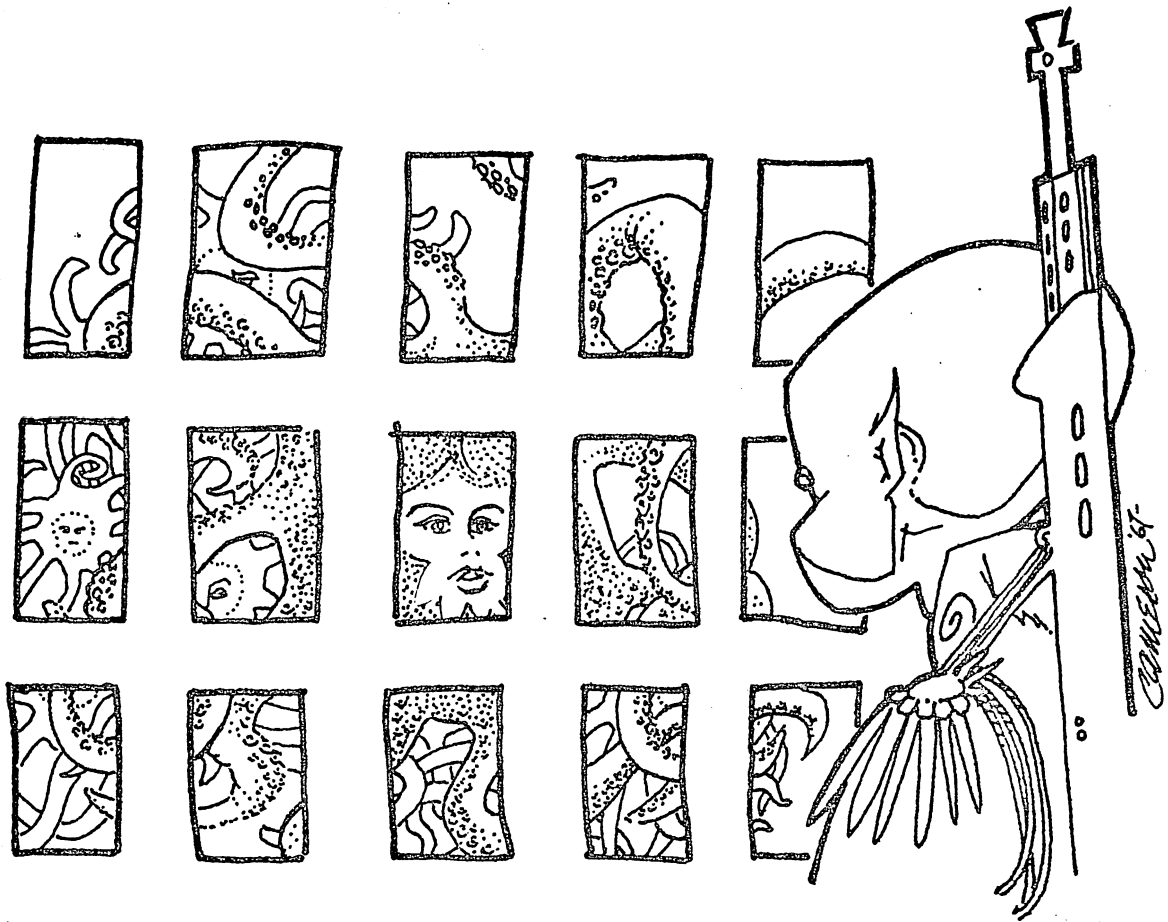


DIASPAR 14



BODE '65'

Head + Back of a "GALATHEA"
Body of a "CROCODILE"
Feet of a "TYRANNOSAURUS"



DIASPAR 14

Produced February 1971 for FAPA and likeable strangers by
Terry Carr, 35 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201.

Cover by Vaughan Bode. Back cover by R. Nelson. (See below.)

Drawing above by Colin Cameron. Drawings in *After the Heicon*
by Arthur Thomson.

Fansprach

I mentioned last issue that I had in my moldering art files some drawings that preceded even the gathering of those files, being things passed on from other people's moldering art files many years ago. In this case it's a drawing signed "R. Nelson, 1941," as you can see as well as I. 1941 was before Ray Nelson's time in fandom, so this is obviously somebody else; just exactly who I have little or no idea. The name Ron Nelson does come fluttering up to my consciousness from the impenetrable depths, but I have no associations for that name so take it for what it's worth, whatever that may be.

I can tell you that the drawing was originally done for reproduction in hekto, since there are notations in pencil to the side of the drawing (which is also done in pencil) saying things like "smoke

red & black" and "clouds b&w," "Mt. purple," "sky blue," "water blue & white," "ships white & black" and "Rays--pale red." So if you're of an age to remember what hektographed fanzine art looked like, imagine this back cover being in the specified colors and you'll be seeing it as the artist intended.

This issue of DIASPAR marks the first time in quite awhile that I've had zines in two consecutive mailings. You may not be cheering, but I am. There are 20 more pages of my trip report in this issue, which added to the 11 pages last issue make 31 pages of trip report to cover the first five days of our vacation last year. That may be very groovy, except that it was about a three-week vacation, and at this rate I'll be real lucky to finish the trip report before this year's world convention, if at all.

Oh well, what the hell: I should be so lucky as to have this problem all the time.

My interest in FAPA is stirring sluggishly, but stirring indeed. I read things from the mailings these days, instead of carefully putting them in a stack of things to be read real soon now. Last mailing there was a page missing from one Fapamag and I stirred so much as to write to the OE for a fresh copy of that fanzine. It was probably the first time I'd written to Gregg Calkins in ten years. It was also probably the first he'd written to me in at least that long.

FAPA is not dead, I insist. Doom-criers may abound, they may even be voted into FAPA office, but FAPA is a fanclub for the ages. Fapazines dream softly in the passage of the years, to repeat a line that Dick Bergeron liked ten years ago. Outside FAPA, fanzines like SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW may come and go, as indeed SF REVIEW has done 1 1/2 times, but FAPA endures. We dream of Vernon McCain and H. C. Koenig, we toss and murmur about Degler and Laney and occasionally William Clyde, we smile at remembrances of Willis and Burbee and we're jerked awake when we recall Redd Boggs as he used to be. But even this is insufficient shock to rouse us completely, and the typical FAPA member is found lying in a hammock whispering only short phrases like "eight pages" and "substantially the work of the member."

FAPA seems to have turned into a fanclub made up of Elmer Perdues. Well, that's not so bad; at least when Elmer produces something for us it's worth reading. Better a fanclub of 65 Brilliant Deadwoodists than of Prolific Fanhacks, I always say. What do you always say?

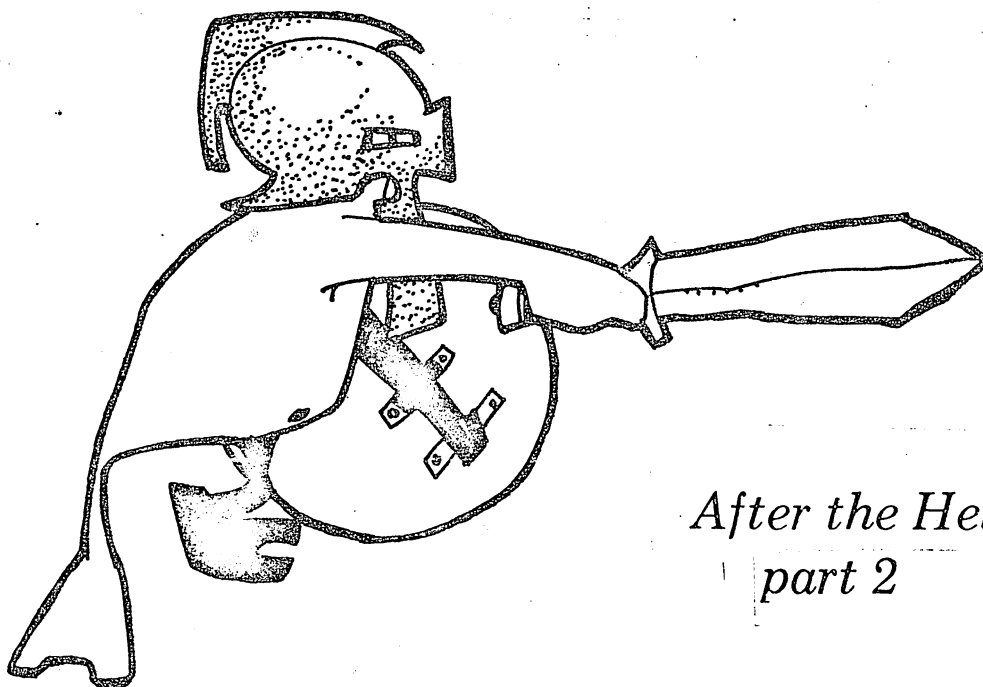
On the next page you'll find a poem I wrote tonight, February 8. It's not a good poem, because I'm not a good poet, but it does get better as it goes along. And it says something I believe. On my good days, anyway.

Did you know that in 1954, only two years after I joined this frabjous organization, I was voted the fifth best poet in FAPA? Damn right. I beat out Dick Eney, Dean Grennell and, uh, William Clyde.

Ah, lordy lordy, the names that FAPA history conjures up. Do you think Fapans of 1980 will remember thee and me so well?

