that's it for Father Time's inroads. I neglected to add that I am also, in that regard, a First Pandem geek. I wasn't active as a fan by 1937 in any

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actifan sense, but I was reading the bilge. In 1944 when I was in the military for one of our wars -- I disremember which, there be so many-- I did get active in fanzines to some extent. I no longer retain the evidence, having disposed of same in the early '50s, when I went through withdrawal from fa tasy lit; Tolkien, a heart attack, some kind words from Augie Derleth -- these brought me back, and in the late 60s I resumed the nefarious practice.

Before long my sage words began appearing here and there, especially in Donn Brazier's now-departed but much-loved Title. About 1973 I commenced what would become IBID, and could not bring myself to drop it when I dropped out of general fanac (you all know how it gets to be, the mailbox chockfull of zines every day, which in good conscience I felt obligated to reply to, considering how much effort their eds had gone to. So I continue, and I am happy for the numerous friends Fandom has given me, and the pleasure of composition, however bad -- or sometimes good -- it has been.

Some of those friends are right here in FAPA..Let's see : ~~M~~ Bruce Arthurs; John Bangsund; Bernadette Bosky(dear Berni!); Brian Earl Brown; Jack Chalker; Randy Everts; Ken Faig; Moshe Feder, whose Fanoolastic bunch were fun to meet; Bruce Gillespie; Rosemary Hickey, to whom I owe a letter and whose last name I could not == until now = remember!; Art Hlavaty -- old talkative; Eric Lindsay; Sam Moskowitz, Esfan extraordinaire!; Marc Ortlieb; Bruce Pelz' Andy Porter, with whom we shared Newport one fine day! Robert Runte; Roy Tackett' Harry Warner Jr; Don C Thompson -- a Wler but an old friend. Yup, that's a goodly crew..

Since I may refer to my "store" now and then, be aware I am a pharmacist, and occasionally little dramas occur, the latest (and sixth time) being a recent gunpoint heist (I don't count break-ins. No drama there, just a mess altho sometimes even there some humor may lie.) If I talk about my plays, that is because I have had some stuff done, and never stop hoping. And I may mention my essays; no big deal, but I have had some sneaking into print, mostly on the redoubtable Stephen King, but also on other subjects now and then.

I shall likely make each mailing, and I hope to hang in for a long time. To my IBID-EOD friends, I apologize for duplication of pages. There will be less in future mailings, but if something is of general interest I'll include it.

And now, typing this in the store, very early, I must get to work!

It would be presemptuous to be on a first-name emcee basis as I leaf through your FAPAZines, but that's what apa's are for...so, let's see... Good luck to Fred Lerner, who found that extraordinary patience paid off, and his dissertaryien on SF. It would be nice if Scarecrow Press gave you copies to put through FAPA, and think of how high the page count would go! However, it wrecks havoc on your royalties. The subject is interesting. I don't know if SF is any more highbrow in Academe than ever, but it sure as heck sells a lot better than once upon a youthful time....

Jack Speer is irrasuble, insightful, curmudgeonly, interesting. Lots of qualities. In advance, I apologize for my numerous typos, which can be blamed on my hunting/pecking/not always finding fingers. However, bad usage is the fault of an aging brain.

Speaking of aging (we ancients do, as you all know) in today's (Nov 24) New York Times Book Review Section is a review of a book of poetry by Kennedy, X. J. -- known in the 40s as a fresh and delightful youngster for some wild fanzines, and going under the monicker of Joe or Joke Kennedy. Know him, Jack? A few years ago, I dropped him a note, after all those decades. He answered it good-naturedly, but fantasy and fanzines are long ago for Joe. His poetry is very good, by the way, has appeared in distinguished places, and the new book is "Cross Ties", Univ of Georgia Press, HC 16.95, pb 9.95. A funny little sample, about a couple of poets:

He's read me, I've read him. Testing his strength,
Each circles each, protecting his behind,
Not knowing, sniffing after his own kind."

He is a college prof.

Eric Lindsay: Give my regards to Jean, not Mary Weber....Your island nation has its attractions even to folks not going to Worldcons. My nephew and his brand new wife (hell, they'd lived together six years already) honeymooned in Australia (plus NZ, Bora-Bora and Tahiti!) And Janet and I were big deals when we went to Florida in 1953! (Is it some sort of indication that we have disliked the Sunshine State ever since?)

Art H: Well, I guess you can save postage now by not sending me separate copies of The Dillinger Melic! I'll read it faithfully here.

