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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:


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HPL: An Editorial

This magazine is the product of many, many hands - some at typers, others armed with pens and imagination, all extremely selfless and generous with their time. All they had to go on was an unknown publisher whose mimeographed fanzines only a few of them had seen. Looming ahead, less than six months from when most were told about the project, was a promised tribute to H. P. Lovecraft, a limited edition magazine of at least 64 pages originally scheduled for release on Derleth's birthday, later changed to coincide with the month 35 years after Lovecraft's death.

These contributors (see the extensive biographical section at the rear) included people who had never had their own art or writings published before and people whose livelihood derived from such activities, but all share a common interest in the subject of this publication: H. P. Lovecraft, the man, the writer and his writings.

In such a project an over-all purpose is frequently stated at this point, but the editors had in mind multiple purposes in this instance. One was to present a portfolio of contemporary artists and their interpretations of Lovecraft subjects. As a bridge, for the sake of continuity, two of the names long associated with the illustration of Lovecraft's work, Lee Brown Coye and Virgil Finlay, are represented herein. Another aim was to present a short anthology of some Lovecraft-inspired fiction and poetry, and it gives us great pleasure to present these pieces from people associated with the Cthulhu Mythos through earlier publication of their works by Arkham House and from people who are likely to find increasing markets for their work in the future. Another purpose was to preserve for the future (and, we hope, for the enjoyment of Lovecraft fans of the present) recollections and reminiscences from friends and correspondents of Lovecraft. Also we felt it appropriate to include some samples of Lovecraft research and interpretation from earlier periods of "fan" writing and from today's fans.

In all this pot pourri we hope each reader of HPL, whether he be a scholar, book collector, graphics oriented or story reader, whether he discovered H.P.L. in the 40's or 70's or in any intervening decade, will find something of interest and something of value. We would appreciate hearing from you, not alone for our own interest in your reactions but in order to present the comments you may have to the contributors by means of a mimeographed newsletter of such to be collected and mailed to each of them some months after the distribution date.

Interest in Lovecraft will doubtless continue to flourish despite the following exhortation but for what it is worth: support the fan enterprises you will find listed at the end of the magazine and any others you may hear about; support ARKHAM HOUSE, with which this publication has no affiliation but to which it says are every Lovecraft fan owes much for the perpetuation of the breed; and Ballantine, Beagle and the paperback publishers who bring forth such material; support WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY and other magazines which seek to keep the traditions of WEIRD TALES in our midst; and finally, clamor for more material by any of the contributors who have particularly pleased you. It would also be appropriate to obtain recognition of our interest on convention programs, TV, comics, and, to await, movies. Thank you for your interest.

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PAGE 2

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CARD CATALOGUE NUMBER: 79-189837
**Table of Contents**

**FRONT COVER:** "The Haunter of the Dark" by Robert K. Price

**Editorial and Acknowledgments** ................................................................. 2

**Table of Contents** .......................................................................................... 3

**Dedications:**
Poème en Prose I, by R. Alain Everts ......................................................... 4

**Teller of Tales:** The Seeker I and II .......................................................... 4

**ARTICLES:**
- The Lovecraft Mythos, by Robert Bloch.................................................. 5
- A Haunter of the Dark, by Joseph Payne Brennan ..................................... 6
- An Interview with Frank Belknap Long, by Stuart Schiff ........................... 7
- HPL's Astrological Chart ............................................................................. 12
- HPL: An Astrological Analysis, by E. Hoffman Price ............................... 13

**Reminiscences,** by E. Hoffman Price ....................................................... 16

**A Few Short Comments on the Writings of HPL,** by Fritz Leiber ............... 18

**Ira A. Code and Howard Phillips Lovecraft:**
A Brief Friendship, by R. Alain Everts ......................................................... 19

**Excerpts from ORDER OF ASSASSINS,** by Colin Wilson .................... 22

**An Early HPL Publisher**
Wm. L. Crawford ......................................................................................... 24

**Biographic Matter on Lovecraft,** by George A. Wilbur.......................... 25

**HPL and Films,** by J. Vernon Shea .......................................................... 28

**An Unknown HPL Artist,** by Gerry de la Ree ........................................ 30

**The Horror Theme after HPL,** by William Scott Margaret ..................... 32

**The Cthulhu Mythos:**
A Study, by George T. Wetzel ..................................................................... 35

**Stalking the Elusive Necronomicon,** by Roger Bryant .............................. 42

**Notes on Collecting Lovecraftiana,** by Stuart D. Schiff .......................... 44

**Notes on Researching Lovecraftiana,** by John L. Holmrison ................. 46

**Cthulhu in Mesoamerica,** by Richard L. Tierney ..................................... 48

**HPL on Night Gallery,** a review by Bill Wallace ........................................ 50

**ART CREDITS:**
Full Pages: The Outsider by Steve Fabian .................................................. 65

**Arigam by Tim Kirk** ................................................................................... 66

**R'lyeh by John Atkins Richardson** ............................................................. 67

**Wilbur Whateley's Death**
- by Tim Kirk ............................................................................................... 68
- by Dany Frolich ......................................................................................... 69

**The Dunwich Horror**
- by Dany Frolich ....................................................................................... 70
- by John Atkins Richardson ........................................................................ 71

**Pickman's Model**
- by Herb Arnold .......................................................................................... 72

**The Whisperer in the Darkness**
- by Steve Fabian .......................................................................................... 73

**Cthulhu by Dany Frolich** ............................................................................ 74

**The Hound by Dany Frolich** ...................................................................... 75

**The Elder Ones**
- by Herb Arnold .......................................................................................... 76

**Priest of Dagon**
- from The Shadow over Innsmouth **by Herb Arnold** ............................ 77

**The Rats in the Wall**
- by Steve Fabian .......................................................................................... 78
- by Herb Arnold ............................................................................................ 79

**Halloween in the Suburbs**
- by Jim Garrison .......................................................................................... 80

**HERB ARNOLD:**
F.R. Long and Chaugnag Faugh (p. 7)
Asenath Waite from The Thing on the Doorstep (p. 11)
Edward Derby from The Thing on the Doorstep (p. 14)
William Dyer from Mountains of Madness (p. 15)
Shantak Bird from Unknown Kadath (p. 25)
Cthulhu Rising (p. 27)
Hastur, Carcosa and The King in Yellow (p. 53)
Ghouls (p. 53), Cthulhu Idol (p. 45), Albert Wilmarth from The Whisperer in Darkness (p. 46)
Tsathoggua (p. 49), Wilbur Whateley (p. 49), Cug (p. 53), Robert Blake from The Haunter of the Dark (p. 56), Cthulhu (p. 56), One of the Great Race (p. 84), An Inhabitant of the Nameless City (p. 87), Dunwich's Round Mtn. (p. 90), Night Gaunts (p. 96), Yuggoth (p. 104), Mi-GO (p. 105), Henry Akeley from The Whisperer in the Darkness (p. 105), Yog-Sothoth (p. 111), Shub-Niggurath (p. 114), Chaugnag Faugh (p. 125), Ambrose d'Art's House from Lurker at the Threshold (p. 127), Deep Ones (p. 133), Wilbur Whateley (p. 136), The Dunwich Horror (p. 137), Death of Wizard Whateley (p. 140), and illustrations on 59, 83, 109, 113 and 121.

**Mike Scott:** The Thing on the Doorstep (p. 6), The Festival (p. 18), At the Mountains of Madness (p. 24), (inclusion in private collection of Vern O'Brien), The Dunwich Horror (p. 52), Nyarlathotep (p. 37), Polaris (p. 41), Strange High House in the Mist (p. 51), He (p. 55), and p. 97

**John Swanson II:** The White Ship (p. 9), Cthulhu (p. 82), The Festival (p. 85), The Evil Clergyman (p. 94)

**Richard Corben:** Walter Gilman Through Hyperspace (p. 17)
Wilbur Whateley (p. 25), An Innsmouth Fishwife (p. 36), The Hound (p. 40) and Azathoth (p. 102)

**Tim Kirk:** The Return of Hastur (p. 53), The Horror in the Burying Ground (p. 61)

**Lee Brown Coye:** pp. 120, 123

**Denis Tiani:** H.P. (p. 5) and pp. 4, 29, 99, 112, 134

**Ron Miller:** pp. 38, 39, 107 (top)

**Bill Guy:** pp. 4, 29, 50, 91, 107 (bottom) 117

**Dave Stidenski:** pp. 112, 152

**Steve Fabian:** p. 43

**Gary Myers:** p. 98

**Mark Gelotte:** pp. 34, 93

**Harry Morris:** pp. 63, 159

**Dany Frolich:** pp. 47, 54, 57, 62, 64, 95, 119, 140

**Clay Fourrrier:** p. 89

**Published in a Limited Edition of 1000 Copies Including**

**Selected Letters III,** a review by James Wade ...................................... 52

**The Derleth Mythos,** by Richard L. Tierney ........................................... 58

**My Life With the Greatest Old One,** by James W. 54

**Gruden Itza:** Evolution of a Sub-Mythos by Donald J. Walsh ............. 55

**Poetry Page** ............................................................................................. 56

**Fiction:**
- The Weird Tale of Phillip Love, by Joseph P. Farley .................................. 57

**Some Writings of Robert M. Price** ............................................................ 62

**Poetry Page** ............................................................................................. 64

**ART FOLIO:** Interpretations of Stories by HPL ...................................... 65

**The Terrible Parchment,** by Manly Wade Wellman ............................... 81

**The BRUINERS BENEATH (Chapter One),** by Brian Lumley .............. 83

**Dark Providence,** by Jerry Sanders ......................................................... 88

**Others Who Are Not Men,** by W. Paul Gannali .................................... 89

**The Return of Zophos,** by Gary Myers .................................................... 98

**The Drawings on the Desktops,** by John F. Sellers II .......................... 99

**Threshold to Doomsrall,** by Robert C. Sudol ........................................ 102

**Planetfall on Yuggoth,** by James Wade .................................................. 104

**Predator,** by Walter C. DeSilva ................................................................ 106

**Those Beneath the Waves,** by Herb Arnold ............................................ 108

**A Madness from the Vaults,** by J. Ramsey Campbell............................. 113

**Legends,** by Darrell Schweitzer ................................................................ 116

**Dull Scavengers Wax Crafty,** by Wm. Scott Home ................................ 118

**Eater of the Dead,** by George T. Wetzel ................................................ 124

**What the Moon Brings,** by George T. Wetzel ........................................ 126

**To the Stars in Oort's Cloud,** by John Jacob Astin ................................. 128

**Down to the Sea,** by Bill Wallace ............................................................ 131

**"Who is Grandpa Theobold?," by Robert E. Howard .............................. 134

**Contributors Notes** .................................................................................. 135

**SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND MISCELLANY** .................................. 141

**Survey of Current Publications in the Field** ............................................ 143

**BACK COVER:** "The Haunter of the Dark" by Herb Arnold
POEME EN PROSE:  I

SWAN POINT CEMETERY -
Providence, Rhode Island,
March 15, 1970

Why does thou weep, the periwigged and bespectacled man asked. It is for a gentleman, I replied, who long-ago died here. We never knew him, but he was a man worthy of grief. All of his friends did mourn his loss, and now that they have joined him, we too are saddened, for he was creative of mind and a scholar; an individual the likes of which we shan't again see. The unique are deserving of encomium.

Do not mourn, my friend, for he is now content - he has sipped his nepenthe, the lethean quaff. The mundane and qualmish touch him not. He rides his night-winds, and the eons are his. With his Gods, his friends, he now ceaselessly converses; an outsider, as they once claimed, no longer. I know that he is well, said the thin-lipped gentleman, smiling slightly.

R. Alain Everts

THE TELLER OF TALES

From midnight dreams, oft credulous,  
Of indifferent Fates he speaks to us;  
Real terrors may spell our ultimate end -  
He makes us shudder with his pen.  
Rime mover of the Cthulhu cult,  
Ore of the cosmic to the occult  
On hints and glimpses he has brought,  
Eerie illusions he frequently weaves:  
Crypts must yawn as spirits leave,  
And things unnamable haunt the nights.  
From dead lines of this one so great  
Tales, like maggots, proliferate!