Tonight for the first time
I listened to Hijack the Starship,
really listened, got into it a bit.
It's just as dumb as I thought it was,
all about 7,000 clever hippies
stealing a starship
and going out into the universe,
where their children will be able to
play among the galaxies.
Isn't that dumb?
Wow. Hijack the starship.
But it's human.
The world is dying of too much being with itself:
Overpopulation; pollution; the endless war.
(It really is, you know.)
Anyone who's somehow contrived to be human
will respond to the world now
and the world ten years from now
not by becoming cautious or defensive
or rational or sensible or responsible, or smart,
but with a leap and a flourish:
Don't defend yourself from all those bad vibes;
there must be a way to harness that power.
Man is the animal who dreams.
There are other animals who dream,
but they forget their dreams when they wake up.
The most human response
to being on the brink of a catastrophe
is to leap to the other side,
to make a pony out of the garbage.
(I know you can't make a pony out of garbage.
But on the other hand, I haven't actually tried.)
Man is the animal with opposed natures:
yin and yang, God and Satan.
Satan was the one who committed suicide in Heaven
and he's the hero of a great epic poem.
Wow. Isn't that dumb?
Hijack the starship, then,
and in the middle of Hell you'll be deciding to be
born in Heaven.
I think if I ever discover the great cosmic giggle
I'll find that it's over a shaggy dog story.
I'll say, "Wow, isn't it all dumb?"

(I know you can't decide to be born in Heaven.
But on the other hand, I haven't actually tried.)



*After the Heicon,
part 2*

Wednesday we left Basel heading south for Lucerne. I was a bit surprised to find the road between these two cities a comparatively narrow two-laner for long stretches, but it looked like that was because it ran through so much built-up countryside that it would've been quite a bit of trouble to clear people back away from the existing road in order to widen it. This part of the trip did introduce me to Europeans' great common sense on the road, though, because when one slow car would cause a line to start piling up behind, someone would always pull out to pass him even in the face of oncoming traffic. I turned white and sucked in my breath the first couple times this happened in front of me, and braked back a little from the possible crash. No one else on the road thought anything of it, though; the oncoming traffic just pulled over as they went by, so that in effect we had three lanes working. I began to develop some respect for European drivers, to replace the wariness that I'd had from hearing horror stories of their foolhardiness.

We got to Lucerne a bit before noon, headed for the old town and found a parking space, with meter, beside the lake. That's Lake Lucerne, a large, beautiful blue lake running east-west, with the city on the west shores. Ducks and swans swam around near the shore, getting fed by the tourists. We walked across a bridge spanning a river that ran out of the lake, and found ourselves immediately in the crowds that thronged through the narrow, winding old-town shopping district. Sid wanted to buy a Swiss watch for his girlfriend and I spotted a record store across the street, so while Carol went with Sid I browsed the bins of lp albums both jazz and rock.

Record stores are a little different in Europe than most in this country; it's been years since we got rid of the listening-booth concept, and though they don't have booths in Europe either,

they do have earplugs at the counter for auditioning things. But I just browsed, noticing that black blues singers seemed much more in demand there than in the record stores at home, and that the rock sections leaned somewhat more toward British groups than American ones.

Carol and Sid came back, the watch bought, and we went down the street to a plastic but pleasant luncheonette where we ate burgers with eggs and drank limonette, a drink pretty much like 7-Up. Afterward Sid wanted to go see a famous covered bridge a little way down the river; the bridge featured a series of medieval paintings on the theme of Death, painted on wood panels. Each scene evidently showed the skeletal figure of Death coming to one or another of the prominent personages of the city, who presumably had contributed money for the bridge and paintings. They weren't badly weathered, but they were in shadow inside the covered bridge, and the captions that explained each were done in old German script, which would have made them hard to read even if any of us read much German. As a kind of sign of things to come, I turned away from the paintings, interesting as they were, to look at the river rushing toward and underneath us; it seemed to be moving a lot faster than its angle of descent would suggest -- I mean, it was fast. A strong current coming through the lake from a feeder river coming steeply out of mountains at the other side? I didn't know, nor did Sid when I asked him, and I felt constricted by my ignorance.

Our time on the meter was about up, so Sid said he'd go back and put more change in, then go to the post office nearby to mail some letters. "Will you kids be all right?" he asked worriedly. We said sure we would. "You're sure you won't get lost?" No no, we wouldn't get lost. So Sid went away and left us alone in a labyrinthine foreign city where we didn't even speak the language, and of course we got lost right away.

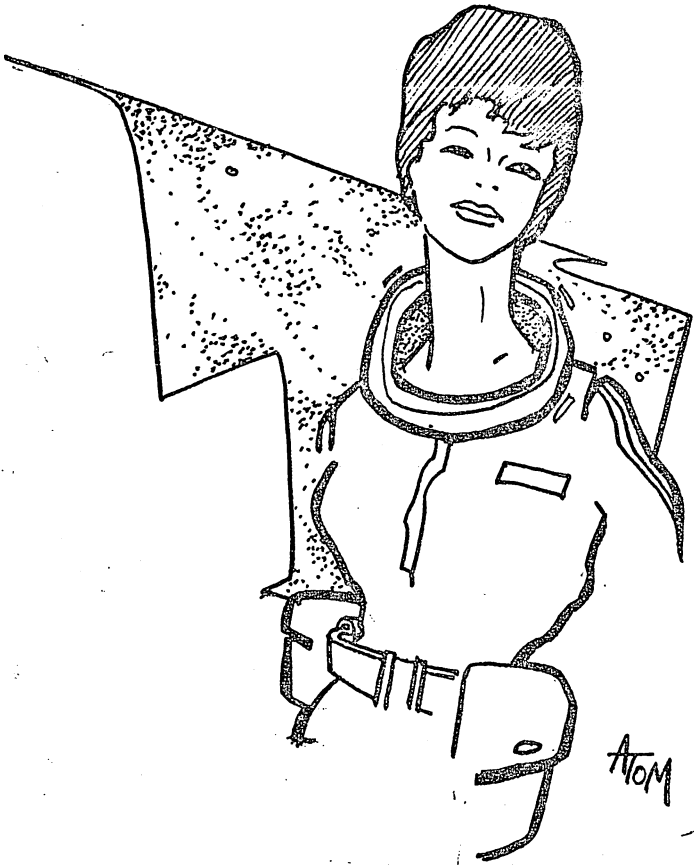
But only for five minutes. When I discovered we were lost amid the shops and the crowds I just steered us toward the lake, found the bridge by which we'd come, and renavigated back to the record store I'd been in before. I'd decided to buy a couple of albums that I hadn't seen in this country, one a Red Allen-Kid Ory stereo jazz album and the other a rock album by a British group named Yes. I'd never heard of them, but they were on a multi-album series called Supergroups, of which I knew only that the two others I'd seen in the bins had been the Stones and Crosby, Stills & Nash, so that seemed a good recommendation. (Back home a few months later and having listened to both albums, I like the Allen-Ory record very much but haven't gotten into Yes much at all. Oh well.)

Then Carol and I wandered through the streets of Lucerne, just enjoying being on our own. Sid was, as I've said a few times, a marvelous guide, but there's certain feeling of restriction that goes with being looked after, and a corresponding feeling of freedom at being left alone. We mingled with the crowds, looked at movie marquees, at fruit and vegetable stands, and went into a bookstore to look for foreign editions of Harlan Ellison books. You may wonder why I spent good time in Lucerne looking for foreign editions of Harlan Ellison books, but the answer is simply that Harlan had made me promise to look for them before I'd left, and indeed I checked

newsstands and bookstores in every city we went to, but no Harlan Ellison books did I find.

We were enjoying ourselves so much that we underestimated the time it would take to get back to the car, so naturally we were late. Noting this we stopped at a fruit vender's by the lakeside and bought some peaches, one for each of us and one for Sid to appease him. But when we got back to the car he said he wasn't hungry, and besides he didn't look in need of appeasement, so I ate the peach myself, and washed my peach-juice-drenched hand in the lake. I had to lie down flat on the pavement at the edge of

the lake to reach the water, and Carol said I looked silly, but I contended I just looked like any other dumb tourist so what the hell.



Having looked like a dumb tourist, I got back in the car with the others and we struck off eastward around the lake and began to climb into the Swiss mountains. The day was warm so naturally we had the windows open, and I was having trouble with my hair blowing in my eyes: my hair was long and I'd washed it the night before. Carol dug in the luggage and got out one of my neck-scarfs, red white and blue stripes, which she tied around my forehead. It looked about half hippie-Indian style and half like a pirate's headscarf, and I got some weird looks indeed from passing motorists. "What the hell," I said; "they'll just think I'm incredibly patriotic."

We began to climb steeply into the mountains, and now the two-lane roads became a real hindrance, since passing trucks and buses was nearly impossible. A long line of cars built up behind a bus up ahead, but we avoided that by simply pulling off the road for awhile at a scenic stop. We got out and left the road, sitting in the grass on a steep hillside with a glorious view of the farm-sprinkled valley below us. The air was clear and crystalline; in the distance I saw snow-capped Alps. "Are we going there?" I asked Sid. "You promised us snow."

"No, I don't think that's our route," he said. "But I'll give you snow, don't worry. You want snow, you'll get snow."