Sam M: This is generous of you to include FC, a magazine I had somehow never gotten around to seeing before. Very handsome, and the cover is a spitting image of myself as I would like to have looked. I'll get to Stapledon another time, but meanwhile allow me to compliment you on the Merritt book, which, by golly, brought me a picture of my one-time correspondent and amateur bookbinder Allen Mc Elfresh. One day, in the 50s he stopped writing, and I figured his radical years and fears had caught up with him! But now, he is alive and well, and, presumably, has my last pile of unbound pages still there (from Astounding.) When you write him, tell him to get off his butt and send them. I mean, thirty years is a long LONG period of patience! By the way, I have a short note from Merritt I have treasured since 1943. Nothing momentous, but signed by my idol. I can understand how Langley Searles felt when he reread Merritt in later years. I had some similar ractions, when I reread the entire body of his work for a fanzine article; his comparison to Tchaikowsky is especially apt. In the end, I think one understands the writer, the composer and himself, and accepts. I would, however, urge LS to try The Metal Monster again. It wears better than The Conquest of the Moon Pool....

Harry Warner: Air, give me air! Well, that's your style..Anyway, Beverly Sills often uses supertitles in her opera house for English language operas. She ain't dumb; singers -- whether opera, pop or rock, can be tough to understand! In the pages on plays which I

include, I do not recall how much space I gave to The Met -- I tended to keep the reviews briefer than I shall infuture for FAPA. Anyway, we saw Favarotti and Caballe -- over 500 pounds of supervoices -- in Tosca. You may have seen -- and taped -- this last year on TV. Unfortunately, Hildegard Behrens sang Tosca, and was entirely wrong. We had seen the lady in Tristan at the Met, marvelous and at home, but she was ready for neither Puccini or TV closeups. (In Tristan, just imagine, she has to belt away for $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours and THEN Wagner gives her the famous Love-death aria to end it on, another 15 or 20 minutes. Somewhere she found the reserve energy and was positively breathtaking. The staging was less so; the designer, very arty, narrowed that entire, colossal stage to a mere pinpoint of light on her head alone -- that's all (previously he had done to a handclasp of Tristan and Isolde) and if I had tenth row seats I'd have been far more moved than I was, straining my binocs from my good but distant balcony seat! Anyway, Zeffereilli's much maligned super scenery was absolutely wonderful, and the Tosca I saw was the first time I was utterly in love with it. And don't let them knock Monserrate -- she didn't just flab off into the wings; there COULD have been a parapet at the side toward which she groped! And who would be mean enough to ask so hefty a lady to JUMP! At that she still can move easily; Jessie Norman, great voice indeed (I loved all $5\frac{3}{4}$ hours of Les Troyens) can scraclly climb a four inch step without assistance.

Seth: Hi. Your printout is elegant and ehviable.

Rosemary: If I'd known you were associated with AARP I'd have used your influence when Janet sent in a slide to their art competition a while back (as my spouse, and I had just joined, she was eligible.) SHE DID NOT WIN! (Not to be unfair, they returned the skide because her piece was a mix of sculpture and canvas, which was against the rules.) Their magazine is attractive, but not enough to make me resub. Good luck in California.

I rejoin SFBC every few years, Moshe, unable to resist all those "free" books, but, dammit, I never have the patience to read them! No doubt the gismicks you will dangle before re-joiners will tempt me again. Nice to say Hello. I hope you and all are just fine! I am the same as you recall, just more beat.

Last year, LIZ SCHWARZIN, I saw a little off-off Bway play called THE FANTOD, a Victorian term dealing in some oblique way with nervous ailments. I forget the writer -- he did better with a two-characters play about How I got My Vietnam Story. This was a mish-mash of Stoker and Stevenson, and unlike Bram S. he made the mistake of giv/ing his sinister villain far too much to say.

Lots of good folks in SQ, Brian. A veritable apa in one fanzine. I'll get to it in time. (They all say that, but I'll try.)

I didn't peruse, rapidly or slowly, every line here but it is nice be part of it, and I hope to hang around a while.

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For FAPA Mailing 194

--- Ben

ONE P.S.: I think your notion of submitting mailings for copyright is excellent and worthy of added copy requirements.