THE SEEKER - I

Hapless I wandered through shadowy wood  
Eve reading that place where I could  
Eve once more with arcane witches,  
Eseech the secret of soul switches,  
And escape this form into which I was cast.  
Elientlessly, the years slither on past,  
Not freeing me by death's bite from my fate,  
Oly mocking my quest for the ultimate  
Lore to loose spells spun long before.  
Despair tells me there are witches no more!

- by Meade Frierson III

THE SEEKER - II

So far above the peaks, he strains  
To see the night-gaunts fly  
Until the demon-vision wanes  
And blackness rules the sky.  
Rulers of the arctic eons  
To view he has gone far;  
So too dark dreams of hell's minions  
Come to him from the stars.  
He haunts the dank tombs' openings  
In case he'll get a look.  
From whence come these imaginings?  
From an Arkham House book!

PAGE 4
Sometimes it's sad, the way they die. Herman Melville, an obscure government clerk, passed from this earth with the bitter knowledge that his magnum opus, Moby Dick, was out of print and - because of the neglect accorded him in his latter years - likely to remain so. Oscar Wilde, who had once tasted fame, died without a crumb of consolation; his work, like himself, was consigned to limbo. Scott Fitzgerald's heart-failure was probably less a tragedy to him than his career-failure. Few mourned Kafka or remembered his books.

And Lovecraft? Surely his departure was the most ignominious of all, for he lacked even the cold comfort of past glories. Not only was his writing out of print - it had never achieved temporary recognition in book form, for no "commercial" publisher had ever issued a single Lovecraft title during the whole of his lifetime.

Oh, he had his friends, of course, acolytes even, the scant score or so of us who formed the so-called "Lovecraft circle" of correspondents. And there were the fans, the faithful readers who relished or revered the occasional offerings which appeared in WEIRD TALES all too infrequently during the final years. But there had been little or no genuine critical recognition from the literary establishment, and even in the pulp-paper pages of the obscure, unsuccessful fantasy magazine with the lurid covers, he never rated the readership response accorded a Seabury Quinn or a Robert E. Howard.

When a struggling young writer in an obscure village joined forces with an equally impeccable compatriot in a plan to place Lovecraft's stories in print before an indifferent public, the effort seemed doomed. And when a book - in an edition of a mere 1,200 copies, almost a "vanity publication" - finally did appear, it was met with a half-hearted reception and its sale, even in this miniscule edition, languished. A second volume fared no better, critically or commercially.

And then the miracle happened. Not overnight, but gradually, Lovecraft emerged from obscurity. In books, in anthologies, in memoirs, essays, paperback reprint; in radio, television, and - with grotesque distortions, to be sure - in motion pictures. Even to the alien world of the H. P. Lovecraft became an "in" figure, the cult of HPL was established.

Today the name and work of H. P. Lovecraft has attained a worldwide fame; minor, alas, but magnified a thousandfold over anything accorded him during his lifetime.

Hard to explain?

Not when one thinks in terms of "miracles" and "cults". For Lovecraft, of course, was a god. A god who, in his own ineluctable wisdom, created his own cosmos, his own Mythos.

The Lovecraft Mythos, the pantheon of Elder Gods and the Great Old Ones they spawned and fought, has a life of its own. And within its annals one can seek, and find, the clue to the resurrection of HPL.

Lovecraft tells us the legend of Cthulhu, who sought to conquer earth and failed, and was consigned to the oblivion of a watery grave deep beneath the sea, not in death, but in eternal exile, a silent slumberer forgotten by all.

All, that is, except a faithful few - outcasts, pariahs, miserable nonentities who nonetheless held his image in veneration, worshipped his memory, formed an obscure cult of true believers who prayed for him to rise once more and raven forth to claim dominion over the earth and the minds of men.

And in the depths Great Cthulhu stirred, and his stirring caused strange dreams in all the lands, and in time he did indeed come forth. Cthulhu's renaissance was brief, if Lovecraft's own account of it is to be believed, but though he sank again beneath the sea, it was only in a second slumber from which he may yet awaken, even as HPL himself awakened to summon his followers, to influence the dreams of man, to rule their fantasies.

Let us also remember the parable of Yog-Sothoth who came from beyond the stars to beget a spawn compounded of elements alien and human: his creations in part resembled men; but both Wilbur Whateley and his monstrous brother betrayed, in varying degrees, their godlike heritage.

Think on that. Think on Lovecraft as Great Cthulhu, who slumbered, and who rose, because a few despised and neglected followers kept the faith through the years. Think on Lovecraft as Yog-Sothoth, who perpetuated his own image in the identities of others who carried on his "works" in their various ways.

We - the faithful followers, the cultists, the imitators - know the true meaning of the Lovecraft Mythos. And we rejoice in the rise and the revelation of the one we worshipped as a mentor, a literary god.

Iaa Shub-Niggurath!!
A HAUNTER OF THE NIGHT
By
Joseph Payne Brennan

As I write, nearly 35 years after Lovecraft's death, interest in his work continues to grow.

The death of August Derleth, who, almost single-handedly, was largely responsible for bringing Lovecraft's work to the attention of the general reading public, marks, in a sense, the end of an epoch. Perhaps this is indeed a propitious time for new tributes to "the night-prowler of Providence."

I doubt that anyone will dispute the fact that Lovecraft's popularity and appeal remain undiminished. Anything written by him, or about him, is quickly bought up. Small printings go out of circulation in weeks or months. Stocks of higher-priced hardbound books last longer but, inevitably, they too fall in the all-too-familiar "o.p." bracket.

Why does Lovecraft's work, nearly all of which appeared originally in "little" amateur-press or pulp magazines, continue to hold such fascination for readers? One obvious reply would be that much of his work is probably the best available in its own particular genre - even though that genre, by its very nature, is a somewhat circumscribed one.

Space (and time in this instance) will not permit a detailed discussion of Lovecraft's fiction, verse and letters, but there is one rather neglected facet of the Lovecraft diamond which might do with a bit of polishing.

More and more I come to feel that, entirely apart from the merit of his work, one strong additional reason for Lovecraft's enduring and growing appeal is the fact that, to the average reader, he appears to be a character right out of one of his own stories! Readers identify him with his own stories to an unparalleled degree. This identity adds immeasurably to the magnetism of much of his work.

He was, to quote August Derleth, "a haunter of the night." He prowled the back streets of Providence at midnight and quite literally "lingered in graveyards." If he wrote during the day, he preferred a room in which all shades were drawn and his desk was illuminated by an electric bulb. He was attracted, by his own nature, as well as by vocation, to night, to darkness, and to death. Years ago Vincent Starrett summed it up very aptly: "...he was his own most fantastic creation...born a century too late. He fancied himself as a cadaverous, mysterious figure of the night...and cultivated a natural resemblance until he was almost the real thing...."

Lovecraft's obsession with time, also, is well known. He revered the eighteenth century. In verse at least he imitated its style of writing. He admired its archaic manners. I think he might have bargained life itself if, in exchange, he could have gone backwards and flourished for even a brief period as an old English gentleman during the 1780s!

Not many authors specializing in the domain of the macabre have filled the role so admirably. Poe comes immediately to mind, and certainly there were times when he wandered the shadowy, night-time streets of East Coast cities in delirium and despair. But for much of his short life Poe was a very busy magazine editor and/or contributor. For long periods his nose was kept uncomfortably close to the grindstone of literary currency. After the fire that destroyed his library, he lectured not infrequently, he ground away at book review, literary criticism, newspaper fillers, verse (as well as poetry) and hack work which he must have hated.

Lovecraft also drugged - especially at revisions of other authors' second-rate work - but, of the two, I believe he was a far more persistent "haunter of the night" than was Poe. Perhaps Poe haunted the wild, uncharted night of the imagination as much as Lovecraft. But I doubt that he haunted the earthly night as much as in the flesh. He was too busy grubbing out a grim existence with a goosequill pen or the equivalent. In any case I can think of no other author in the macabre field who surpasses Lovecraft in the degree to which he has been fictions. And this identity was by no means artificial and contrived. Exploring deserted streets at night, loitering in lonely cemeteries, writing by artificial light with the shades down, and other habits, simply fulfilled Lovecraft's inward nature. These habits, so bizarre perhaps to others, were "normal" from his own perspective.

The psychiatrist, the psychoanalyst and the near-sighted academic snobs may probe, dissect and pass judgment till doomsday. The ENTHRALLED READER WILL CONTINUE TO APPLAUD!

PAGE 6
Our intrepid Associate Editor, Stuart D. Schiff, one chilling October eve braved the antedeluvian evils of Manhattan by-ways and sought out the famed Belknapus of Lovecraft's letters. Mr. Long consented to pose for our artist, Herb Arnold, with his protege and bodyguard, Chaungar Faugn, and graciously granted the following interview.

SCHIFF: What was your first knowledge of Lovecraft?

LONG: That's quite a long and interesting story. When I was about 16 or 17, I entered a prize contest held by a boys' magazine. I think it was called BOYS WORLD. I won first prize and there was an amateur journalist out West, Paul Campbell, who saw the story and wrote me, inviting me to join the United Amateur Press Association, which I did. Then I wrote a story somewhat like Poe's Shadow, imitative, you see, running to about 2,000 words, for the UNITED AMATEUR, the official journal of the U.A.P.A. Lovecraft saw it and wrote me, telling me he thought it was splendid; he praised it very highly. Of course I was flattered and wrote back, and so we "met."

SCHIFF: Did you know of him at the time?

LONG: I knew of him only as a member of the United Amateur Press Association, one of about 250 members.

SCHIFF: When did you first meet Lovecraft in person?

LONG: I corresponded with him for about three years, and then he came to New York City on a short visit just before he married Sonia Greene. They were planning to marry and his first visit occurred about 3 months before his marriage, as I recall it. He phoned me and asked me to come over. He said he would very much like to meet me in person after having corresponded with me for so long. That was the first time we met, in Brooklyn.

SCHIFF: What was your impression of him when you met him?

LONG: Well, he was sitting on the stoop outside Sonia's apartment. He was very stout at that time. He became stout briefly for about 2 or 3 years. He looked much older than he was - he was only about 32 at that time, but he looked 40 or more. Somehow I
knew it was Lovecraft as I approached and he was very glad to see me and we went inside and I met Sonia for the first time. As I recall, we spent a very pleasant afternoon. And then about three or four months after that he married Sonia and came to New York again. Then he invited all of us to their Brooklyn home - Samuel Loveman, who was staying in New York at that time; Rhinehart Kleiner, and James F. Horton, the curator of the Paterson Museum, who was one of the older members of the Lovecraft circle...

SCHIFF: What was your most memorable moment with Lovecraft?

LONG: I don't think there's any one memorable moment. Of course, I was very flattered, since I was so much younger than Lovecraft, to have him praise my early stories so highly. As soon as he began to correspond with me at length, I realized that he was a man of great intellectual and imaginative stature. I felt I was very fortunate to be privileged to exchange letters with him.

SCHIFF: Do you remember any humorous story about him?

LONG: Howard was very serious-minded. He had a keen sense of humor, but he didn't display it often. He played it more in his letters than in his conversation. When you met him, you got the impression of a man who was very serious-minded and was interested in everything that mattered in literature and art. The little boisterously exuberant, slightly immature quirks you associate with most writers seemed largely absent in Howard. Oh, he was very eccentric in a few somewhat amusing respects and the impression most people got of him -- a correct one -- was that he was basically a warmly human personality. But he was not much given to relaxing, and being casually human or jolly. Back-thumping and a bone-crushing handclasp were alien to his nature, and that, of course, was entirely to his credit.

SCHIFF: In your correspondence with Lovecraft you were addressed as "Sonny" or "Grandson"; how did this originate?

LONG: Howard always thought of himself as the old gentleman of Providence Plantations so all of his young correspondents became his grandsons -- Alfred Galpin, Donaldu Wandrey, even Clark Ashton Smith, although Smith was older. He thought of himself as a man of about 70, and everyone else was very young. His wife, Mrs. Galpin, he spoke of as "my daughter" and James Morton, who was almost twice his age, as "my son." So he addressed me as "Sonny," which I didn't like -- it seemed kind of a foolish thing but I didn't want to offend him by mentioning that, so he continued to call me "Sonny" for about ten years after that.

SCHIFF: Was that also your name in the Circle?