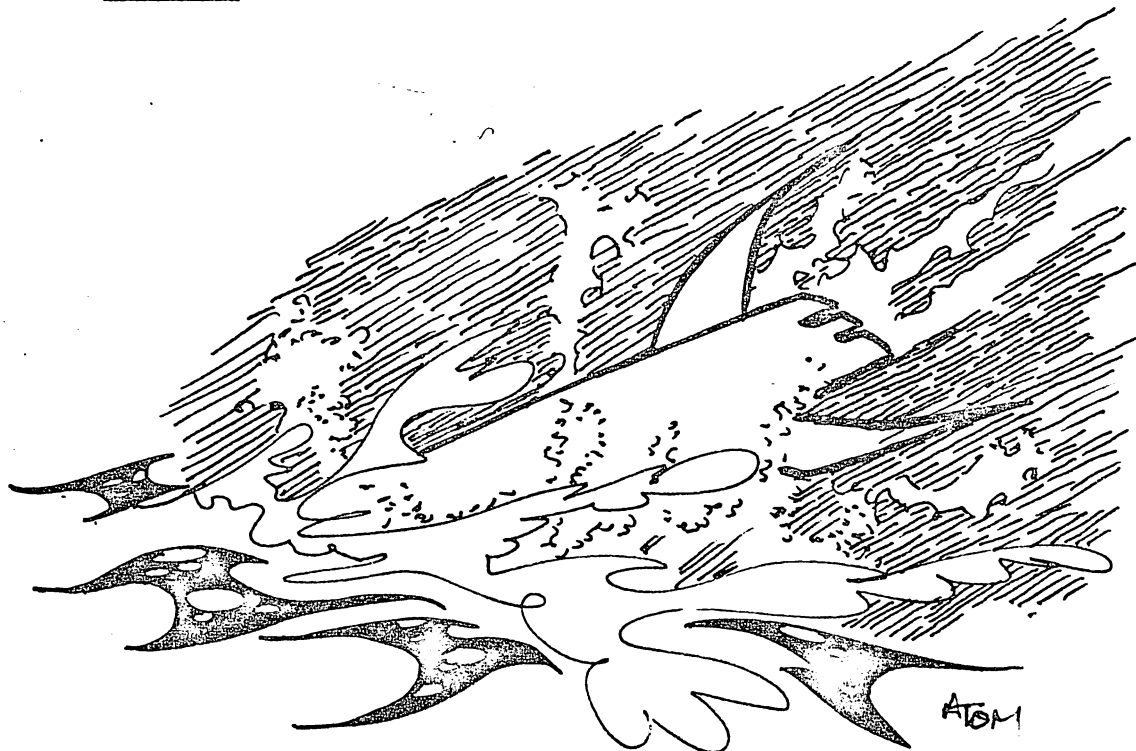
Back into the car we got, and toiled steeply uphill on the switchback road till we came to another line that was beginning to form behind a laboring truck. I was able to see three switchbacks above us and there was no traffic coming down, so instead of slowing as we came up to the line I just swung out and went around. Did you ever pass two cars and a truck on a two-lane steep road going uphill around a curve? Let me tell you, it

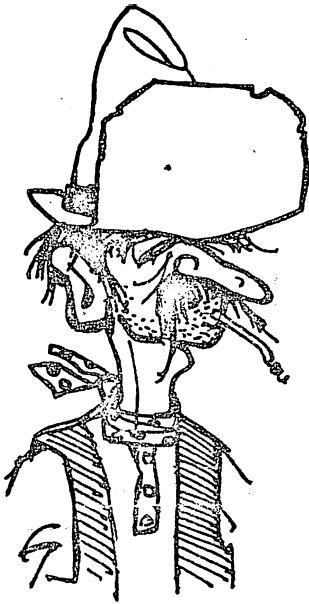
doesn't matter how far ahead you've scanned the road, you're still nervous. In fact, as we came out of the last turn and I was just getting around the truck, suddenly there was traffic coming downhill at us. I snuck over next to the truck and slipped back in as soon as I could, missing the first oncoming car because he moved over to give me that phantom European third lane.

There were fifteen seconds of silence before Carol said, "I wasn't nervous; I could see we were going to make it." Sid agreed: "Sure, it was safe all the way." I said nothing; if they felt secure about things like that, why disturb them? I only hoped Carol wouldn't notice the whiteness of my face.

"Where are we going to stay the night?" I asked Sid by way of changing the subject. He consulted his maps. "Well, it looks like we could take a small side-trip to a little town called Einsiedeln, where they have a big pageant going this year. We'd get there about 5:00." "Okay, sounds good."

So we went to Einsiedeln, which turned out to be a beautiful little old Swiss mountain town that even tourism couldn't ruin. They were really set up for the tourists, too: there was a giant parking lot in the town square on the side of the hill in front of the cathedral, and the hotel we checked into was on the square and very modern. Carol was tired so we left her to sleep for an hour or so while Sid and I walked around the town. The center of it was the cathedral, in front of which a huge wooden amphitheatre of seats had been built; the wood in it was still blond. Sid and I went into the church itself and looked around in horrified fascination. It was an old church, medieval in origin, but it looked like each succeeding generation had felt it necessary to add more decoration, with the result that by 1970 there wasn't a nave or nook unscarred by ugly decoration: terrible pretentious seventeenth century paintings, new columns added here and there, gingerbread added to the columns, junk hanging from the roof... "It's hideous!" said Sid, vehemently. I looked around nervously;





it makes me uncomfortable to be criticizing a church when people nearby are taking it seriously, even praying. "Uh, yeah, kind of a mess," I muttered. "What?" Sid asked loudly. "A mess, you say? It sure is! Just look at that pseudo-Gothic arch. Yecch!"

Naturally no one was disturbed by this but me; the good people of Einsiedeln are presumably inured to tourists remarking on the ugliness of their church. We paused on the way out because a crowd had gathered in front of a shrine at the front of the church; this proved to be the "black Madonna," a representation of the Virgin Mary sculpted in black stone. It was the main feature of the church, and a group of nuns and numerous parishoners and/or tourists knelt in front of it. We passed by bemusedly and went on outside.

In the open air once more I could hold it in no longer. "Christ, is that an ugly church!"

"If you want beautiful churches, I'll give you beautiful churches," said Sid. "Wait'll we get to Italy."

We wandered around the back streets of the town, looking at the quaint natives who nearly ran us down barreling around corners on motorcycles or in sportscars. We searched for a likely looking restaurant, found nothing and decided the restaurant in the hotel would do as well as any other. We did stop to buy bunches and bunches of Swiss chocolate before going back up to waken Carol for dinner.

The meal was unremarkable; in fact I have no memory of what we ate. I do remember that promptly at 9:00 the place became completely empty, save only one waitress, who seemed restless. "They've all gone off to play in the pageant," Sid said. "I'll bet every single inhabitant of Einsiedeln has a part in the pageant. Our waitress too: she's probably the Madonna, and we're keeping her here." "God, what power we wield," I mused.

Sid had at first planned to go to the pageant, but now decided against it. We went back to our room after dinner and opened one of the bottles of white wine we'd bought in Riquewihl yesterday. (Just yesterday? Yes...but so many sights in between that and this.) The wine was nice, the talk was good, and outside we heard trumpets and chorus from the pageant till 11:00, when it must have ended, for by 11:30 everything was quiet and looking out the window of our room onto the square we found everything dark and empty. After awhile Sid went to his room next door to sleep and Carol read either the D. H. Lawrence or Donald Westlake she'd bought at the Einsiedeln bookstore earlier, while I read some more of Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-5, of which I'd read 20 pages a night for the past week. Good book.

Next morning, Thursday, we were determined to get up and out by 9:00 in the morning, something we hadn't managed with much regularity before. Sid had warned us that he would begin to pound

on the wall at 8:00 and wouldn't stop till one of us knocked back. (The wall between our rooms was not within reach of our bed -- or beds, since of course we again had the eternal, infernal ersatz double-bed of European tourism, two singles shoved together.) But I woke up at ten to eight, and when my watch said 8:00 I pounded on the wall myself, beating Sid to the punch. There was no answer, so I pounded louder. At length there came an answering thump. I nodded, and went into the bathroom to brush my teeth. The thump came again. Carol said, "Ump? Wha?" I rushed out and pounded back, and the noise stopped.

When I came out of the bathroom Carol was dressing, and just then the door to our room opened; it was Sid in his bathrobe. "Can I use your shower again?" he asked. Carol had jumped behind the curtains that covered the windows. "Sure, but just a minute," I said; "Carol isn't dressed yet." I shut the door and said, "Carol, come out from behind there, quick." "But Sid will be embarrassed!" she protested. "I shut the door," I said. "Besides, what about the people behind you?"

"What do you mean, the people behind...?" Carol said, ending with a little yip. She emerged from behind the curtains. The window they covered opened on the town square, remember? That must've looked interesting from outside.

(I could make this a better story by saying that a crowd had gathered in the square, but it wouldn't be true. I didn't see anyone out there at all.)

Later, when everybody had showered and shaved and dressed, I asked Sid why he hadn't answered my first thump on the wall, and why he'd kept on pounding when he did answer. "Oh," he said, "were you knocking first? I woke up and didn't know why, and then I heard the 8:00 o'clock church bells and thought they were what had woke me. So I pounded to wake you up, and you didn't answer, so I kept knocking."

"It seems to me," I said judiciously, "that today is off to a propitious start."

So we had breakfast, and Sid paid the hotel bill, and we loaded our luggage into the car and got going by...well, maybe not 9:00, but 9:30 certainly. We were still traveling east through Switzerland, a route that took us by the Wallensee, a long lake or series of lakes with sheer cliffs overlooking them on the other side; it was a spectacular view, and we stopped at a lay-by to look through the coin-operated telescope. Beautiful clear blue water; multicolored, stratified stone cliffs rising broodingly above us over there; clear slate-blue sky above. Other tourists had stopped too, several carloads of them; German and French exclamations surrounded us.