Theatre Beat

As any theatre buff -- or any potential New York City tourist -- knows, this is a weak season on the boards. Stuff opens, on and off-Bway, but distinction is lacking. My own Opening, set far off Broadway, in a neighboring town, in fact, for next Spring, is cancelled, since the old schoolhouse where the producer-director operated from was found to have a ton of asbestoes. No theatre, no play. (I've sent copies to a few places, but I don't have much high hope since it really is a group of one-acts, not the biggest dream of a producer. (I was doing a last recycle, but ended up revising a lot and adding too.) So, we'll go to the pro stuff, adding only that my musician-son has signed a contract to do songs for a film. Details eventually may follow....

The best play this season for us is easily the Eugene O'Neill masterpiece, "The Iceman Cometh." Initially a flop some four decades ago, it was revived with great success off-Bway, in the round, with a young Jason Robards. I can still recall its power, the actors looming over us (as we sat at "ringside" and saw their spit in the low lights. Coming in at close to five hours -- and we sitting on cane chairs!! -- it nevertheless was (as they now all say) "Riveting." ~~It~~, it is now revived on a proscenium stage, in a large theatre -- and it still works. It is directed somewhat differently (by the same director) and now the stage is broad, with the dozen habitués of Harry Hope's saloon spread out across the stage, in varying light and shadow, with all the chiaroscuro of a Rembrandt painting of some town elders. Robards, both the grantee and the victim of the O'Neill largesse, is still brilliant, abetted by Barnard Hughes and Donolf Moffatt and a splendid cast. Like last year's equally long and brilliant O'Neill marathon, "Strange Interlude", these plays seem to me symphonic, rising, subsiding, with minor chords, repetition and climax. Together with what seems to me his grandest masterpiece, "Long Day's Journey Into Night", these plays seem to me the American Shakespeare. Five hours -- and it passed very quickly.

In new work, perhaps the most interesting for me -- not for Janet, who hated and was bored by it -- was Robert Wilson's "The Golden Windows", seen in Brooklyn. Wilson doesn't exactly write plays; he blocks out scenes, and suggests dialogue, often allowing the actors to contribute. He thus wrote last year's sensation, the revival of "Einstein On the Beach," with Philip Glass' magnificent score. That play had a wealth of imagery and many actors and scenes -- and that haunting score. It was $4\frac{1}{2}$ intermissionless hours (audiences were encouraged to come and go, but after the first hour no one left, so haunting was it. Well, "The Golden Windows" only runs 80 minutes, in three acts, with four characters, all dialogue being non sequiter, and nary a word of explanation about anything. It had no Glass score to pull it out; music was by Gavin Bryars, a Brit (you may know his -- to me -- haunting "Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me". This score was a rather quiet chamber-like music. It must have taken me half an hour to get with the play and its seeming inertia and torpor, but -- like most of the audience -- I did give in. I imagine one such play a year would suffice for me, but Wilson is very imaginative with his staging and lighting, and its is a contemporary painting fleshed out. It did not have the genius of "Einstein" -- one of the most original concepts I have seen in my life -- but it had its own beauty.

I had the misfortune of overkill on the subject of AIDS, seeing within five days TWO plays about it, THE NORMAL HEART and AS IS. (One was on very low discount, and the other was a freebie -- but it was a bargain I'd have been wiser to resist.) "Heart" was basically a polemic, almost a history of homosexuality in America, and then hitting on the dread illness. AS IS concentrated on AIDS. Each was moving -- how otherwise when one must deal with the tragic death of young persons? Each also tended to memorialize the victims, as though they were some sort of heroes in a mysterious battle. This attitude results from the early years when little or no attention was given the young men dying of the disease, as though it were God-given retribution for their unorthodox way of life. After all, 13,000 died, including 900 women, and the gay/lesbian community could hardly be faulted for bitterness, when a relatively minor outbreak like "Legionaire's Disease" got immediate attention and action.

Nevertheless, while I feel compassion for any young person whose life is so cruelly snuffed out, I do not believe in making mythic, tragic heroes of them, just as I would not make such figures out of victims of muscular dystrophy, cancer, heart disease, leukemia etc. "The Normal Heart" especially typified this attitude, covering the walls of the theatre with all 13,000 names, in a grotesque imitation of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington. Say what one will about the wisdom or lack of it in that terrible war, and the manner in which those near-60,000 died, it was in service of their country, not of a biological urge or an infected-needle drug injection. I sympathize, even agonize, over the 13000 dead -- a growing number, terrifyingly, one which will affect heterosexuals as well -- but I will not memorialize it. Meanwhile, the implicit message of both plays remains: research, to halt the disease, just as Polio was once successfully attacked. It is not any less urgent.