LONG: No. I was always addressed as either Frank or Belknap, my middle name. My paternal grandmother's family were Belknaps and my parents used that name to distinguish me from my father, since I was a "Jr." Howard and I think Norton called me "Belknap" - the others, "Frank," but all my boyhood friends from a quite early age called me Frank. "Belknap" is such a far out kind of first name it would have caused bewilderment if I'd used it at school.

SCHIFF: In other words, Lovecraft never gave you a name like "Klarkash-Ton"?

LONG: Oh yes, "Belknapius" - he Latinized it, you see. In correspondence mainly -- Norton was "Hor-tonius", Galpin was "Galpinius" and so forth.

SCHIFF: A lot of writers feel they were influenced greatly by Lovecraft. How would you say Lovecraft influenced your writing?

LONG: Not very much. I read all of his stories and I think they did influence me, naturally, in some of their statistic qualities, but from an early age I think my writing followed a different pattern from his. I was just as interested in supernatural horror and fantasy, but, to the best of my recollection, Howard never made any revisions in my stories, or suggested changes.

SCHIFF: You were the first person to read many of his stories, weren't you?

LONG: Sometimes when he visited us in person, he would read the stories. I think he did that more often than sending them through the mails, because he was our guest quite often and he would bring a new story down from Providence and read it. So I was the first to hear The Shunned House and At The Mountains of Madness and Two or three others.

SCHIFF: How did he read the stories - did he act them out?

LONG: No, he would just sit in a chair and read them in a very straightforward fashion, in an almost conversational voice.

SCHIFF: Do you think that took away from the horror of the stories?

LONG: No, he had a very good voice for reading supernatural horror stories. You see, a horror story could hardly be read by a babbitt or a guy who's a Rotarian. His voice was that of a cultivated New Englander and it went very well with the stories. But a more rustic-sounding "Down East" voice, with a pronounced nasal twang, would have been impressive, too.

SCHIFF: What is your favorite of Lovecraft's stories?

LONG: I think The Dunwich Horror is perhaps his masterpiece, with The Shunned House following close after that. At the Mountains of Madness is a very powerful novel. The Case Of Charles Dexter Ward is almost as powerful, too, in an entirely different vein. Also The Shadow Over Innsmouth. In college days I'd read his Dunstan fantasy over and over - The Nameless City, The Doom That Came to Sarnath, etcetera.

SCHIFF: What impressed you most about The Dunwich Horror?

LONG: I think the slow build-up, the accumulation of brooding atmospheric details. It becomes more powerful as it goes along until finally it reaches this tremendous climax.

SCHIFF: Of the stories you've written two of the most powerful are The Hounds of Tindalos and The Space Eaters. These seemed to have been influenced by Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos.

LONG: Yes, they were. It's amazing how the fans and the fan groups remember these stories across the years. They were my earliest stories, those in WEIRD TALES, and they have been reprinted by Ace, Avon and THE MAGAZINE OF HORROR and anthologized, which may have helped them to get reprinted. I don't feel they're comparable to some I've done since then, particularly in recent years. I think that they were overwritten and too melodramatic, but they seemed to have left an impression on the early readers of WEIRD TALES and those who have read them since. I don't know -- I don't want to be too critical of myself in that respect. I've had several writers and quite dis-
in a midwestern town who is the forerunner of a new race of men. There's one called JOURNEY INTO DARKNESS (1967), also published by Belmont. They didn't get the distribution my Pyramid and Lancer and Popular Library books did, but I think they're among my very best work.

I also wrote a science fiction novel for Pyramid about eight years ago called MARS IS MY DESTINATION, and a just-published Lancer novel, SURVIVAL WORLDS, I'd put in this category, and a MONSTER FROM OUT OF TIME (Popular Library 1969). But I'm comparing some of my science fiction stories with my early WEIRD TALES stories and they're in a different realm entirely. But some of my recent novels have aspects of horror writing in them which, I feel, far surpass anything I did when I wrote for WEIRD TALES. For instance, in those books I just mentioned there are passages in the genre that contain much more mature writing. I wrote also a Gothic novel for Lancer about five years ago under my own name that I think is one of my more powerful supernatural horror things. I'm writing now much more prolifically than I ever did in the past. I think my writing over the last fifteen years is much better than my earlier work but a great many fans don't agree. However, a lot of them haven't read these paperback books.

There's a great deal more social satire in my recent things than was present in my earlier stories, more irony and that sort of thing which makes them stronger. But one thing about the older stories which makes me think they can't be too bad is that they've been anthologized so frequently. I've had about 35 stories in hardcover anthologies, most of them containing the best writers of the 19th century in the supernatural horror genre, Poe, Henry James, Bierce, etc., and in all those anthologies about one-third of the F&F inclusions are early stories.

Among my early WEIRD TALES stories I like The Black Druid (July, 1930); Second Night Out (1933); A Visitor from Egypt (September, 1930); Two Face (published in WEIRD TALES years later and anthologized by Beliier & Dikty) and three or four others better than The Space Eaters or The Hounds of Tindalos. But these two seem to be the best remembered.

SCHIFF: Perhaps this is because they were the lead stories in your first book.

LONG: Well, it may be also because Lovecraft figured as one of the central characters of The Space Eaters. But I'll tell you an interesting thing about The Hounds of Tindalos. Just by accident I seem to have stumbled on the whole peculiar idea and anticipated Timothy Leary by about twenty years. If you read that story carefully, you'll find it deals with consciousness-expanding drugs and the sense of unity that they give people, that everything is a part of some great whole. And incidentally some of the hippies who are embracing these concepts now take that story very seriously. From a literary point of view I feel that some of the early stories are over-written and melodramatic but they may just possibly contain elements which are as interesting as anything in my later work.

One more thing, I seem to have spread the horror on a little too thick. I didn't use enough subtlety and suggestion. I'm a great admirer of the horror stories of Montague R. James. I think he achieved as much by suggestion -- perhaps more than HP did by piling up adjectives. In my early stories I used the Lovecraftian method, the Poe method, really, of piling up adjectives. It's a greater art to be able to convey this in a more suggestive and subtle way. You'll find that in both the stories of Montague James and a story like Turn of the Screw by Henry James. It's a more subtle psychological approach.

SCHIFF: What writer do you think has influenced you the most?
LONG: There are so many writers who influenced me that it's hard to say. My reading has been in so many different fields. For the last ten years I've been very interested in contemporary American writing in the "new freedom" - no punches drawn - tradition, but this hasn't been mirrored to any extent in my work. But we'll see. I'm hoping to write a more realistic novel than anything I've ever turned out, with more character and subtlety. I'm probably more interested in character than Lovecraft was. I'm interested in unusual characters as well as atmospheres and backdrops. I've written in so many different styles, all kinds of stories, that it's hard to identify the influences.

SCHIFF: Of all the things you remember about Lovecraft what stands out most in your mind?

LONG: He was extraordinary. He was unlike most people. Some couldn't bear him while he was still alive, then he was respected, and now he's respected. He had a very high level of intellectual discernment. It was just like a book talking. But you remember him also as a very kind person, which so many men of creative genius are not. He was very kindly disposed toward everyone. He had very few enemies. There was no young writer who appealed to him for help and didn't find him ready to do his best to assist.

SCHIFF: With the recent publication of volumes of Lovecraft's letters we're getting to see a little more of Lovecraft the man and in fact the letters are becoming as well known as some of his stories.

LONG: The thing is that the real Lovecraft was more in his letters than in his stories. He had this tremendous ability to bring the 18th century to life. He lived in the 18th century himself to a great extent and all of this was revealed in his letters. His love of the old houses of Providence. He was an antiquarian but a very lively kind, not the dry-as-dust kind. You could call this a pose but with him it wasn't a pose, it was really an extension of his identity. He was a gentleman - not just pretend to be but you got the impression that he was very much what an 18th century gentleman might have been, a cultivated 18th century gentleman with Howard's gift of imagination.

SCHIFF: Some people feel that in taking so much time to write his letters Lovecraft lost a lot of time for writing fiction.

LONG: Yes, it was a tragedy in some respects.

SCHIFF: He would have been better able to develop his qualities as a writer if he hadn't taken so much time with those letters.

LONG: Yes, but Lovecraft was never an opportunist. He never went after literary recognition. He was writing primarily to satisfy these deep urges within himself. If he had set out to be a professional writer, he could have probably gone very far from both a literary and a monetary point of view, but that's it -- he didn't care for that sort of thing. But it's tragic because he did waste a lot of time on people who had no artistic talent whatever. Others, however, achieved no small measure of literary recognition. All these young fans he wrote to were so delighted to receive his letters and it extends across the years to today, fans are still receiving his letters for the first time. It's really contributed to the Lovecraft legend. To think that he could evoke such enthusiasm long after he had passed on!

SCHIFF: Why do you feel that Lovecraft has been able to develop such a fanatical following among his readers of today?

LONG: There are certain writers who appeal to youth. Youth has this sense of dawning wonder and there are certain writers who appeal to this so-called imaginative awakening which occurs in young people. H.G. Wells was a writer of that sort. Although Lovecraft was completely different from Wells in personality and so forth, he had that same capacity. The irony of it is that he always thought of himself as a very old man and yet there is something about his stories which appeal to youth; they touch on far realms out of space and time, the imperishable dream that you find in all the great great myths and so forth. Some of that is in Lovecraft and you get the tremendous impact of that when you read his stories and all of his letters to these young correspondents.

SCHIFF: As a member of the Kalem Klub, do you recall any really memorable gatherings?

LONG: I remember when Donald Wandrei came to N.Y. for the first time. He was about 19 and had never seen New York before. Neither had I. I went up to Providence and my mother and father and I drove up in a car after James Norton had also joined Howard. We were there three or four days. I remember we went on a trip to Newport and Howard showed us all over the town, all the old houses. That was the first time he had ever explored Providence in the presence of three or four of his friends. That was the first time I realized what a wonderful guide Howard was, touring these ancient byways.

Howard, as you know, spent about three years in New York, then went back to Providence. He came down here about eight o'clock one night. He was our guest four or five times, we got a room for him in our apartment house, I remember. And of course I saw him steadily for about three years when he was in Brooklyn. That was his back time when Lovecraft was here and Talman, who lived in Flatbush. We had a lot of meetings during those years. I didn't attend as often as some of the others -- they would take long walks and stay out all night. I was at the time in college and didn't have time for that. They'd walk the streets of Brooklyn and lower Manhattan until dawn, just looking at 18th century houses, often in the Village.

SCHIFF: I recall hearing or reading that Lovecraft drank a lot.

LONG: No, he never touched a drop. That's the most ridiculous legend I could imagine. It would have been interesting to see how Howard might have expanded under the influence of liquor; he might have become even more talkative. I think Lovecraft told me just once at a party without telling Howard he had sneaked something a little stronger in one of his drinks and Howard wasn't aware of it at all but he did become more talkative - more exuberantly expansive.

SCHIFF: When members of the Circle, Loveman, Lovecraft, Kleiner, Arthur Leeds, James Norton, yourself, got together what went on? What did you talk about?

LONG: Mostly writing, books, art... we all had similar interests. Lovevan was a great book collector, he loved books as books. I never cared much for books apart from their contents. Lovecraft had quite a large library; all walls were lined with books.
SCHIFF: Of all the writers in the circle who do you think had the most influence on Lovecraft?

LONG: I don't think there was very much back-and-forth influence by members of the Lovecraft circle. There were all of these models for all of us to follow: Poe, Bierce, Dunsany, Blackwood, Machen. I don't think Howard influenced Clark Ashton Smith to any extent or Smith influenced Howard.

SCHIFF: How did you get your first sale to WEIRD TALES? Was it The Desert Lich in December, 1924 issue?

LONG: Yes, it was. Hennenburger was the original owner of the magazine and Howard had corresponded with him. When he came east Howard brought him to our home and I talked with him and told him I'd like to submit a story, too. Edwin Baird was the editor then and I submitted a story after they had published three or four of Lovecraft's. Then Farnsworth Wright became editor and he raved over my two or three early stories, wrote me long letters about them. From that time on for ten years I'd sell stories to WEIRD TALES three or four times a year.

SCHIFF: What did WEIRD TALES pay?

LONG: There was no money in it. A cent a word. Sometimes you'd have to wait for the check, which was on publication.

SCHIFF: Did you like any artist in particular who illustrated your stories?