When we started out again, I said, "How about lunch? Where can we eat?" Again Sid consulted his maps, watched the flight of birds, and read a hexagram from his guidebook. "We'll be in Vaduz in an hour," he said. "That's in Lichtenstein. In fact, that is Lichtenstein."

"Hey, wow, Lichtenstein too?" we asked. "You mean we get

another country today?"

Sid said modestly, "Well, I just thought I'd throw it in. You want to see lots of countries, I give you lots of countries. This one's small."

So we had lunch in Lichtenstein, in a peculiarly fancy snack-bar in the middle of town. The food was singularly uninteresting, but like anyplace I've been in Europe there was good beer. Sid and Carol wrote postcards to people back home. Lichtenstein picture postcards come in three scenes: Vaduz, City Center; Palace of the Duke, from the south; and Palace of the Duke, from the east. (I may have that a little wrong; maybe it's the Palace of the Prince. Sid told us as we came to Vaduz that Lichtenstein was a principality, then changed that to a dukedom when we bought the postcards -- either that or he told us it was a dukedom and changed that to principality after the postcards, I got confused. Whichever, Lichtenstein is virtually another state of Switzerland -- it's surrounded by Switzerland on all sides, otherwise known as the Helvetic Confederation of states that were in earlier centuries independent -- and the only thing that keeps Lichtenstein from joining Switzerland is the fact that it's ruled by this duke or prince or whatever, which doesn't jibe with Swiss democratic processes. Well, that was the historical reason Lichtenstein didn't join with the other states; in actual fact it doesn't hurt the tourist traffic at all that it's a separate country. Not that I mean to sound cynical and superior about this; we were having lunch there for no other reason ourselves.

The afternoon was a beautiful drive up into the Alps, through farmland on steep hillsides and picturesque small towns about two blocks long and beside rushing mountain streams. In midafternoon I saw a wide spot in the road next to one such mountainside stream, and pulled off to stop. We got out and stretched our legs as we looked at the white-rushing water cascading down its rocky stream-bed. Another couple had stopped before us and were having a picnic lunch in a field nearby; it took only a step around the fence where it stopped beside the stream for us to enter the field too and wander downhill looking for a spot where I could make my way down to the water itself. (I have this thing about contact with nature: I tend to chew blades of grass, walk in the rain and try to drink from streams and lakes.) I did get down to the stream and drank the water (cold) from cupped hands, then stood sort of mesmerized by the sound of rushing water, looking at the incredibly lush hillside across the stream, where there was an almost vertical wall of brilliant greens and reds and yellows and blues, bushes and flowers, with countless tiny streams cascading downward from high above to join the main stream.

The field we'd entered was actually for the use of a bull, who reacted to the growing amount of humanity in our corner of the field with what I think was curiosity; at any rate he came moseying our way, and it was decided that we'd seen enough of nature just now, so back to the car we went. The picnickers had already left. We drove on, upward into the mountains, exclaiming over the ever-improving views as we climbed.

"You really like this mountain scenery?" Sid asked us. We exclaimed some more. "Okay, listen, how about instead of going

south into Italy today we go on eastward and spend the night in Innsbruck?"

"Innsbruck?" I said. "That's in Austria."

"Sure. You get another country today free."

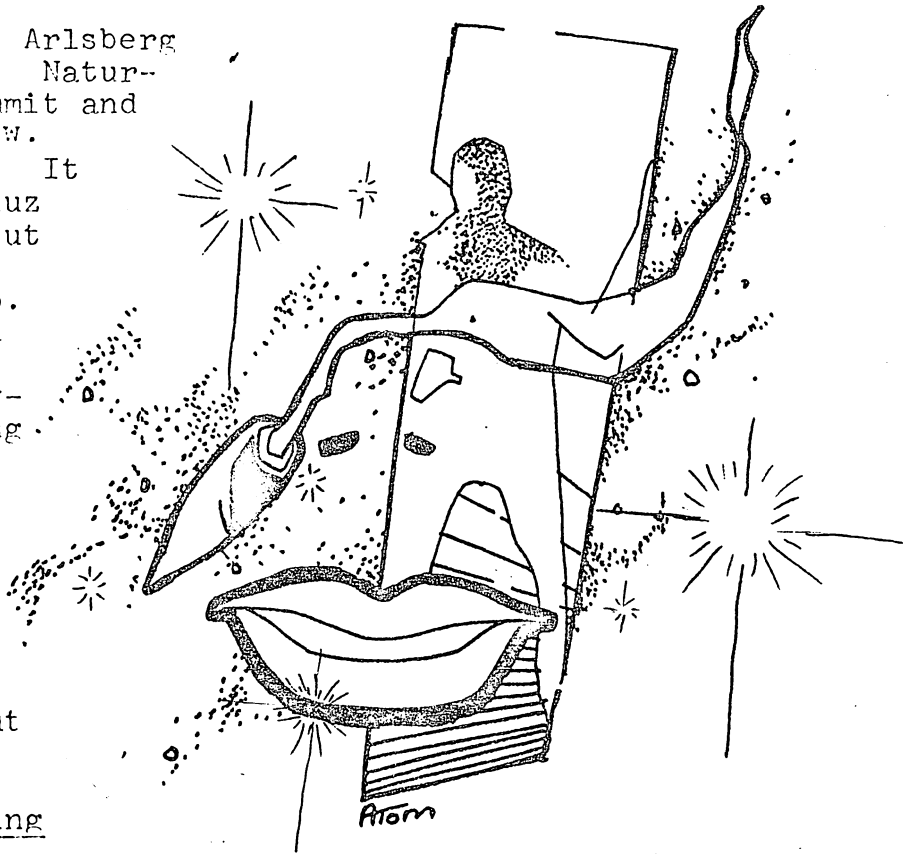
"Wow," said Carol, "a three-country day!"

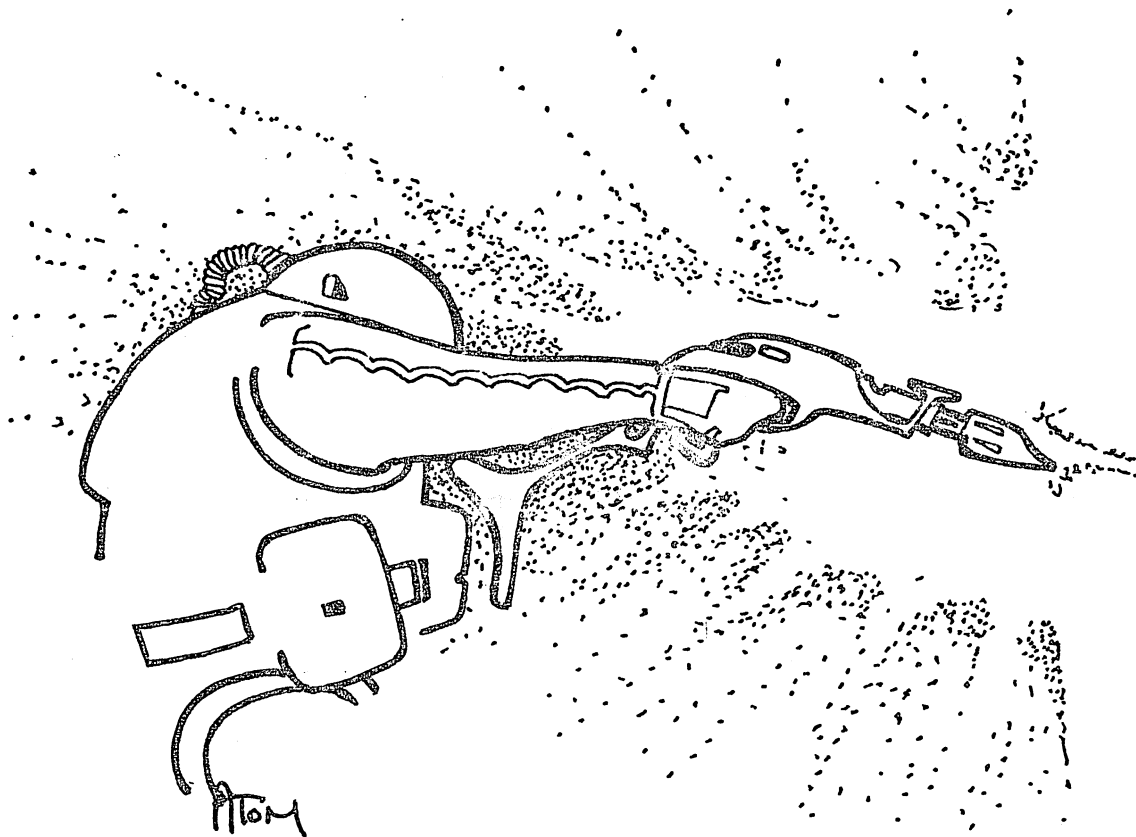
So on we went, to the Arlsberg Pass leading into Austria. Naturally we stopped at the summit and got out to look at the view. Hey, it was cold up there! It had been pretty hot in Vaduz just a few hours before, but at this elevation the air was freezing and windy too. We crossed the highway and climbed a hill from which we could see glorious snow-capped mountains stretching into the distance. Even at this height there was no snow around us, and I brought this up to Sid. "You promised us snow," was what I said.

"It must have been a hot summer," he said. "But wait till we come back through the Alps from Italy into France -- nothing melts Mont Blanc."