Nevertheless, the pair made me leery of further plays on the theme. It is hard to avoid, in some measure, and so I got itty bitty doses in "Short Change" about four college kids rooming together, one of them a young woman. This basically TV-sitcom managed to touch upon Hodgkins Disease, homosexuality, straight sex and maybe a few other things as well. Its chief problem was that the allegedly loveable lead guy seemed to me a good replica of George S Kaufman at his least loveable.... ns "Alice and Fred" touched glancingly on Lesbianism; when Fred (Freda) goes after a man, however, Alice is burned up. It takes place at the break of the century, and, really, folks, if you want ambience, you ain't gonna get it with one chair midstage and lighting. I remained unconvinced I was watching anything other than young actors pretending to be 1900 folks. Worse yet, Alice vents her jealousy by cutting Fred's pretty neck with a straight-edge razor! Now my teacher taught me never, but never, take the easy way out by killing someone off unless it is absolutely called for. There is, indeed, a plethora of blood-squirting knives, razors, etc, loose on the stage today! In five minutes flat I could have provided them a better, cleaner, more honest and more moving ending -- and no dry-cleaning bill either.

Another bit of redundancy occurred with "Hamelin" and "Just So", two musicals based on stories for children. The problem is which audience is being sought? Well, each actually wanted an adult audience, of course; who makes money on kidshows? The trouble is the way the show comes out,

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and, with a story like The Pied Piper, or How the Camel Got Its Humps, there are difficulties. Hamelin went for a more outspokenly rock music style, and its first acts especially so, when the rats, dressed rather abstractly, were lively. The second act tended to become sentimental and preachy. Seeing it in late preview, I felt that since it aped the costume manner of a far costlier animal show uptown on Broadway, it might as well go all the way and call itself RATS. (The later New York Time review used the same schtick, so I guess it wasn't all that clever and original.) I found that all its energy and occasional spark did not make it a particularly good show, or an adult fairy tale, like, say yesteryear's "Once Upon A Mattress."

"Just So" had much of the same frenetic score, mingling with songs closer to ballads. Since half the cast (well, 3 of 7) were black, and most represented animals, it was an easy laugh to get by using anachronism -- the characters would talk in street jive, slap hands, etc. On the other hand, when an occasional attempt to catch the flavor of Kipling was made, with the fantasy and the esoteric names, some beauty was achieved. I could not help but feel that less cheap laughs and more honesty to the source might have made a more meaningful play on any age level. The cast is likeable, but the show does not soar.

For any who care to read this in FAPA, I should mention CATS, which I saw in August 1985, and quite likely will never forget. Money talks, and here it spoke in absolutely topnotch acting, singing, dancing, playing, designing, and over all Trevor Nunn's brilliant concept; it is the best musical show I have ever seen (but keep in mind it also cannot be compared to others, as it is not a book show, except a few light strands. It also is not a mere one song play. If visiting the Big Apple (and it is better to see it there, as the road show is a smaller version, I am told by a fellow who knows both) send in your \$45.00 the seat and get Orch seats, close as possible, altho this show is all over the theatre.

Last year we liked very much a dark, moving play about Bronx low-lives (and, oi weh, do I know THEM well!), "Danny and the Deep Blue Sea" by John Patrick Shanley. Now we saw "Savage in Limbo", about like people, a larger cast, and that same power. This is the writer closest to David Mamet I could name, and I figure by his next -- which I hope will be better titled -- he should be on Broadway itself. Potential viewers should be forewarned that his language is filled with that same 4 letter expletive which became so funny in Mamet's Glengarry Glen Ross.... George Walker's "Filthy Rich", by the same rep co. as the Shanley, was an undecided pastiche of the Bogart/Slade genre, sometimes satire, sometimes straight, occasionally funny, and too inconsistent. The author has been diddling with it for 6 years in small productions; time to put it away and do something new.

Which isn't all that bad, I suppose. A few years ago we saw a play about Colette by Jones and Schmidt, who have been living on their cornucopian royalties from The Fantasticks; for 14 years they've tried their Colette collage in various forms, always failing out of town. This too was a dud. Boys, I'd like to say, all right already! After 14 years, if your second act is THIS soggy, FORGET ABOUT IT!

Doubles was a very funny play in a men's locker room at a tennis club, with a hilarious send-off on the prototypical handsome self-centered tennis pro. I laughed all the way. ... "Solo Voyages", a one-actress reading of material from plays by a black writer Adrienne Kennedy, directed by Joseph Chaiken, was very rewarding ... "Yours, Anne", a musical based on Anne Frank, was, in spite of an adverse Times review (and, keep in mind, out-of-towners, that NYTimes reviews make or break plays) very moving. It added no dimension to that tragic, ennobling, hopeful story, but it was poignant, with a young actress, Trini Alvarado, who bore an uncanny resemblance to photos of Anne. The story must be told again and again.