LONG: Well, I didn't care too much for most of the WEIRD TALES illustrators. Virgil Finlay, of course, was an illustrator of great imaginative brilliance and Saks was too. But for the others I didn't care so much. The interior illustrations for The Space Eaters were magnificent.

SCHIFF: What did you think of Clark Ashton Smith as a writer?

LONG: That's a long story in itself. Briefly, I think that Smith was much greater as a poet than as a story writer. The Book Club of San Francisco published a collection called ODES AND SONNETS in 1920 and that I think contains the very best of Smith's poetry. Later he became too imitative (too much influenced by Baudelaire and the English decadents of Yellow Book fame -- Dawson and others) and his poems underwent a decline. But at that time he wrote some magnificent poems. They're traditional poems; they preceded the 1915 poetic revival when a new kind of poetry came in and rhetorical eloquence of that type went out, although it survived in England much longer than here. If Smith had written those poems about 1890 in England, I think he would have been among the greatest of minor English poets. By that I mean -- with strains of lyrical splendor, here and there, worthy of a major poet. (Mr. Long then quoted from an early Smith poem). I think that his stories, except in about ten instances, don't compare with his poems. The City of the Singing Flame and the sequel were magnificent, however.

SCHIFF: You wrote poetry at one time, "The Goblin Tower" and "Man from Genoa."

LONG: I sent the "Man from Genoa" around to about ten poets, John Masefield, Arthur Machen, George Sterling, George Santayana, Robinson Jeffers and others, and I got some very encouraging, very flattering letters from all of them. But I haven't written any poetry recently.

SCHIFF: If you were to meet someone who didn't know Lovecraft, how would you describe H.P. to him?

LONG: That would be very difficult. Every individual has qualities that are lost forever when he dies. You can't bring them back by just describing them. I don't think I'd attempt to -- I'd simply say you get to know him best by reading his letters and his stories. He had the qualities that you usually associate with a man of genius. Probably if you had talked to H.G. Wells or Henry James or Joseph Conrad or anyone else of genius, you'd have gotten this overwhelming impression of a very extraordinary personality but you can't recapture that when they're gone; you can't convey that essence, so to speak, of the person.

* * *

PAGE 11
H.P. Lovecraft 9am Aug. 20, 1890 Providence, R.I.
11°25'N - 41°N
Sidereal Time
Birth, 7:13 pm

Form No. 4: Combination Chart for Natal, Progressed and Transiting Planets.

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HPL: An Astrological Analysis
by E. Holtman Price

By adopting the system explained in THE KEY TO YOUR OWN NATIVITY by the noted English astrologer, Alan Leo, I am presenting an analysis of H. P. Lovecraft, in which I do not introduce any bias or opinions of my own - EXCEPT where, in italics, comment by me may be helpful to the reader in interpreting the personal judgments of the late Alan Leo to HPL. Such comments will be clearly identified. There may also be statements of ascertainable facts - not opinions - regarding HPL, which either are in accord with Alan Leo's generalizations or are significantly at variance. Such interpolations will also be clearly identified.

My intention is to present a judgment based solely upon the practice of astrology in the Western tradition, and to exclude whatever knowledge, actual or fancied, objective or subjective, I had or have, from my personal acquaintance and my correspondence with HPL.

A competent astrologer - and I am such, and my status is professional - can do an analysis and synthesize who is more complete, and more specific, than is possible with or by Alan Leo's method, as set forth in the book which I use. That he has written six major volumes in addition to the one at hand, indicates that he considers the present work to be primarily for the beginner, or, for the more advanced worker who finds it necessary to secure a sceptical client that the astrologer's personal knowledge, bias and opinion are excluded.

That the astrologer's intuition and skill, long experience, are also excluded, is of necessity accepted when one is required to demonstrate utmost objectivity, and become as mechanized as this age of science is making us! HPL always was, and in recent years, has more than ever become a controversial character. I have composed, for another non-commercial publisher, an analysis in which mechanized objectivity is not required. Accordingly, the present analysis is an offset, a counter-poise. Each presentation is potentially useful - or useless, according to your views on astrology.

To check memories, stories, notions about HPL against this analysis or against "the other", presented by another publisher, is not intended to demonstrate the validity of astrology, nor to demonstrate the correctness of the author's astrologer, HPL, astrologer, as such, is merely one of the many modes in which HPL may be regarded.

The first edition of Alan Leo's book appeared in 1915; the seventh edition, 1956. The author refers to English custom and background, "Americanese" at times is different from English diction. I do not propose to give a verbatim transcript. However, I will neither cut nor rewrite or paraphrase in any way which will warp or misrepresent, or fail to present, Alan Leo's words. I give the paragraph numbers of the seventh (1956) edition for those who may desire to read Alan Leo's original words.

The birth data, 9:00 A.M., August 20, 1890, Providence, R.I., came from one of HPL's letters. In his day, and into the 20th century, one of day has been given in "round figures" instead of going to the actual minute. We cannot know, for instance, whether Venus is actually in the XII House, or whether Mars is in the 1st or in the 3rd. Until someone "rectifies" HPL's chart (page opposite), by calculations based on the critical events of his life, these uncertainties will remain.

(7) "Libra was rising at your birth; a sign belonging to the element air, and to the cardinal or movable quality. This gives you a courteous, gentle, affable and kind and considerate nature. Your affections are strongly developed and are likely to play an important part in your life. You are able to make many friends; you associate easily with other people; the social side of your nature is active and your growth will be served by cultivating it wisely. You will be less fortunate if you live alone or dissociate yourself from others. You have a refined mind, are fond of beauty and orderliness, with a taste for music or painting. Your surroundings influence you very much and you are not happy unless they are neat, elegant and harmonious. Your mind is susceptible of considerable cultivation especially in connection with the more imaginative and idealistic subjects: but you have more intuition than reason, and emotion and affection are more to you than cold intellect. You are rather fickle and changeable, your likes and dislikes vary a great deal, and your ideas change with your moods. You are not quite constant either to persons or to ideas, and you are likely to experience many changes in your life. Companionship, friendship, partnership, association and marriage are the legitimate objects of your nature, and you will not attain to your fullest possibilities without them. Venus is the planet ruling Libra."

(16) Venus is the planet of love and beauty. You are warm-hearted and companionable, fond of the society of friends and relatives, and favoring all that is harmonious and refined. Venus generally gives those born under it good taste and love of beauty. You have the ability to develop the aesthetic side of your nature in the direction of singing, music, art, poetry, etc.: if you care to do so. The influence of the planet can also be adapted to a business life as it gives some financial ability and good luck. Venus is the chief significator of love and marriage.

NOTE BY EHP: While Venus rules the entire sign of Libra, there is a sub-ruler influencing each of the three "decans" - 10 degree portions - of every sign. Since HPL has 19° Libra rising, the ruler of the second decan, Saturn, is influential. I give you Saturn - 

(19) Saturn gives you a disposition that is sober, serious, thoughtful. Saturn rules old age. It gives you self control, reserve, restraint, as well as inclination to frugality, prudence, caution and prudence, and you may be very old, in the way which will warp or misrepresent, or fail to present, HPL's words. I give the paragraph numbers of the seventh (1956) edition for those who may desire to read Alan Leo's original words.

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(32) Saturn, ruler of the Second Decan of Libra, is in the VI House: Alan Leo says of this position, "...you will have many friends and will be popular in your own sphere of life. You make friends easily among people who are of the type signified by your
ruling planet. Friends are likely to influence you. You are likely to rise in life and fulfill your ambitions.

NOTE BY EHP: Although Saturn rules the second decan, Venus rules the entire sign, and hence, second decan is Venusian essentially, though "flavored" by Saturn. The writers, poets, hobby-publishers, and other aesthetes in HPL's circle are consistent with the above.

(76) Venus, ruler of Ascendant, is in Libra. Alan Leo says, "Vorable for marriage and all kinds of association with others. Contributes to the refinement of the mind, and gives some taste for music, poetry, singing; develops the mind in the direction of imagination, idealism, sense of beauty and good taste. Ugliness and coarseness offend you. Love and affection are blended with thought rather than with desire. You could earn money by an occupation of the nature of Venus, especially if in partnership, or as manager or agent for someone. Possibly gain money through marriage."

NOTE BY EHP: Revisory collaborations certainly were "partnership" work, and he "managed" the sale of the product. Had he been willing to quit Providence, he easily could have been "money gained through marriage." He had it made! Since Saturn is ruler of rising decan, I give you that planet again:

(111) Saturn in Virgo gives an orderly, critical and analytical mind, of serious cast, tending to make you original and able to deal with profound subjects; this might not show to advantage during early life. You may at times be far too diffident and reserved. Possibility of disappointment or reverses in your occupation. Ambition may be thwarted because of unpopular occupation, ill health, or some cause coming from your elders. (NOTE BY EHP: That's a micro-biography).

(146) Sun in Leo: You are generous, warm hearted, affectionate. Deep emotions and firm will, but when uncontrolled, the desires will be impulsive, the feelings easily affected. You are generous, sincere, earnest, persevering and inclined to self-perfection; unselfishness, ambition, pride, love of power. The dangers of Leo are potentially for cowardice, prevarication, love of pomp.

(160) Moon in Libra: You love ease and pleasure, the arts, and social gatherings. You are kindly, genial, affable and courteous. You love approval; life will be sweet when you are appreciated, but not when you remain unnoticed. You have artistic tastes.

(540) Blending the influences of Sun in Leo and Moon in Libra, it would appear that you could easily adapt yourself to literary and educational pursuits. Be careful in choice of friends and acquaintances, and also, and especially so, in marriage.

(183) Mercury in Virgo; your mind is active and comprehensive, you have a good memory, all your mental efforts can be turned to good use. You would be practical in any capacity, but you are apt to have too many things going at once. Not so good for public success. Teaching, literary work, bookkeeping (accounting), would be good pursuits.

(201) Mercury in XII House tends to keep you back in life by not allowing you to make the most of your mind. You may suffer from secret animosity or slander whether deserved or not. Do not let yourself be drawn into any unwise scheme, especially where writings are concerned. (NOTE BY EHP: Writings in this context mean legal documents such as contracts, or informal statements which could be legally binding or actionable, i.e., libelous - rather than writings in a literary or artistic sense.)

(203) Sun and Moon in beneficial aspect: success - the attainment of many of your desires; your efforts will prosper. You will have success in all affairs that relate to the heart.

(221) Sun, beneficial aspect with Uranus, bestows inventive genius, much originality. You have an independent spirit and love to carry out your own plans. You have magnetic power and can exercise over others a fascination which will make it easy for you to influence them.

(266) Venus in beneficial aspect with Mars is fortunate for emotional affairs, and in all events connected with feeling. You are free and liberal with money. Social matters have much attraction for you. You will be fortunate financially. It favors love affairs and is generally beneficial in marriage or partnerships.
NOTE BY EHP: What the author is saying is almost always correct. HPL is one of the few exceptions. But if you take into account all the other details of the chart, you will be able to reconcile this sharp divergence from history.

(285) Mars and Saturn in adverse aspect: a tendency at times to render harsh or bitter judgments, and utter words in accord. You have much courage, and are reckless in the face of danger.

(291) Mars in adverse aspect to Neptune: intemperate enthusiasm. You should avoid excesses, mental, emotional, or physical. Avoid all narcotic drugs.

NOTE BY EHP: HPL's almost fanatical averse to tobacco and alcohol could have been intuitive avoidance of things which were potentially harmful to him, and in a measure exceeding that which is the case with "ordinary" people. Neptune rules alcohol, alkaloids, narcotics, poisons, petroleum and other oils and - the SEA, the products of which he loathed.

(299) Benefic aspect of Jupiter to Neptune: "... there is a tendency to extravagance. You could rectify this by disciplining yourself in other lines of thought, such as science or mathematics in order that the sensuous and emotional nature may not assume too great a sway, because these are likely to bulk largely in your life, directly or indirectly. You should practice the sterner virtues, also, simplicity and frugality.

NOTE BY EHP: It is true, yet pointless, to say that HPL to develop frugality and simplicity! Frugality, I mean, was compulsory. Regardless of immediate causes, or ancestral causes, he went with his stars. One might say that, as in (281) above his Puritanism was an unconscious "over-correction" of tendencies and urges which he was, must have been, aware. Again, this is not a defense of Alan Leo - it is an attempt to declare just where you were when HPL's stars suggest or declare what was very conspicuously NOT manifested, not even revealed by speech or in his writings.