We agreed to this, got back in the car and drove on to Innsbruck. I remember the later afternoon as being pretty long, because though we were descending through a beautiful valley flanked by spectacular cliffs (glacier country), this was more driving than I'd done in a long while and my back was hurting. We stopped at one point because I'd spotted a waterfall coming off the top of the cliffs nearby and then I saw a side-road that I decided would lead to the falls. I'm a falls freak. The road, it quickly developed, led to a rock quarry, but from there we did have a great view of the falls. Didn't seem to be very wide, probably just a creek really, but falling a thousand or more feet down the cliff made that creek more spectacular than it was likely to be anywhere else. Then I noticed that a creek ran through the quarry, and it was the right size and came from the right direction...well, maybe we'd met the falls after all.

Then on to Innsbruck as evening came on. Sid steered us to the center of town by animal instinct, since he hadn't brought detailed maps for Austria. We were looking for the railroad station, since (handy traveler's tip from Sid Coleman) the tourist office is always across the street from the railroad station. We (Sid) had to ask directions, but we got there before long. Sid





and Carol went off to book rooms in a hotel at the tourist office while I stayed in the car, double-parked. I turned on the radio and listened to AM radio from some alternate universe: there's no rock station in Innsbruck, it's all pop music. Sometimes this impinges on the boundaries of rock, but mostly the radio I heard that evening in Innsbruck sounded like something out of another time. I wondered momentarily if they might have radio dramas at night, but then Sid and Carol came back.

"Well, we have a hotel," Sid said. "It's outside the city -- you agree that what we've seen of Innsbruck is pretty awful, don't you?" I repeated some of the remarks we'd made on our way into town; it really had been remarkably uninspiring, drab city scenery. "Okay, that's what Carol said. So we booked rooms in a hotel across the river, up on the hill. I don't have a Michelin for Austria, but the clerk said it was a good hotel."

Following Sid's directions as given to him by the clerk, we drove through more dirty, dull streets, crossed a bridge and took a street that led uphill. And uphill. And uphill. Before long it had left the city behind, and we were climbing a switchback road up a steep mountainside. "Are you sure we haven't gone too far?" I kept asking, but Sid said to go on, go on. And after half an hour's climb, or so it seemed, we did come to the hotel, amid a small cluster of other hotels at the base of a telepherique going up the mountain to the top; here at the jumping-off point there was a small tourist enclave.

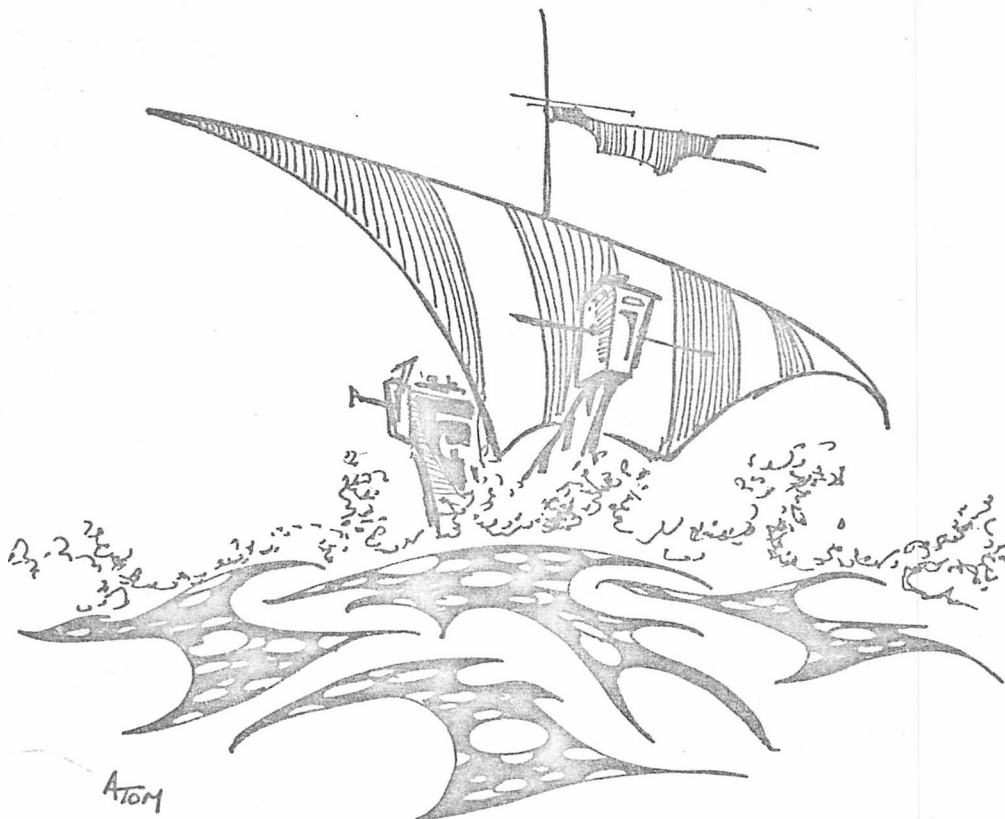
We checked in, and asked the desk man if our rooms had a view down the mountain. "A view?" he said with a trace of amusement. "Yes, there is a view." So up the stairs we went, following our luggage, and passed through halls filled with 19th century bric-a-

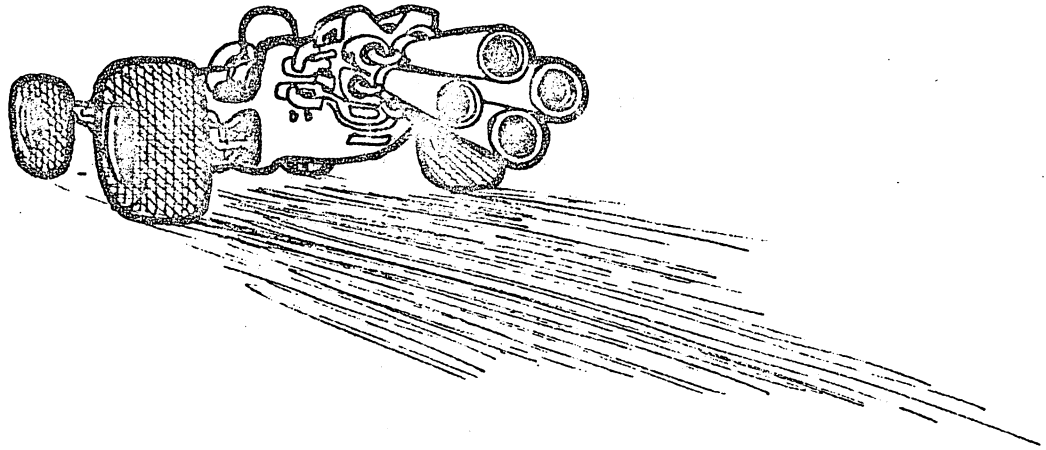
brac, with carpets of faded elegance. The hotel was probably very big in the early decades of the century: "A watering place for the biplane set," as I put it.

Then we got to our rooms, and we looked curiously for our View. There was a balcony outside, and when we looked from there we saw...below us...I mean below us...a thousand feet almost straight down lay Innsbruck, a city that from up here was far from dull and drab, loaded with great old-style buildings, rococo roof decoration and so on. Beyond the city rose more mountains, a tv antenna set atop the highest one; off to the right, the valley continued, with suburban housing patterns that were all too recognizeable. A quiet river cut through the outskirts of the city and on down the valley. "What river is that?" I asked Sid, and he said, "The Inn, of course. 'Bruck' means bridge. The city was named after the first bridge over the river, back when this was an important pass leading down into Italy."

Carol wasn't listening. She just stared down and said, "Incredible. Incredible." And indeed it was. No wonder the desk man had been amused.

Sid filled his bathtub with cold water and we put our Alsatian wine booty in to chill. The bathtubs, his and ours alike, were built with a ledge on one side: they're meant to be sat in rather than for lying down. I thought they were quaint but felt no need to try ours out.





While Carol took a bath Sid and I went downstairs and sat out on the terrace drinking lagerbier while we watched sunset over Innsbruck so far below us. Patches and strings of lights went on here and there in the city and the suburbs; a waiter came out to turn on the lights on the terrace. Before long full dark had settled, and Innsbruck was a swathe of diamonds in the blackness below. We admired the view and congratulated ourselves for our luck in landing in this hotel, then went upstairs again.

An hour or so later we had dinner in the hotel's dining room. The food wasn't much, and the room was completely empty save for the three of us. The whole hotel, with its evidences of bygone richness and yet so few visitors today, had a melancholy aspect. But we sat by the window and looked down at the city and we didn't feel melancholy at all.

Afterward we went up to the room Carol and I had, and Sid brought the last of our Alsatian wine to drink while we did our nightly ritual with maps and guidebooks. "If we get up at a decent hour tomorrow we can go to the top of the mountain on the telepherique," Sid said. "I suppose that'll give you all the mountain scenery you'll need for awhile, so would you like to head south into Italy, or should we spend another day going east through the mountains?"

"Well, what are the alternatives in what we'd see?"

"If we keep going east through the mountains we'll see more mountains," said Sid. "If we go south from here we can spend tomorrow night in Verona."

"Let's go to Verona," said Carol. "We can see the Tomba di Juliette."

"The what?" I said.

"Juliet's tomb. Romeo and Juliet took place in Verona, remem-

ber? Juliet's tomb is on the outskirts of the city."

"You've been peeking at the guidebooks," I said. "Besides, who says it's really Juliet's tomb? They probably just picked any old tomb from the middle ages to satisfy the tourists."

"Who cares?" said Carol. "We're tourists."