Fina Bausch and her German Tanztheater laid 2½ tons of dirt on the stage of Bklyn Academy of Music, and had 30 actors -- dancers -- call 'em what you will -- running around thereon, not ballet, not dance, really performance theatre, and it was remarkably effective. On a clean floor a few nights later she did the Brecht Weill "Seven Deadly Sins" and again very effectively... Less happily, on the same stage, I was bored utterly stiff by the newly reorganized Laura Dean Dancers. Dean's specialty is spinning, but here she tried new stuff along with it, and, with inadequate dancing skills, her troupe merely left one anxious to get out. Much better was a new troupe, the Rebecca Kelly dancers, still mostly under the influence of Paul Taylor, but lively, colorful and exciting.

A mighty big bite was taken in trying to adapt "Crime and Punishment" to a miniscule O-O-B stage, and my wife felt SHE was being punished. It was gallant to try to be faithful to the plot, but the multiplicity of scenes, with their attendant blackouts to move scenery were better handled in cinema. Here they slowed things down, and the style was obly old-fashioned. The book can be done but I think it should be handled differently, concentrating on only a few characters, with some abstracted diversions

For ancient movie fans, we saw a 1929-31 film, QUEEN KELLY, produced by and starring Gloria Swanson, directed by Erich Von Stroheim, a famous "lost film" now pieced together as best as possible. Only five reels were ever filmed, at which time Swanson gave up on Von Stroheim, who would film each scene over and over; the end was not in sight. To make matters worse, it was silent when talkies were already coming on strong. Its plot is ludicrous, hopelessly outdated in its own time, but it has splendid details and a certain silly charm. It is fun, but no treasure like Abel Gance's Napoleon, a masterpiece saved from obscurity and lovingly reconstructed from fragments. Now there was an occasion de cinema when I saw that! Only that awful old big Apple could do it this way: the Radio City Music Hall, a 60 piece orchestra conducted by Carmine Coppola (whose son Francis had sponsored the film), the mighty Wurlitzer, and, for the final reel, the full original 1928 precursor of the three-screen Cinerama process. It had to be the greatest single movie-going experience I have ever had -- all 4½ hours of it. As icing, Lillian Gish had come to see it, and was taken to the stage for a brief speech, and told how "Mr Griffith would have loved this."

...I hope this is legible, and without TOO many errors; I am having typewriter trouble making my stencils, and have not tried to correct much. I'd go blind! If this goes on, I'll try to use xerox and offset more.

About books...

I have not been able to get to many cons the last year or two, which is too bad, because one of the nicest things about them was the near certainty I'd run into my old friend and occasional editor, Darrell Schweitzer. Now, any of you who have attended cons, at least back east here, have also run into Darrell. You know him -- tallish, slim, nasal, friendly, and with a valise of books, mostly his, which he will gladly sign and sell. Well, they are all good, but if he is carrying his latest -- TOM O'BEDLAM'S NIGHT OUT, when you meet him, by all means, BUY IT, because it's good, really good.

Here is the poop, as Darrell puts it in an afterword: he writes the way he does because no one else is writing stories that way and that's how he likes them. And for the most part, they are fantasy, which today is too often interpreted as horror, or as S&S adventure, and where is beautiful prose or imagination? (Bob Silverberg has done some, and I'll get to that right away, not that you don't know!)

There is much of Darrell in his stories: discursive, rambling, pun-making, too kind to be mean, too knowing to be nasty. So, his fiction roams optimistically through disasters, joys, marvels and a happy madman's wisdom.

The title story is one of three, comical and insightful, and since they are my favorites, I can understand why Darrell chose the first as the title of his book (18 stories, a poem and nearly 200 pages.) Tom is one of those happy nuts who illuminate literature and make things easier to bear in our reading. He is so good-natured that when he escapes from jail, he returns and saves his jailor from incarceration! These are rollicking yarns, but as certain as you'd expect, there are a few neatly Dunsanian tales following too, the author's favorite inspirator. "A Lantern Maker of Al Hanlo" is poignant and wistful; the hero has his lost but unforgotten dream of a beautiful woman, and he knows at last he will never have her, but he is able to accept, retaining only "a single moment frozen in time," and recognizing that she was probably unaware of his existence! Strange thing, Love. He has the Irish lord's talent for exotic names: the poet Obhok; the King of Rhoon; the capital of Klor; the river Xrum; and, with humor, the god of poets, Gheeznu. These are not pastiches; something of another literary magician, Jack Vance, is present as well, with his menage of sorcerors. Yet, the not entirely human god-constructed dadar, has more than a share of what makes a sensitive human being, and his story is all the more touching when he eschews vengeance at the end.