(306) Adverse aspect between Saturn and Neptune: this is an uncommon and strange position that is likely to bring you into remarkable situations. It is a very lofty vibration, to the true nature of which present day humanity cannot fully respond. It is not altogether favorable, and appears to indicate that there is some "kink", as it were, in the inner nature, which may manifest or perhaps remain dormant in this life, entirely unsuspected. Guard against the subtler forms of selfishness, which are likely to beset you. The cultivation of psychic faculties would not be good for you. There is a melancholy tendency associated with this position. (Note by EHP: This invites, as do several earlier paragraphs a receptive reading of SELECTED LETTERS.)

(313) You will gain through others, by will, legacy, inheritance, also through partners and co-workers. Expect losses, either through your own or another's extravagance. Never lend money without security. You can be practical where money is concerned, except where your feelings are concerned. You should prosper on the whole, for you have the ability to make money quickly.

(320) Travel, especially upon what are considered short journeys in our time, will be helpful, beneficial. This division of heaven also rules the "brain mind" and with [sic] brethren (i.e., kinfolk, relatives, not necessarily brothers and sisters—note by E.H.P.) Your kindred will be well disposed, your mind religious, and your mental condition harmonious. You may practice meditation to advantage.

(340) Jupiter in IV House promises good environment at the close of life, the end of your life is the best, and a good termination is indicated. It will be much better for you to remain in or near your native home, than to reside away from your home to gain success. This influence indicates inheritance from your parents. Every year of your life will be more and more prosperous and comfort secure at the end. (Note by EHP: Jupiter is "retrograde", which restricts or restrains or removes of the benefits of that planet. Despite financial shortages, the final five years of HPL's life were very good; he enjoyed them, almost to the end.)

Fifth and Sixth Houses: There are no planets in these and I see no merit in giving the traditional "Egyptian" rulerships, versus the "modern" rulerships, whether Saturn or Uranus rules the V, whether Jupiter or Neptune rules the VI, is a profitless pace filler. Saturn ("Egyptian") and Neptune ("modern") are most in accord with the facts.
Mars governs your VII House, that of marriage. Not favorable. You will in all probability marry one who is very ardent and who will desire to hold the reins and rule the roost.

Venus in Libra: more on HPL matrimonial prospects, much of this as with much of (366) is yes-and-no. The unusual HPL at times rises above all "rules", escapes all bonds of predetermination.

Legacies, inheritance. Gain by marriage, or partnership, profit from marriage partner's gains, earnings.

Neptune influence in (386) means likelihood of not getting full benefit of inheritance rightfully anticipated. Avoid having drugs administered (medically, it is implied). Liability of your going into deep sleep or trance. Drowning (at sea) is not improbable.

Mercury's ruling your higher mind indicates that it is often more active than your "ordinary" or "brain" mind. You have the ability to become a philosopher but not until you have more continuity and concentration. You are quick and perceptive. You will take some long journeys, or travel in foreign countries. You have a metaphysical turn of mind and love mystical subjects.

The Moon is concerned with all your pursuits in life and favors employments of a public or universal character. You should do work which cators to the public at large. There will be many fluctuations in your pursuits. Avoid trade or profession which requires fixity.

The Sun is in and also rules the XI House, that of friends and associates, hopes and wishes, plans and projects. You will realize many hopes. Your friendships in many instances will be firm, and will help you.

Saturn is in your XI House. This indicates some faithful and reliable friends, but some trouble through friends is denoted. You will have friends among the elderly, those considerably older than yourself. You will have some disappointments in your friendships.

Mercury rules your XII House, and is in the XII. You are much interested in the occult, and in mystical matters, both the spiritual and the physical. You have ability for investigating spiritualism and occultism but you should avoid becoming engrossed in such things, particularly not in the phenomenal aspects.

The majority of the planets are in Airy signs. This give you an inspirational and artistic temperament. You can live much more in the mind than in the senses. You may love sensuous pleasures, but you abhor all things sensual. You have good intellectual ability but it is the artistic that appeals to you more than the scientific, unless it is the philosophically intellectual aspect of science.

The majority of the planets were in mutable signs at your birth. You are versatile, and at times, indecisive, not sufficiently determined.

Uranus rising at the time of your birth, especially in the first house, marks you as one quite out of the common, for Uranus is the planet of originality, invention, often of genius. It will at times cause you to be considered peculiar and eccentric. This position has much to do with your love of the mystical, and it also gives you ability for astrology and metaphysical subjects. You love the wonderful and the profound. Some romance will come into your life, or some sudden and unexpected change either a reversal of fortune or unexpected gain.

Reminiscences of HPL


(The speaker has edited the transcript, and with thanks for the privilege of doing so. The remarks were made impromptu, after having studied or prepared. The speaker was at once dredging his memory and responding to a most friendly audience. This does not make for good delivery, good arrangement. The flaws, for which there is no apology offered, are glaring when blazed up from the typed transcript. It was otherwise at the convention—we were having fun! Yet I know better than ever why many speakers object to having tape recorders at work, especially when one is free-wheeling, instead of presenting a formal address. - E.H.P.)

"I remember HPL that afternoon in New Orleans, near 40 years ago. He was lean, slightly stooped, long-legged. He spoke as though he had a dictionary lodged in his speaking-gear. He sounded artificial in his choice of words. He seemed shy, operating under tension. There was a jerkiness of speech. But before we had walked all the way from the Lafayette Hotel down into the Vieux Carre, where my studio was, his choice of words and his mode of speaking became entirely natural - I'd become accustomed to it. His archaic loyal-subject-of-King-George-IV diction seemed to be the only appropriate speech. Once used to him, you would have been distressed if he were speaking to you and I.

The one at 305 Royal Street was the first formal, "fashionable" studio I had ever had. I mean, the first professional work shop, not the corner-of-the-home, set aside by an amateur. There have been rumors to the effect that I entertained HPL in a studio in the red-light district of New Orleans. This is not true. The yankees and other out-of-towners always confuse the old French city with the "district", as the natives termed the whore-house area, several blocks of "cribs". Certainly HPL was not the sort of person one would invite to a studio in a block of hook shops!

Fact is, I was rather twitchy because of the studio party which had been scheduled for that very evening. Until Robert E. Howard wired me, I didn't know that HPL was going to be in town. I heard that he was a blue-nose, a Puritan, and a very unpleasant character. I was ready for the worst. Now I was delighted by the man's charm, which overcame or offset his awkwardness and artificiality of speech, his nervous tensions and shyness. HPL was outreaching, in his own peculiar way. Still, I was wondering what would happen when the "winebibbers and the whoresmongers" assembled at my studio.

I had several barrels of raisin wine, old stuff which had done fermenting at least a week ago — also five or ten cases of homebrewed beer and a couple of five gallon crocks of brew that still fermented. The Vieux Carre's writer and painter set, phonies as well as producers, would drink anything — and did!

(I must interpolate that in addition to shop keepers, restaurant operators, and all others business persons of a town, there were in those days a considerable number of every-day, standard folk like their forebears, had always lived in the "Old City". The Vieux Carre was far more than the habitation of the writer and painter crowd.)
I was wondering whether I should call off the party. I did not want to give Lovecraft a bad case of shock. He was so genuine, so very likeable, so congenial that I wanted to spare his feelings. But, despite my qualms, the party was staged as planned. The Puritan was as much at home with the Vieux Carre crowd as he was in his sedate native Providence. One would have thought that he had spent all his life with wine-bibbers and people addicted to riotous living.

Some say that he was at ease because he drank spiked punch, not realizing that it was spiked. This is error! We never served punch in the Vieux Carre. HPL needed no grog.

The guests gathered about HPL. He held them fascinated. It was beautiful to see how he was charming them. They did not know who he was. He didn't bother to tell them. His presence was enough.

When all the guests had tottered home, I broke out an enormous pot of chilí con carne. It was blistering - it would do anywhere along the Mexican border. He loved it, ate bowl after bowl of the peppery stuff. I promised him that we would make a pot of Indian curry when I visited him in Providence. He stood up as his guest, a year later, to make good my word.

There was another guest, the mad-house keeper, as I whimsically called him - Harry Brobst, intern or psychiatric trainee at a Providence hospital, HPL's good friend and neighbor, for the final five years of HPL's life. Harry was going out to get a six-pack of beer. He wondered whether HPL would object.

HPL said, "Not at all, since it is not in violation of the law of the land, anymore. I have no objection whatsoever."

While Harry was getting the six-pack, I was making the curry, and HPL was sampling it.

"Is it hot enough for you?"

"Ah, a few more spices from Araby and the Indies would help."

So I dumped in more curry powder, and yet more. When it was hot enough to raise blisters on a pack saddle, he said, "It is just about right."

Harry offered him as a matter of courtesy some beer.

"No, no," he said, "Pardon me, but I simply cannot drink the filthy stuff."

"Well, that's all right," Harry said, "Ed and I will drink it."

You should have seen HPL's face - if a man had said, "I'm Count Dracula, nice meeting you," he could never have been so amazed. He looked at Harry - he looked at me. "You mean that you two will drink all that beer?" He couldn't believe us, and then, after we had drunk the six-pack, he still couldn't believe it!

I remember him as the perfect host. I did not realize how little money he had. I'd known he was not getting rich, none of us were. This was 1933. It was not until years later that I knew that he had been busting himself to be hospitable. He decided, for instance, that I should eat in one of those absolutely unpronounceable New England villages - Pottertown, or some such Indian name - famed for its seafood. He ordered the biggest "shore dinner" on the list, with steamed clams and all manner of other marine creatures. As for himself, he considered seafood unfit for human consumption. When all the revolting mess was set out, he spoke. I'd never heard him use such language before. I cannot convey the disdain in his voice: "While you are consuming this God-jammed stuff, I will go next door for a sandwich. You will please excuse me, I trust?" (The "God-jammed" was uttered with a deliberation, a stateliness, a solemnity worthy of a great orator.)

He could not endure the smell of it.

We didn't have the traditional ice-cream orgy. There was a spot - you may have heard of it, and of the 42 different flavors. HPL and a few friends, each ordering a different flavor, and dividing each successive lot among his companions, got as far as 28 kinds, and then called it a day.

HPL was one of my most esteemed, most dear friends. Those who knew Lovecraft were devoted to him. In recent years people in intellectual gatherings have picked him to pieces, psychoanalyzing him. He was a racist, they claim. I think that this is nonsense and not worth the refuting. He was generous minded, and in material things, as generous as his finances allowed, and in fact, extravagant where friends and hospitalities and contributions for good causes were concerned. You astrologers - it is hard to find a group, these days, in which there are no astrologers - might be interested to know that he was a Leo, and he had all the pride, sensitivity, out-reachingness of that sign, all the generosity. He was a dish all of his own, too, with a dark Saturn touch."

(Note by EH: The speaker was cut short by one of those emergencies without which no convention could operate. A jammed schedule, I think, and I had to make way for another speaker who had to speak his piece quickly, to make way for a dinner or luncheon or something which from its nature could not or must not wait. But, while it lasted, we did have fun, though this was for some of us, blended with blin-kings, and checkings-up.)
Stuart Schiff: "Fritz Leiber needs no introduction to any of you, I'm sure, but this multi-gifted man is truly one of the greatest writers of fantasy and science fiction this century has seen. Fritz's possession of multi-Hugo's and Nebulas more than attest to his recognition by the SF&F world. He had a short correspondence with HPL and his fine booklet of poems, Demons of the Upper Air, was written under the Lovecraftian influence. Even though a bit under the weather and having already written reams on HPL, Fritz graciously penned a few words for us. Let's just call it...

A FEW SHOUTS

COMMENTS ON

THE WRITINGS OF HPL

By Fritz Leiber

Lovecraft's juvenalia were quite as indistinguished as most such.

Outside of The Horror in The Museum, his editing-re-writings were a tragic waste of time.

He fumbled around a while with his stories in the Dunsanian vein, his stories involving 18th century tombs, etc.

He hit his stride with The Outsider, Dagon, Pickman's Model, The Music of Erich Zann, The Dreams in the Witch House, The Colour Out of Space, etcetera. It is important to note that most of these stories contain definite SURPRISES and shocks.