So we decided to go to Verona, and thereby lucked out again, because Verona proved to be one of the high points of the trip. We got up reasonably early the next morning and I went to the windows to look out at Innsbruck in the morning. But there was only white outside. Drifting white.

"Looking at the view already, hm?" Carol said as she began to get out of bed.

"In a manner of speaking, I guess," I said. I got dressed and stepped out onto our balcony. There was fog all around; I could barely make out the tops of trees only twenty feet away.

"Hey, Sid," I called, "come look at the view."

In a minute he came out, did a take, and muttered, "What have they done with Innsbruck?"

We went around the corner of the hotel, following the balcony, and looked up the mountain we'd planned to ascend this morning. Nothing. More white, more fog. Oh well, there'd be a telepherique at Mont Blanc later in the trip.

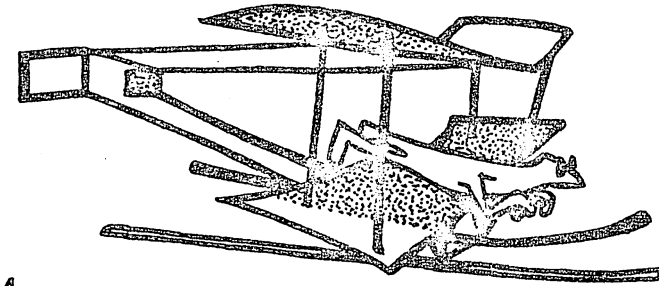
We drove down the mountain, skirted Innsbruck on a freeway and connected onto a new highway leading out to the Brenner Pass into Italy. Just outside Innsbruck, while we were still climbing into the mountains, we drove over a spectacular new bridge spanning a gorge hundreds of feet below; at the top of the bridge I noticed a parking lot on the right, and people walking up to a vantage point, so I pulled off the road. We'd hardly started the day's driving and here we were stopping already, but what the hell, that was what this trip was about.

We went up a path and then a series of stairs to what looked like a memorial building of some sort, but it wasn't open. A path led around the back, and we found that this took us back down to the bridge, where we could use a pay telescope or walk out onto the walkway on the bridge itself. We went onto the bridge, though it was cold up here and there was a good wind in the gorge. But from the center of the bridge we looked straight down to a tiny stream far below, a few farms and a power station...maybe it wasn't such a tiny stream down there after all. The dense fog of an hour or two before had mostly cleared now, and we could make out almost unbelievable colors in the strata of the cliffs on each side of the canyon. It was really a spectacular view, and suddenly I realized where I'd seen something like it before: back in New York, when we were still planning the trip, I'd gone through any number of travel folders and such, one of which had used a color photo of this bridge and environs on its cover. I'd admired it, had looked to see where the bridge was, and when I'd found it was in Austria

I'd just sighed, because we weren't going to be in Austria, I'd thought. And I'd forgotten about it till now.

We got back in the car and drove on; just a little way further up the road we came to a toll gate, evidently to pay for the bridge. I didn't mind paying, and I thought it was nice that they'd put the toll on the other side of the bridge from Innsbruck, so that people could drive up from there for the view and turn around and go back without having to pay the toll every time they did.

We went through the pass and began to descend to Italy. The customs station was in a crowded little town where we dashed from an office in one building to an office in another, changing traveler's checks into lire and buying gas coupons. Gasoline prices in Italy, as everywhere in Europe, are fantastic, but to encourage tourism the Italian government will sell you a limited number of gas coupons which entitle you to a lower price for gas. The further you can drive in Italy the more places you're going to spend money.



Atom.

Customs was such a bottleneck that traffic from there on got very heavy; we crawled along down into the valley at five or ten kph. I cursed the traffic, and fretted, and my back began to hurt again. When we came to a gas station Sid suggested we fill the tank there and then he'd drive for awhile. So we did, and he did.

Sid hadn't driven for a year or two, and he wasn't used to this car's stickshift. Getting behind the wheel he said, "Let's see, the most important thing to know is...where's the brake? Ah, there. Good. Now, Terry, please fasten your safety belt." I started to protest that I wanted more freedom to move around, with my back hurting, but he added, "It's not that I'm a bad driver, but if I got you killed I'd never forgive myself. Do it for my peace of mind."

He can be convincing when he wants to be.

So, gears grinding, we pulled out into the bumper-to-bumper traffic. It must've been five kilometers before Sid had occasion to shift into second, and there was some more grinding and jerking. Sid hunched over the wheel and asked Carol to light him a cigarette because he was nervous, but with traffic moving so slowly we could have walked faster, what was to worry about?

Traffic came to one of its frequent halts. Sid stopped. Traffic started again, so Sid let in the clutch and we started off -- in reverse. Only for a second, of course, and Sid sure found that brake fast all right. But I'll bet the driver behind us was never so surprised in his life.

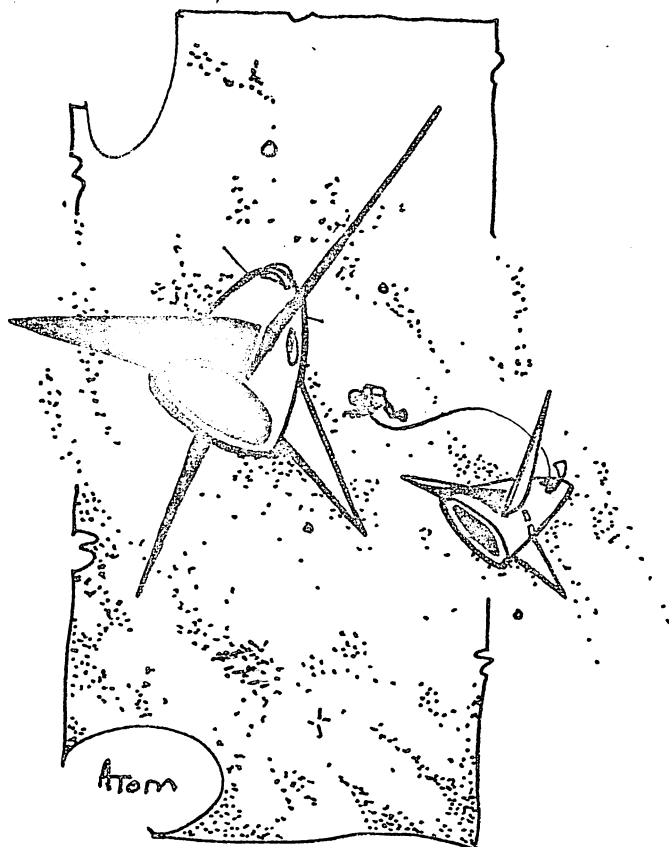
Sid cleared his throat and asked Carol to light him another cigarette.

Carol said, "Terry, how's your back feeling?"

"It's getting better," I said.

"Don't worry," said Sid, "if I crack up the car and you get killed, I'll marry Carol and take care of her. I'm a responsible person."

On we went, crawling down a winding two-lane road that descended into a valley with dark cliffs on either side. Whenever we came to a stretch of road that was straight for even fifty feet cars would pull out to pass, working their way forward to a truck ahead that was probably the current bottleneck. One car worked its way up to behind us, and then he pulled out to go around, but he had to drop back as Sid sped up, not having seen him. Sid was concentrating fiercely on the traffic and road ahead. The car came again next chance he got, and this time he got right alongside us before he had to drop back; Sid still hadn't seen him. What intense concentration these high-energy physicists have. I wanted to say something but I remembered times when I'd had to direct all my attention to something I wasn't familiar with and knew that adding another area to worry about would probably make Sid tighter.



Next time the car came to pass Sid did see him and let him around. But my back really was feeling better after a little rest, so when we came to a place where Sid could pull over I got to drive again. I pulled out into the traffic, fretted at the 10 kph rate of progress, and began passing cars. Two, three, four or five at a time I'd zip around them, till Carol began asking little questions like "Must you?" and "Sid, how's your back feeling?"

"I'm adjusting to local driving customs," I said, pulling out to get a look around the truck, which I'd finally reached. "They do this stuff here all the time; they must expect it of each other," and there came a break in traffic so I vroomed around the truck and found a clear road ahead of me. It was still winding and twisting alongside a small river, though, so I held our speed down to something reasonable.

"Anyway," I said, "Sid is a hell of a lot better at navigating than I am, and there's a turnoff somewhere down here that we'll have to take."

"Yes," said Sid. "It's right there." And I had to grab a quick right turn that I would've missed seeing myself. It led us to the

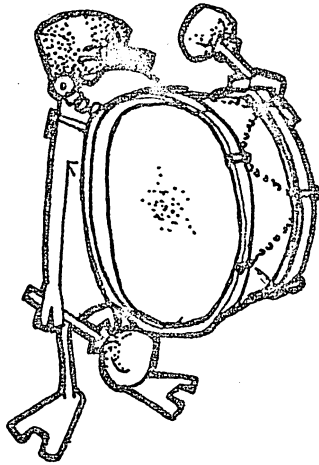
first of the Italian autostrada I'd seen, and it was something of a revelation: Two or three lanes on each side, a dead straight road, and virtually no other cars at all. It was like driving on the Nevada salt flats, and I responded in keeping with that; I floor-boarded the gas and shortly we were doing 140 kph.

"A hundred and forty?" Carol said. "Terry, that's ridiculous."

"It's only kilometers, not miles," said Sid. "About eighty miles an hour, which is typical on the autostrada."

So we drove for an hour like that, and during the hour I don't think I moved the wheel for a single curve in the road: perfectly straight. The cliffs that flanked the valley slowly drew further and further back, though there were still rocky outcroppings here and sheer mesa-like hills; we saw monestaries on top of these.