In several Roman tales -- Darrell, among his butterfly-hoppings, is also a devoted classicist -- the "Story of a Brown Man" offers a different view of the collision of pagan Rome with the new Christianity, told with sympathy and understanding for the old -- and doomed -- faith.

I have about three more of these lovely, whimsical, humorous fantasies to read, but it is good to enjoy -- and even be surprised by -- a friend's work, seeing a deeper soul than mere fleeting acquaintance allows. The sense of wonder is still alive here! The book is published by W. Paul Ganley, P.O. Box 149, Amherst Branch, Buffalo, N.Y. 14226-0149, in three editions, a fine pb at \$7.50, as well as a hardcover and a signed, boxed de luxe. Steve Fabian has delivered beautiful, complementary illustrations, often sensual, always apt. My congratulations, Darrell, on your best yet. More, please...

Steve's beautiful art reminded me to comment on some other illustrated books. I just received Don Grant's lushly produced KULL and KANE. The latter is drawn by Jeffrey Jones, in that dark, dour style he has used of late, filled with mood and suggestion but little overt action. His hero is a surprisingly lightly made man for a hero. However, KULL is chockablock with dazzling and baroque art by Ned Dameron, brilliantly colored. It reminded me I never mentioned Silverberg's short masterpiece, Sailing to Byzantium, which bore a grand d/w by Dameron. I simply was enthralled by this story, pure fantasy (with a basis of SF for its logic). I might have known how much I'd like it, inasmuch as I liked Lord Valentine's Castle so much. I don't keep up on things as much as I should, and somehow I had pigeonholed Silverberg as a sciencefiction writer only; so grand a fantasy was a pleasant surprise. I liked some of the stories in its successor, but after a while I was pretty much taking the tales for granted, although here and there one made me sit up with a shock of pleasure. I have yet to read the third book, but I suspect it will hit the bell again. Still, Byzantium was, I thought, a perfect gem, and I congratulate Bob.

Naturally I have read the Bachmans, although I had to give up early on the third, Roadwork, I think it's called -- the guy who is determined to defend his land. Tiresome. And the first, Rage, was okay, but obviously padded. However, the 2nd and 4th were zingers. King amazes me still: The Long Walk (excuse me if titles are wrong -- I'm too lazy to walk upstairs and get the book!) is a one-plot story, no subplot to speak of, only those young men walking and talking; and, for a while, it threatened to be exasperating. Then, THEN, one is hooked by it, for what it has is a powerful subtext indeed, as do a number of his better works. That walk is his metaphor for life, and it is quickly gripping and filled with tension. The final novel, The Running Man, seemingly a replay of the walkers, is not at all that, but it is a not-put-downable book, and a honey of a wild adventure, right up to the characteristic no-holds barred smash-it-all-up copyrighted King climax. Thinner was also a hooking book, but I could never take it seriously. I mean, gosh, after all these years, a gypsy's curse novel? And with so improbable, not to mention vulgar, a pretext? I suppose people in Maine do such things in automobiles, but in New Jersey we are more chaste. And the ending was both obvious and ludicrous. Still....I had to finish the darned thing! Sigh. The Man is-- FUN! By the way, the new Underwood-Miller 2nd collection of essays on King, KINGDOM OF FEAR, should be out early in January, and therein I rave happily about King's wonderful THE EYES OF THE DRAGON. No, I give away VERY LITTLE of the plot, so, if you wish to read the essay, and are awaiting the trade edition late in 1986 (or early 87) it will not spoil your pleasure. The U/M book, by the way, has a great array of essayists, so that my own humble presence will not hurt sales.

And I must mention Ray Bradbury, whose DEATH IS A LONELY BUSINESS is not really a pastiche of Hammett and Chandler, but is a tribute. It is an unusual item, a nostalgic look at RB's own beginnings as a writer, with his love for outrageous characters. It is fun, and a good read, even if it will not knock his masterpieces off their perch. Reading this, one should also read his collection of very early stories for mystery pulps, A MEMORY OF MURDER, which has a few of his very best stories. Hail, Ray!