But then - to my mind of today, unfortunately - he began to make his stories longer and longer . . . and longer, and also cast them in the form of scientific or scholarly reports. The elements of surprise and shock vanished almost completely. By the end of a few pages, or merely the first paragraph, one knew what the climax was going to be and could merely admire and shiver at the nightmarishly slow approach of that foreknown crisis - rather as in a repeated drug trip.

Think what a thriller The Case of Charles Dexter Ward might have been if it had been kept a mystery up until almost the end just what the pleasant young man was up to! As it stands, we get the gist of the story in the first two pages.

It's at best a guess why this happened. Perhaps Leiber grew in Lovecraft a literary contempt for the "thriller" and its surprises. Perhaps his technical abilities were not up to the tricky problems of the thriller with its "now you see it and now you don't" and its careful management of off-stage characters. Perhaps descriptive details began to proliferate uncontrollably in his mind. In any case, he wrote the stories he could with intense care and utter self-absorption. What more can one ask?
IRA A. COLE AND HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT: A BRIEF FRIENDSHIP

BY R. ALAIN EAVES

In the fateful year 1914, the late Amateur Press enthusiast, Eddie Vasas recruited his most celebrated (both within and without Amateur Journalism) and most extraordinary amateur of lovecraft followers, the 25 year old Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

Although Howard did not start to contribute regularly and did not commence the editing of his own journal that 1914 fall, his friendship with HPL did begin his life-long correspondence with several Amateurs who did remain his close friends for many years — first, Rheinhart Kleiner (1892-1949) of Brooklyn, who in turn introduced HPL to a former cowboy and uneducated plainsman, the man HPL described as "a strange and brilliant character — an utterly illiterate ranchman and ex-cowboy of Western Kansas who possesses a streak of brilliant poetic genius."

This strange individual was Ira A. Cole, the first in a long line of unsung poets that the lucubratory Lovecraft was to patronize — through teaching them grammar, enlarging their vocabulary and revising their poetic phrases. However, Ira A. Cole was the most amazing and the most exciting of his contemporaries, despite the horrid period between the beginning of 1915 until late 1918, when HPL replaced the absent Cole with his genius protege, Alfred M. Galpin, Cole made up one-fourth of the first of several literary coteries so dear to his heart — the famed KLEICONOLO with its round-robin epistles.

Ira Albert Cole was born on the last day of Aug- uste, 1885, in Burt County, Nebraska. At three, his family moved into a roomed cabin. This period of the West was truly Wild and cowboys were very much in existence — indeed, Cole was born four years after Jesse James (whom his mother — who knew well — was a fan of) was killed in a gunfight at the O.K. Corral, and four years later, the infamous Doc Holliday died of T.B. in Colorado. From the Cole homestead, the young Ira recalls that he could not even see their closest neighbour — simply the vast and endless expanse of the beautiful plains that became so much a part of the young boy's poetic soul. Ira went right to school, perhaps only one or two months a year during winter. His first mentor was Nature, and for the small boy, Nature was his whole world. At the age of four, his uncle taught him to herd the family cattle; and at age seven, Ira was herding the cattle by himself, astride a horse. At age 14, the boy, Ira, was herding the cattle by himself the whole year around. Since his childhood, Ira was precocious when it came to writing and making up stories, and while still quite young, he composed a short adventure tale of three chapters entitled Trip Across the Tropics. During his adolescence, Ira worked hard and of ten as a cowboy ranging the plains of the mid-West. He took a large herd of cattle from Kansas to Texas and about 1903, he purchased a farm at Bazine, Kansas. Two years later, he married a well-educated young girl of 16 from the East, named Myra Burnett. Ira and Myra Cole became very well-known in Aijay, both of them writers who contributed frequently, and both corresponded with Lovecraft. Myra was a poet, writer and a talented musician, and in order to find an outlet for their common interests, they joined, about 1913, the Kansas Poets Association. Ira became friendly with several Amateur writers, among them Prof. Hoe who wrote to Howard Lovecraft about the talents of this plainsman and farmer. Howard P. Lovecraft because Ira Cole's mentor and his maitre. He taught Cole how to write poetry correctly, and he sent Cole many books on poetry and English grammar — books inscribed to Ira Cole, "Con- gential Cole, the Plainsman," their friendship be- tween the two began well, and the exchange of KLEICONOLO letters proceeded at a furious pace. Cole wrote to Prof. Hoe, and Ira, to Kleiner, to HPL, and HPL to

To one who sits by broad Atlantic's shore, L'er weaving wondrous songs of ancient lore, And seeing em'ry lute the music swell, Some god upon the sun kissed billows rise, To Lovecraft, gentles of the poet train, My feeble Muse would wake this faint'ring strain. Some of the Muse didst ever hear? When still Of a city oiden buried near the swell Of that broad ocean rolling evermore In endless billows by thy chamber door? Did never hear some voice, some love divine, Tell that the beauty of that land bewail In song or rhymed verse, or o'en the lay Of some lone bard who sat at close of day.
With nought but his sweet lute for recompense
In plaintive accents, loit'ring by the fence
That bounds the Barrow's noble domain,
To gain an evening's song the strain.
Or slumbering soft beneath the pallid ray
Of some far wand'ring star whose distant way
Through Heaven's deepening void, ere breaks the dawn,
Leads thy fair soul on.
As down some living aisle of golden light,
To feel the rustle of the winged flight
Of radiant dreams, creations of thine own
Imaginings from Fancy's garden flown,
That singing to the music of thy soul
Diust lead thee forth to that enlightning goal
Whence flows all wisdom and all pulsing song.
The throne Hommosyne's nymphs have graced so long.
To list the plaintive melody thy heart
In rapturous union with thy art
Diust sing, and singing to thy vision drew
Fair pictures in the far off mystic blue.
Wherever ocean's soft and purlsed lips,
The maiden love of low arched heaven sips.
And waking then hast to thy window flown
To make that blissful dreaming all thy own,
Else in the too real dawning of the day
Thy soul's bright myth might wing itself away?
And hast thou loitered long thy casement by,
In sorrow, but to see the stars fly
As from the mighty flood of ocean rose,
In fiery splendor, where the planet bows
To meet the other kiss of radiant space.
Thou of day? And hast thy face
Like other bards, and wert to see thy dream
Fade vanishing adown the golden stream.
Where flows the ceaseless shadows of the years,
Forever lost as are so many tears.
And mourned that that fair land a myth should be
Whose very shade escaped by waking thee?
Oh my beloved friend in thy pure heart
Let not base envy at my singing start,
If then my rhyming seemeth to be fair,
For I would sing a rhyme that few would dare
The virgin whiteness of a page to mar
By its recording. But we mortals are
By Nature's wondrous spirit so devised
That each one by the other is despised
Unless by happy chance our actions prove
The gods would lift us from the common grove;
And then our follows of a kindred mind
Full oft with our frail efforts error find,
And finding, in a fit of fiendish gleam,
Expose our weakness to the gaping country,
But thou dost know, my learned and gifted friend,
No Muse of mine with thine might well contend.
By my claim herein to greatness lies
The gods did not my humble and despised
But granted me a vision to see
Which I in turn will humbly show to thee,
If thou wilt deign my feeble song to bless,
By no comparison in
With that which thy pure soul has sung so long.
I am persuaded thou thy Muse wouldst wrong
In such a vain attempt, and not to try
But just to let its rustic beauty lie,
If then indeed there ought of beauty be,
Would seem the fairer course to thou and me.
Full oft in youth's young day thou hast I ween
Been tempted by the gay and glit'ring sheen
Of bright hallucinations, subtly wrought
By thy too eager inspiration. Naught
Thy sober reason said had any weight,
And all day long in blissful dreams thou sate,
In doubt thy wondrous heritage to test
Yet lingering that sweet offering to wrost
From the purloining hand of happy Fate,
Erstwhile's unalterable voice relate
Thy soul's demise. And yet the sinking sun
Hast found thy self-appointed task undone,
Because thy doubting intellect did drag
From Cymon's crucified soul thy slag
Thou couldst not then fair Nature's course pursue
And follow her sweet shades the morning through,
But e'en must to Convention's dismal Baal
Make sacrifice of all those beings frail
Your poet's soul in dream was parent too,
All though to such course you well might rue.
I, too, oh bard, have felt the blighting curse
Of those false precepts on my humble verse.
Full oft when my loosed soul in song would rise
Convention's icy frost to pierce the lilies,
And grov'ling, down my wounded Muse doth sink
The cup of degradation vile to drink.
For in this age the humbliest bard must sing
To her accompaniment or the string
Of public ridicule his lay will doom,
And voiceless through the deep and fetid gloom
Of yet un-numbered years it o'ern must go
Alown the shores of time o'er it may know
The full sweet echo of its vibrant voice.
But still to me it seems the better choice
When I to thee would sing to tune my lute
With that soft chord which has so long been mute,
And singing wake the plaintive melody
Contemporaneous bards may well decry.
For what is the profit, friend, were I to gain
The world's loud praise and cause thy spirit pain?
Then let the world today no notice take
While at the fount of song our thirst we slake.
For yet in some fair mossy mountain gleam
When Tim's sweet shade shall ascend the heaven
Whose craven voices now the Muse assail
Shall some fair minstrel our lot bewail
To sobbing multitudes, then shall we know
The rapture that the lily shall know
To ancient bards imparted, and our ghosts
From far off western isles, with happy hosts
Of Nature's disembodied spirit folk
On that fair lute to song a blissful strain will invoke...
But I would sing, oh friend, not of our verse
Nor yet of that base crowd with thoughts adverse
To all of beauty that therein doth lie,
But let me sing in sorrow, o'er beset
Great thoughts, the fruit of my much dreaming,
So should generations yet unborn but know
The secret of their birth, a pathway bright
From hidden things, shall lead them to the light
Of that eternal and unending morn
Whose matins yet doth linger in the horn
Futurity's snail-crossing gods stani guard above.
The cloud's of morning softly bared
The eastern heaven's rosy-lighted main,
The breath of summer toying with the Vane
But lightly stirred their folds. Behind the wave
Of ocean's breast the fair faces of the country,
To one who lingered on the pebbly shore,
Bright visions and the happy days of yore,
Er'd yet the seed of avarice had grown
From Adam's hand, and the wind was blown
On which the sons of his doomed race should feed
To their great sorrow; and the deadly weed
Of discontent the earth had over-run,
Seemed yet shap'd by loving hands to begin.
Long, long he loitered there and softly dreamt
- So long the timid mew about him screamed,
Nor guessed him thing of life but ever flew
In shortning circles then, and nearer drew,
And nearer; still his deep eye seaward gazed
As though some mighty scene his senses dazed
By its great beauty, and his raptured mind
Was loath in other sights repose to find.
Approaching then I heard him softly sigh
As if some deep set sorrow burning low,
Like hidden fires lest beneath the snow
Of aged mountains, though well hid away,
Yet on his soul's vast vitals still did prey.
I paused before him there, and strangely cowed
By his wild god-like beauty, humbly bowed
And questioned what the grief might be so strange
In that fair picture thus to disarrange
One's inner feeling. Slow his sad eye turned,
As if to hide the pain that in him burned.
"Friend!" cried he, "in my deepness wildly wild
To palpitating music as he spoke.
"Wouldst thou behold a wonder, look afar
Where you unrisen sun's bright ringlets are, 
And tell me what thou seest." Quick I looked, 
So beautiful the scene my flaxen brook'd 
In exaltation no delaying, and 
In exultation wild, I raised my hand 
From its bright radiance my face to shield 
While backward my mailed being recoiled, 
As if unable to behold the sight 
That rose in wondrous beauty to delight 
The vision. Far, where Ocean's mighty flood 
In white-capped waves against pale heaven stood, 
There rose, from out the lap of morning wide, 
In mighty volume, rolling o'er the tide 
To meet the fleeting shadows of the dawn, 
A pageant grand of wondrous cloud shapes, drawn 
By plunging creations of the rolling deep. 
A goblin rout such as cometh in our sleep 
From out the mystic land of phantasy - 
When Shades that guard our too deep sleeping flee, 
But clothed in so bright a garments I ween 
By mortal eye no fairer sight was seen. 
Awe struck, I stood my mystic comrade by 
And watched the shining vapors drawing nigh 
Nor sensed the slightest sight of crimson fear, 
But deep within my heart a wailing cheer 
As one who drinketh deep of aged wine 
Which long in some old castle's vaulted mine 
Hath lain, to steal from grayness' time 
That soft delight which wets such the pious pray. 
Flowed pulsed forth, and starting in wild song 
I plunged into the flood to meet the throng 
And pluming felt not Ocean's briny kiss 
But upward borne me spirit so dull. 
To greet the Nerine train, whose foremost car, 
Like some old monarch's chariot of war, 
With foaming dolphin steeds had now drawn near. 
We may not measure life by hour or year, 
Oh friend, with any actuality, 
For Time is but a shade that seems to be 
And not the vibrant force we reckon it. 
Eternity will roll with him time 
And yet of life we shall not then have proved 
By its accomplishments o'er had moved. 
A sovereign thing endowed with liberty. 
Through that dim region is not I ween 
We sleep and what of time! If we dream not 
I am persuaded it has moved no jot. 
Insensate time! And dost thou ever sleep? 
Oh fie! And where wast thou when I did leap 
To meet the vanguard of that sea-born dream? 
Perchance in thy slow-flowing turbid stream, 
By ever changing cycles slowly made. 
Some interstice of soul's ambitious shade 
Ebullished, and while thy ceaseless flood moved on, 
With that fair spirit train into the dawn 
Of vast futurity its shadow rode. 
Albeit, Time, today I feel thy goad 
Of vanished years, thou canst not me condemn 
For life beyond the tide we mortals stem. 
To gain the pensive pleasures of thy span 
Of misery laden hours. Woe waits the man 
Whose life bereft of dreams doth madly plunge 
To meet oblivion in thy deep sponge 
Whose fatal pores drink ever up the tide 
Of senseless souls, who seek life's barque to guide 
By thy unreal realities. Not so guilt 
That daring adventurer who would go, 
As I, between thy carnalized links 
To that fair shore whose heaven born beauty shrinks 
To nothingness the thought of thing. 
The lowly Algae its long tendrils twin 
In wild luxuriance around a stone 
Where far Sargasso's tepid billows groan, 
The eerie gulf from vagrant way 
Or o'er the white-capped waves in millions fly, 
The slimey shrimps, the graceful fur-clad seal, 
Or e'en the fabled braken softly steal 
From out the humia wastes thou guid it round, 
And over on its mossy groves's tops are found 
Unnumbered bones, old ocean's ghastly gift, 
Spoil of wrecked mariners whose spirits drift 
From care of their base bodies free
Coly Wilson