About 1:00 in the afternoon we decided we were hungry, so we pulled off the autostrada at Trente and made our way to the middle of town, where there was a parking lot in the piazza in front of the cathedral; we were to find this typical of most every Italian town or city we visited. Well, it only made sense: in these medieval towns the streets themselves were barely wide enough for the Opel to squeeze through and the only space for tourist parking was in the piazzas; there was always a piazza in front of the town cathedral, the cathedral was always a tourist attraction, so Q.E.D.



Another thing that we soon found typical in Italy was the old man who officiously directed people to parking spaces and charged for the parking. Sometimes these men were indeed parking lot attendants; more often, it seemed, they were just locals who'd go down to the piazza and see how much money they could make from the tourists. In this case the man got a little loot from us because there was only one space left and two different cars wanted it; Sid bribed him more.

We took a table beside the piazza and ordered toastes (spelling phonetic) and cappacine. "Toastes" are Italian tourist-food: toasted ham and cheese sandwiches. I didn't think much of them, but I loved the cappacine, which came with whipped cream on top. That was no doubt turista food too, and I think the whipped cream was out of a can, but it was good anyway. We sat and chatted and watched the local young louts struttin' and signifyin'. Piazzas in Italy seem to be heavily inhabited at all hours by kids out to pick up girls or girls out to pick up guys; the guys loll about making a show of being languid, which is why we came to refer to them all the time as louts (a word we'd got from Boyd Raeburn, whose vocabulary abounds in good dismissive terms for the stupid or indigent). They were all dressed in a very precise imitation of American hip of the upper-east-side Joe Namath school; their hair was always just long enough to be terribly fashionable, and the girls all wore slacks. But nobody dressed the slightest bit freaky, no one's hair was too long or ever uncombed, and the girls always wore bras. I began to understand how the Italians could make

the very plastic westerns and historicals that they do.

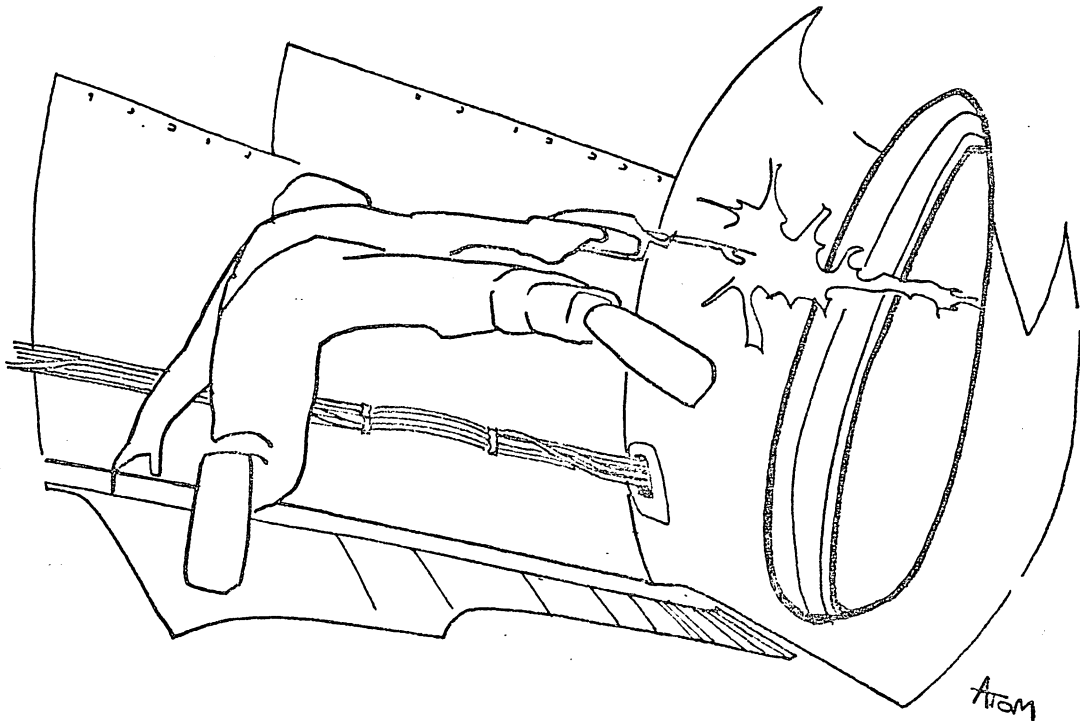
We went back on the autostrada and spent the rest of the afternoon driving to Verona. Actually, we were only on the autostrada for a little while after Trente; they were still building it further south. "They were supposed to have this autostrada finished all the way from Brenner to Verona six months ago; that's why I picked this route," said Sid. "But that's Italy for you." Instead we followed a small highway through small towns and miles and miles of vineyards.

When we got to Verona we did our usual thing: we headed for the center of town. And as usual when entering the town where we were to spend a night, we got there during rush hour. Driving in rush hour traffic in Italian cities is really something: the streets are narrow, as I've said, but that doesn't slow down local drivers who are used to driving there. So though Sid occasionally saw a street sign that correlated with something on his map, he was never able to give me a direction to go before the traffic surrounding us had forced me in some other direction. Finally, somewhere in the heart of the old town, Sid spotted a church on the left with parking in front and hollered, "Pull off there and we'll figure out where we are."

So I did, and Sid studied his guidebooks and maps; in a couple of minutes he looked up and said, "We're presently parked in front of the most expensive hotel in Verona. That must be it over on our right. Shall we spend a night there, or do you want me to try directing you to a less expensive one that'll be perfectly good?"

It was beginning to rain, and my back was hurting again. "What the hell archie," I said. Carol agreed.

So three scruffy looking touristas trudged into a lobby that



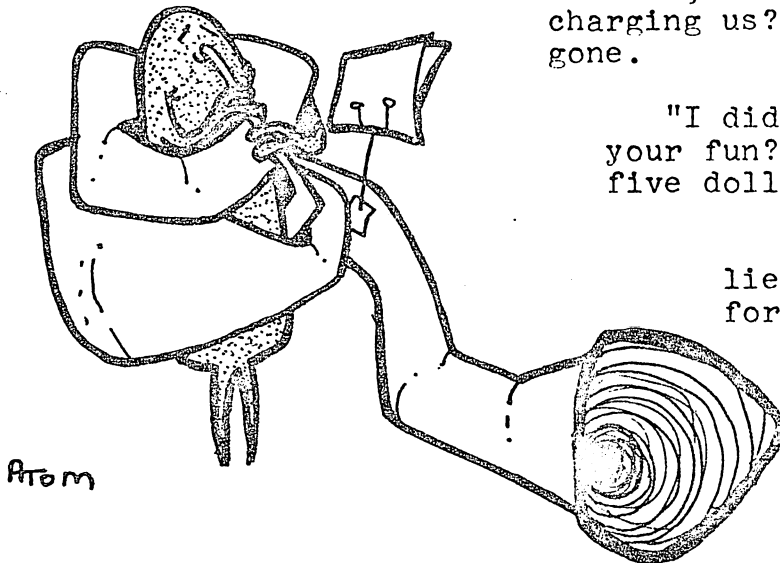
seemed to stretch for half a block. The floor was marble, covered with rich rugs; paintings and draperies hung on the walls. We checked in and a porter took us up to our rooms. The halls too were richly decorated, and very unlike the hotel last night in Innsbruck everything was very much in use here. Our room, Carol's and mine, had a chandelier and wallpaper that showed two-color engravings of landscapes probably from the 1800s, blown up to fill a wall each. The scenes were of explorers with high hats and parasols looking at natural rock bridges or ancient monuments in the Near East.

"Sid, how much did you say they were charging us?" I asked when the porter had gone.

"I didn't say; I figured, why spoil your fun? Your room is about twenty-five dollars for the night."

"Oh, is that all," I said, relieved. "We've paid close to that for rooms in lousy convention hotels."

"Well, this is Italy," Sid said. "The way you're thinking is why the Italians tend to think of Americans as marks. Not that I don't think the same way myself."



Carol and I wanted to rest awhile and I wanted to take a bath, so we agreed to meet in a couple of hours, by which time Sid would have picked out a restaurant.

And so it came to pass. Sid met us at our room and we walked down the stairs instead of taking the elevator; we wanted to look at the hotel. We found that on each floor there was a room full of objets d'art, just sort of a sitting room, and the stuff on view was fantastic. Beautiful small figurines, ornate gold jewelry, cameos in ivory, the everpresent paintings and wall hangings. It was really lavish.

"It's disgusting," Carol said. "It's ostentatious."