(Ed. Note: Lovecraft fans know this excellent and prolific British author by his THE MIND PARASITES (Arkham House 1967) and THE PHILOSOpherS STONE (Crown 1971) and some may (and more should) be familiar with his non-HPL material. Mr. Wilson was kind enough to send us the manuscript for his new book ORDER OF ASSASSINS, which will be appearing in the near future. It is an intriguing final volume of his "murder trilogy," this one concentrating on recent mass murderers and revealing the truth on every page. Certain parts related to HPL and consequently we reproduce below portions of:

ORDER OF ASSASSINS

Readers who admire the macabre writings of H.P. Lovecraft may be reminded of a passage in his best known story, The Call of Cthulhu, as it is Chief of the "ancient old ones", monstrous creatures who once inhabited the earth, but who destroyed their civilisation through the practice of black magic; Cthulhu lies in a trance at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, but the time for his return is approaching, and artists all over the world have horrifying dreams of great alien cities. And a professor who suspects what is going on has collected press cuttings that reveal the eruption of strange psychic influences:

"Here was a nocturnal suicide in London, where a lone sleeper had leaped from a window after a shocking cry. Here likewise a rambling letter to the editor of a paper in South America, where a fanatic deduces a dire future from visions he has seen. A dispatch from California describes a theosophist colony as donning white robes en masse for some "glorious fulfillment" which never arrives, whilst items from India speak guardedly of serious native unrest toward the end of March. Voodoo orgies multiply in Haiti, and African outposts report ominous mutterings. American officers in the Philippines find certain tribes bothersome about this time, and New York policemen are mobbed by hysterical Levantines on the night of March 22-23. The west of Ireland, too, is full of wild rumour and legend, and a fantastic painter named Ardis-Bonnot hangs a blasphemous Dream Landscape in the Paris spring salon of 1926. And so numerous are the recorded troubles in insane asylums that only a miracle can have stopped the medical fraternity from noting strange parallelisms." One feels that if this had been written in 1971 instead of 1928, Lovecraft might have added the Manson murders, the killing of the Otha family, Dean Baker's cannibalism, the Zodiac killer.

The literary parallel is more significant than it appears on the surface. Lovecraft's work is far more
than grotesque escapism. When he talks about a "blasphemous" dream landscape, he does not mean that it contains indecent mockery of the Christian religion, but something horrible, frightening, nauseating, something that makes the lixe of modern symbolist paintings of Hieronymus Bosch. His work is romanticism gone sour and bitter; instead of turning away, like Shelley and Keats, to visionary dream-worlds, he creates the nightmares that have haunted the stream of modern western civilisation. He is fond of the word "loathing", with its suggestion of revulsion from something slimy and slug-like. He writes in one letter of "blasphemous" atrocities that have taken place, "by the thousands of Jewish men, women and children,..." and in another of his "mad physical loathing" of the semitic types who jam the New York subway, and says that he has come to loathe the sights of Asiatic New York, with its "slug-like" democracy. But the feel is reminiscent of certain passages about Jews in Mein Kampf. But it would be a mistake to label Lovecraft - or Hitler - a cranky racist. The hatred and lurid romanticism, a frustrated appetite for beauty (in the case of Hitler, the anti-Semitism originated in Vienna in the years when he was an unsuccessful young artist living in doss houses) is "love showing its roots in deepest hell" again. ....Nazism must be seen as an idealistic revolt against the aspects of the modern world that Lovecraft also hated: the materialism and cultural debasement. Lovecraft's "loathing" expressed itself in visions of a remote and nightmarish past in his excursions into our modern world; Hitler's, in Buchenwald and Belsen. Hitler once remarked (to Hermann Rauschning) that although he did not greatly enjoy Goethe, he had read him; and he could quote him: "He who began action." "To desire and act not breeds a pestilence" said William Blake, expressing the same idea. Hitler desired and acted; Lovecraft desired and acted. Unconsciously we understand the spirit of his writing, with its "blasphemous" horrors and monstrosities, we also understand something important about Norman John Collins and the Zodiac killer and Chaos of Hansen and Pablo Escobar. The basis for it of Lovecraft's writing is the basic spirit of Sade's. There is a desire to shock, to shake his fist in the face of modern civilisation. And the use of horror is central to his aim. In fact, as I have pointed out elsewhere, many of Lovecraft's stories could be regarded as science fiction rather than horror stories. Great underground cities built a million years ago, creatures from outer space, these themes are not necessarily horrifying. Lovecraft preferred to treat them in the context of horror because the horror story expresses aggressions, and science fiction doesn't. In a story called "The Unwilling" the narrator, a writer of horror stories, mentions that half his stories had appeared in a magazine in 1922, but that many shops "took the magazine off their stands at the complaints of silly milkshakes". In fact, something of the sort happened, in 1924, but the story that caused the furor was not by Lovecraft, but by C.M. Eddy, and The Loved Dead caused WEIRD TALES to be attacked for obscenity rather than frightening the milkshakers. Lovecraft himself was too much a puritan ever to allow a sexual element to intrude into his stories. Perhaps the nearest he comes to it is a story called The Picture in the House, which describes an old man who has become increasingly fascinated by a book on cannibalism, full of gruesome pictures. 'That feller bein' chopped up gives me a tickle every time I look at 'im - I hev to keep lookin' at 'im - see what the butcher cut off of his feet?' Lovecraft actually uses the word "perversion" to describe the old man's obsession. When drops of blood begin to fall on the book the narrator notices a red stain spreading across the ceiling... The horror of Lovecraft's writing is that he has taken on the job of confronting modern people with the nightmares of the past, and that he has been able to do so in a way that is both (a) entertaining, and (b) genuinely disturbing. His work is enjoying an unexpected revival; like Borges (a writer to whom he is closely related in spirit) he has become a cult among the young. Papers about his weird tales can be found on every seaside bookstall. There is even a pop group that calls itself "H.P. Lovecraft" by way of homage. What makes the appeal is not the gothic machinery of the horror tale; otherwise there would be a similar revival of all those old writers of WEIRD TALES - Wm. Hope Hodgson, Robert W. Chambers, Zealia Bishop, Clark Ashton Smith, Lovecraft, the revolt against civilisation, the feeling that the material success by which the modern world justifies itself is the shallowest of all standards, and that it's a crime to make a cult of a type of man - like Nietzsche, he felt that democracy is the rise of botchers and bunglers and mediocrity against the superior type of man. He was not a logical philosopher; he did not ask himself what he would like to put in its place; he only knew that he hated the impersonal rush and hurry of the modern city, and all the standards and values of "industrial man".... In 1924 he wrote to Edwin Baird: "My daily life is a sort of existence - I seem quite capable of not loving, of doing nothing to please anyone, of playing all day, and forming no attachments or of virtually or vice... I am not of the world, but an amused and sometimes disgusted spectator to it. I detest the human race and its pretences and swinishnesses - to me life is a fine art, and although I believe the universe is an automatic meaningless chaos devoid of ultimate values or distinctions of right and wrong, I consider it most artistic to take into account the emotional heritage we our civilisation and follow the patterns which produce the least pain to delicate sensibilities..." But in another letter, written at about the same time, he says: "Books are very much the same now as they were in the middle ages, except that we have read, have read, the classics we have read, have even a hundredth of the joy of Greece and Rome which comes to the millionaire whose car and yacht enable him to linger indefinitely through all five senses the glory which we are never likely to know save through the dense filter of the visual imagination."

It is important to ask: why does he feel so alienated? Is it his own fault, or the fault of the society itself? Lovecraft felt that there is something rotten about the whole trend of modern civilisation, and that it is this that forces people like himself into a position of out-lienaries and rebels.

Things are no worse now than they were in Lovecraft's day, or, for that matter, in the days of the "dark satanic mills" of more than a century ago, on the contrary, they have improved. They are more freedom, more leisure, better education, more public subsidy of the arts. But the increased freedom has also increased the number of rebels and misfits. Blake, Nietzsche, and Lovecraft were all "outsiders" (one of Lovecraft's best stories is called The Outsider), solitary rebels in an alien society. As the population increases, and as illiteracy becomes the exception rather than the rule, more and more people come to share their view. Inevitably, it finds its way into action...
The year was nineteen thirty-three and the country was in the throes of a depression. In a small Pennsylvania town, a young man, just out of high school, had become bitten with the publishing bug. His name was Bill Crawford - William L., in full.

Crawford's first project was a fantasy magazine. The trials and tribulations involved in its launching have no bearing on this article. However, its publication brought Crawford into close association with a number of fantasy and science fiction writers - via the U.S. mail. One of these was H. P. Lovecraft. Despite the fact that Crawford was not particularly interested in the weird tale, Lovecraft became a regular correspondent. During the course of their letter writing, Crawford mentioned his hopes of eventually publishing a line of hard-backed books. From this it was only a hop, skip and agony to the publication of THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH.

As with everything else Crawford did at this time, there was very little money available for the project, so Crawford did most of the work himself. However, the linotyping for the book was done in a newspaper plant in a neighboring town. (In 1935 one could get an entire galley of type set for little more than the present cost of one line!) The paper was purchased from Sabin Robbins Paper Co. in Philadelphia and the actual printing was done by Crawford on a ten by fifteen inch press. (Quite an improvement over his first 7" x 11" hand press however). No book binders were available in the small town and Crawford knew of nowhere else. A friend who worked for a local newspaper plant showed him a few of the tricks of binding a hardcover book. Presumably, under the circumstances, the binding was inadequate, but it has always been something Crawford disliked, since he had hoped that his books would be professional looking.

He and HPL had discussed the publication of other books; in fact, Crawford had wished to start the series with AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS, but because Lovecraft felt that THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH was a more literary effort, he held out for the Innsmouth novel first with the other story to follow.