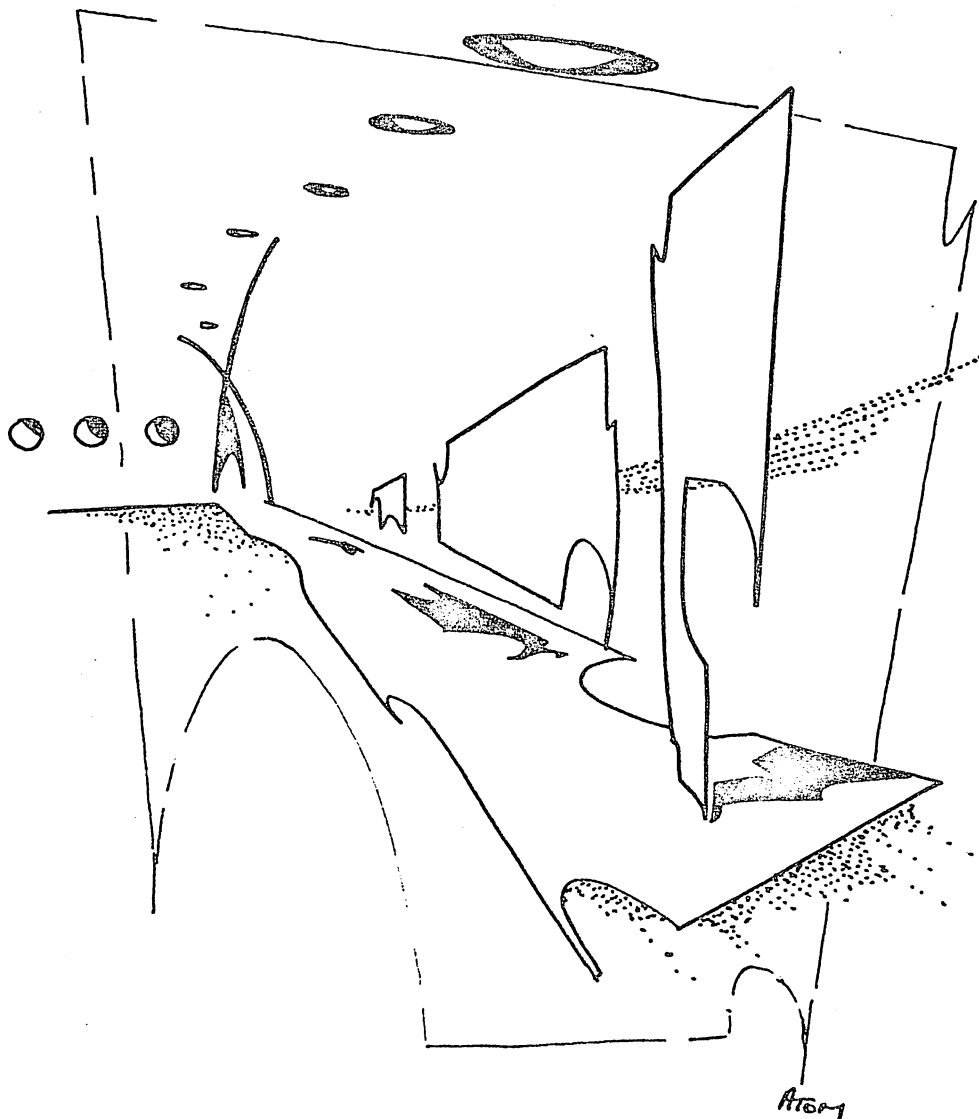
Sid said, "Ah, Carol, your socialist background is coming out. You're prejudiced against the upper classes. These things were all made hundreds of years ago; nobody's working for coolie wages to make it today."

"No, but why should all this be shut up in the highest-priced hotel in the city? Things like this should be in a museum, where anybody could see them. Oh, I really hate this place."

"I'll take you to a restaurant that will improve your mood," said Sid. And he led us through narrow cobblestoned streets and byways to the 12 Apostoli, a small restaurant on a dimly lit side-street. It was the only two-star restaurant in Verona. There are no three-star restaurants in Italy, since Chairman Michelin is French and admits his palate isn't sufficiently educated in Italian

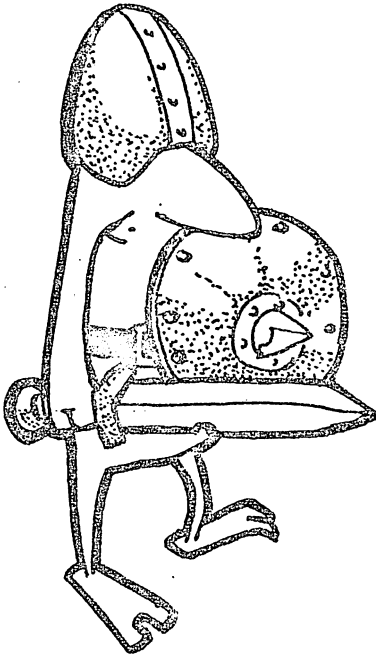
to distinguish the rarefied differences between a two-star restaurant and a true three-star restaurant in Italy. Some of the two-star restaurants in Michelin may be three-stars really, but the little red book declines to guess. (There's the natural suspicion that M. Michelin simply can't face bestowing his highest commendations to a restaurant that isn't even French, of course, but I choose to accept the Michelin explanation.)

Ristoranti 12 Apostoli was a treat, however the micrometer might measure it. Not big and expensive; much more like a very good neighborhood restaurant where people eating out this evening might drop in. There were a number of Italian couples and families there that night who didn't act like people going out to a famous restaurant. Yet the food was first rate; I had an appetizer of just sliced tomatoes in oil and vinegar dressing, and it was beautiful (tomatoes by themselves in place of salad turned out to be typical in Italy: Italian restaurants should only do it more over here). I chose the specialty of the house as listed by M. Michelin for main course: petto di pollo ala crema e funghi. Oh my goodness I liked that. Carol and Sid had other things, equally good. "Molto bene," said Carol. So was the service; the waiters were genuinely friendly and helpful. On the walls -- on the wall I faced, anyway -- were repro-



ductions of medieval maps of Verona: really imagined aerial views of the town, with all the buildings drawn sort of three-quarter angle from above, and names of cathedrals and piazzas lettered in that beautifully clumsy medieval script.

We left the restaurant and decided to walk around town for awhile. The air was sparkling fresh after the rain that had ended earlier; we walked through alleys and dark piazzas till we came to a miniature Colosseum, a Roman arena, around which the night life of Verona clustered. Gay young Italian blades of all kinds paraded the streets across from the arena, which from the outside looked to be in perfect preservation. Hordes of guys with tight pants, hair curling neatly around their ears, shirts open to the third button, paraded in search of partners among the gaggles of girls who clustered at tables on the piazza, all wearing slacks and their hair curling down their backs. The Italians still seem to dress in uniforms.



I looked for Harlan Ellison books in a book-stall till I was chased out by glares from the proprietor, who didn't like the length of time it took me to look through Barbarella in Italian. We decided to cross to a small park in the middle of the piazza, and the easiest way, considering the traffic that whizzed by on the street, was by going down into the subway on one side of the street and coming up on the other side. So we made our only visit to an Italian subway in this fashion. In Italian subways, or in this one at any rate, stores line the corridors much as they do in some American subway stations. There are also posters for this and that entertainment, and from these posters we learned that the Colosseum was not only well preserved, but still in service; performances of various operas were advertised to be performed there.

We wandered through the park -- really just a triangular block with trees and grass on it -- and stopped for a cappacine at a street-side table, and then wandered off through the night streets of Verona. "The night streets of Verona" probably means little or nothing to you, but the phrase is incredibly evocative to me. I loved Verona; it was beautiful and exotic and old and full of small surprises: tiny alleys that opened into sudden piazzas; basilisks on the edges of roofs silhouetted against the stars; lighted windows of clothing and home appliance stores even long after the stores themselves had closed. As we wandered I periodically sang snatches of my Billie Holliday version of What a Piece of Work is Man, song from Hair (lyrics by Shakespeare), pastiche by me. Carol knew what I was doing, since she's used to me breaking into impressions and such at odd moments and is also familiar with Billie Holliday's records, but I wonder what Sid made of it. Billie Holliday was a woman, not a man, and my impressions of her tend to sound like W. C. Fields, alas. But Carol understood, and Sid doesn't care much about music, so I guess it was all right. (All right, hell: it was brilliant. It's just too bad there isn't a market today for Billie Holliday impressions that sound like W. C. Fields.)

"If you like Verona," said Sid, "wait till we get to Florence: it's just like Verona, only bigger."

Verona was also the town in which we first saw the Italian Male in his fully-dressed wolfish guise. Carol was wearing...oh hell, pretty much the usual sort of stuff she wears, skirt and sweater, but the number and intensity of the looks she got was noticeably higher than usual. One guy turned completely around in his tracks as she passed. But no pinching: lots of looks but no pinching. (Pinching has always struck me as beside the point, anyway; are there really people in the world who think pinching a girl's ass is a thrill?)

And eventually, back to the hotel we went. We agreed with Sid (as we always agreed with Sid, to rather little effect) to rise at a propitious hour on the morrow, in order that we might see a few of the sights of Verona before leaving it. I arranged at the desk to have breakfast rolls and coffee sent to our room at 9:00 next morning, and as we ascended in the elevator I considered how useless that gesture would be: you can lead a sleepyhead to coffee, but you can't make him drink it. (Copyright © 1971 by Terry Carr.)

TO BE CONTINUED SOME MORE

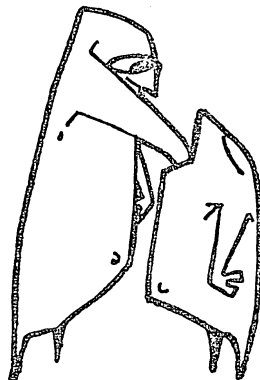
(More McLuhanesque trailer)

Don't miss these scenes from next issue:

not as interested in the doors as Sid was, so we went on into the church because we heard a choir inside. The acoustics were fantastic; this was the way choirs were meant to be heard. Then we realized the occasion for the music: there was a

, everyone looking silently at the paintings that lined the walls. "Some people dig Bonestell," said Sid, "but it's Carpaccio who really

fact, the only thing I had against the hotel was that I had some trouble getting to sleep because of the motorboats going by till all



Atom