After SHADOW another book was published by young Crawford. It was not fantasy but something Crawford felt would make money, probably because he was intrigued personally by the subject. It laid a big fat egg, because after it was printed Crawford did not know what to do with it. SHADOW did sell perhaps a hundred or so copies. Of the odd four hundred copies printed, about half were left in the attic of Crawford's home when he left there shortly afterward. Crawford eventually ended up in California and never returned to Pennsylvania. Consequently, all of the unbound sheets of HPL's book and all the many letters he had received from Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith and August Derleth about the book and many other things have been forever lost.

Crawford is presently getting back into fantasy book publishing with Emil Petaja's STAR DRIFT and Henry M. Eichner's ATLANTEAN CHRONICLES. He has also scheduled Andre Norton's CARAN THE ETERNAL and Petaja's GLORY STONE. In addition, he is struggling with the publication of WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY - a magazine he had hoped would become a successor to WEIRD TALES.

(Ed. Note: Mr. Crawford's company is Fantasy Publishing Company, Inc., 1855 West Main Street, Alhambra, Calif. 91801. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope for a listing of available publications in the fantasy and science fiction fields. They are most reasonably priced.)
BIOGRAPHIC NOTES ON LOVECRAFT

By George T. Wetzel

About March, 1958 I visited Providence, R.I. to do Lovecraft research in the John Hay Collection of Brown University and to view that part of his life and writings connected with his Library and Writings. In the Library at Brown University I perused many Lovecraft manuscripts, including a number of interesting letters which chronologically should be in both SELECTED LETTERS and II but are not, and I read also the unpublished thesis by James Warren Thomas (1950) on Lovecraft which I understood Derleth refused to allow to be printed (I myself having even asked for its use in my then Lovecraft Collectors Library). This thesis has some false conclusions (e.g., that HPL sensitively concealed the fact he wore glasses; but I had previously viewed in some amateur press publications several photos of him wearing them in the 1920s which I gave Derleth who used one of them in THE SHUTTERED ROOM).

But the Thomas thesis was invaluable as it quoted from ms letters of HPL in the Library, giving among other things a 1924 letter's contents in which HPL disclosed that the original of the Shunned House was the Babbit house on Benefit Street. That very day I engaged in some fast detective work to establish the whereabouts of the real Shunned House. (I give fragmentary bits of sleuthing from some recently discovered notes, having once written up a complete account for Derleth which he never returned or published though he promised to in THE SHUTTERED ROOM.)

Apparently I checked a reference that the "Babbit" house was listed in a local Providence Historical Society's files and that Babbit had been a Civil War officer. I next found a note "1890 Providence City Directory" and following it "#135 Benefit Street."

The next day I accompanied Miss Dorothy Walters, an elderly lady corresponded with who knew HPL personally; and she showed me many scenes connected with him. When I told her I thought #135 Benefit Street was the real, original "Shunned House", she added it was called by local antiquarians as the "Stephen Harris" house. In Lovecraft's story he develops a lengthy, almost tedious genealogy of the occupants of that house, including a Harris family who were the first tenants and victims. Miss Walters also told me that the present day tenant, Mrs. Sara Bullock, "had a lot of French books in the house." Compare this to the story wherein some of the victims shouted French in their delirium and the story's vampire had been a Frenchman.

Across the street from #135 was St. John's graveyard from which vantage point I photographed the "Shunned House" (which picture appears in THE SHUTTERED ROOM, but minus any credit to me.)

As we walked there, Miss Walters added that W. Paul Cook once told her that where we stood - St. John's Graveyard - was the site where Lovecraft scared some friends one evening by telling them a blood curdling ghost story. I looked at a tree growing out of a hillside tomb there and at once thought it was the inspiration, tomb, tree and incident, of The Unnamable. This photograph I also snapped which appeared in THE SHUTTERED ROOM sans credit.

Miss Walters then walked me to the Barnes St. home of Lovecraft and thence to his last home at #66 College Street. (I don't recall if we entered or not but I took an outside photograph which is in THE SHUTTERED ROOM.)

The tenants who had just moved out of #66 told her of the marvelous sunsets they witnessed from what once was HPL's study window (one has only to read some of HPL's letters in SELECTED LETTERS to know of his preference for beautiful sunsets.)

She further remarked of an artist colony at #7 Thomas Street, the Fleur de Lys building, which she thought the source of The Music of Erich Zann. The original church of The Haunter of the Dark she was not familiar with but said that Mr. Eddy knew of it. A suggestion to visit HPL's grave at Swann Point cemetery I turned down due to lack of time.

On my way back to my YMCA room I passed Weybesset Street, and above me on the cornice of a building in the gothic style I spied several gargoyles leaning over, watching me, which I snapped and sent to Derleth who never used it. These gargoyles reminded me of the line from The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath: '...a curious face peering over it as a gargoyle peers over a parapet of Notre Dame.'

This Providence antique which I felt inspired HPL was at #60 Weybesset Street, between Claverish and Foster Streets.

I forgot that when I first met Miss Walters that day at her rented room she told me a number of other things including: Miss Gamwell, Lovecraft's aunt who was once librarian of the Shapley collection, took her meals at a boarding house across from #66 College.
St.; HPL took his own elsewhere. Miss Gamwell and HPL lived separate lives. She was robust, good-humored, and made conversation easily with others; sometimes she was out of patience with her two sisters in their overprotective attitude toward HPL.

She related that Miss Frances Leonard (a niece of HPL's mother) received from Mrs. Lovecraft when she was 10 years old—in 1917—a doll that Lovecraft had played with as a child.

As I was to return to Baltimore the next day, I view Dr. Leet. With Leet's briefing. He explained that when he was called in to attend HPL medically he found the latter sitting in a tub of water which Lovecraft had discovered eased the pain of his stomach cancer.

Removed to the hospital, HPL spent his time writing which Dr. Leet assumed was notes for a story, having heard only that HPL was a "writer". Later Dr. Leet became aware that those notes were HPL's scientific observations on his symptoms. (Where are those notes today?)

Though Dr. Leet said HPL had a soft tenor voice which he characterized as "sweet", he quickly added that HPL was not "sissy", Samuel Loveman in "Lovecraft as a Conversationalist" in FRESCO, Spring, 1958, said of HPL, "The texture of his voice was uncomfortably high."

Edward Lucas White, author of LUNKUNDOO AND OTHER STORIES, once said most of his stories were lifted from migraine-induced nightmares. To my knowledge, no one has ever advanced the idea that Lovecraft's fantasies may have been due also to migraine. I read in SELECTED LETTERS I that in December, 1919 and May, 1920, Lovecraft had two nightmarish dreams and awoke with a terrible headache in both cases; one of these dreams became The Statement of Randolph Carter.

Typical migraine headaches awake the sufferer from a sound sleep; and in E.L. White's case also produced nightmares. Lovecraft did possess some of the characteristics of the migraine personality type: he was a perfectionist and above average in intelligence. Excessive sensitivity to external stimuli is another trait. Some migraine sufferers have an acute sense of smell. Lovecraft's sensitivity to cold is a possible trait where he is concerned. (In migraine attacks there is a drop in body temperature and a feeling of coldness or indisposition to cold.)

Lovecraft's writing habits have been touched upon by Derleth. I found some additional facts. John T. Dunn, acquainted with HPL in the amateur press association in Providence in the 1920s, wrote me in January of 1954 that Lovecraft "...told me that he would think of a piece to write and he would stay up to finish it even if it took until six in the morning. He had an income and he did not have to get up as we did to go to work. I could always tell when his letters were written—if they were typewritten, I knew they were done in the daytime; if they were hand-written, they were written at night. He did not wish to disturb others with his typing.

Because of the subtleties in HPL's stories plus the fact that in many he hints and never fully reveals the central horror even at the end, I found it helpful in analysis to use the unusual procedure of reading backwards, paragraph by paragraph from the story's end. In a rather lengthy article on the mechanics of writing, Literary Composition, in the UNI-MATHEUR January, 1929, Lovecraft wrote, "The following brief quotation from him entirely justifies the above method of analysis used by me:

The end of a story must be stronger rather than weaker than the beginning, since it is the end and which contains the denouement or culmination, and which will leave the strongest impression upon the reader. It would not be amiss for the novice to write the last paragraph of his story first, once a synopsis of the plot has been carefully prepared— as it always should be. In this way he will be able to concentrate his freshest mental vitality upon the most important part of his narrative, and if any changes be later found needful, they can be easily made.

The following anecdote by George Macauley, an old HPL friend, in An And From Far Hills in his own AJ, 0-WASH-TA-NONG (date?) after HPL's death, tells its own story. The paper cutter mentioned herein obviously had been sold by Crawford, the Pennsylvanian who printed the book, THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH:

Last spring we ordered a paper-cutter, to augment the Mayhew Press, from a Jackson, Michigan jobber in used printing equipment. After a letter, a letter and tracers notwithstanding, it arrived having come down from the Pennsylvanian hills, over a logging or some other slow time railroad to the Pennsylvania system, then to us. Our consternation was keen, when we found that all the bolts, and small parts were missing. More letters, more frantic, for the cutter was piling up, but it was not for a couple of weeks that the large box came with the missing parts.

We had seen them out, and the machine together, but it was noble who discovered the reason for writing this, and the reason for taking away all our ruffled feelings about the vexarious delays caused. The small parts were packed in proof sheets of THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH and were corrected in those unmistakable hieroglyphics made only by the remarkable pen of Howard P. Lovecraft.

* * * *

Did HPL really have a blind spot where music was concerned? In a letter written in November, 1930 he said so himself. On the other hand two letters I saw in the John Hay collection written by him in August, 1922 and September, 1925 appear to contradict this.

I communicated my discoveries to Alfred Galpin in 1958 who since wrote a memoir of his own views regarding this, telling of HPL's interest in a Chopin nocturne and Wagner's Act III prelude from Lohengrin, presumably in the early 1920s.

In that September, 1925 letter I read HPL had just seen 'Ring' and was overwhelmed by the film, "Siegfried" with its grandiose plot. To him the Wagnerian creations were the second greatest artistic monument to the Nordic race, the Gothic cathedral being the greatest. He added that the bass music in Das Rheingold might inspire a demonic tale.

Wagner did things on a grandiose scale; his music is massive, organ-like chords, his orchestra is gigantic, the Ring Operas are based on the tremendous Mythos of the Nordic region. Lovecraft's prose' conceptions also tended toward a gran-
diocese scale; e.g., The Call of Cthulhu is a record of world-wide phenomena and time-spinning; At the Mountains of Madness is spatially cosmic, galactic and across vigintillions of years.

My conclusions: it was the Wagnerian grandeur of style that attracted him. Instead of growth by music appreciation, HPL's interest atrophied.

* * * *

In the UNITED AMATEUR for March, 1918 appeared a minute, unsigned biography, Lewis Theobald, Jr. (a Lovecraft alias). As it is of associational interest, an abridgement of it follows:

"...Mr. Theobald...is a scholar and poet of considerable attainments, and was born a little over 35 years ago in Blavet, France, where his parents were living at the time. When Mr. Theobald was 10 years of age the family returned to England.... Mr. Theobald...claims an even closer connection with English letters...and says...the Lewis Theobald mentioned in Pope's "Dunciad" was his great-grandmother's uncle. Several years ago Mr. Theobald came to America and acted until quite recently as third assistant librarian of the Providence Public Library, where Mr. Lovecraft first made his acquaintance.

* * * *

In the novel, At the Mountains of Madness, are repeated references to paintings of Central Asian mountains of N. Reerich. HPL often frequented the New York Museum, which museum (according to Richard Hare in ARTS AND ARTISTS OF RUSSIA) had over a thousand of Reerich's paintings, which Hare scathingly described as "a plethora of bare rocks, cardboard mountains and dreamlike clouds."

In this novel there is a "Stygian sunless sea that lurks at earth's bowels". One sees not only the influence of Poe's Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym but also Hs Pounds in a Bottle with its spectacle of Polar seas pouring through a hole in the Arctic into the bowels of the earth.

The novel itself has several unmistakable internal signs of not being a polished or finished draft. There is in the middle section an excessive repetition of certain dark words that might have been replaced with synonyms. The other flaw is the numerous references to Reerich's mountain landscapes which revision either would have eliminated or made more varied.

* * * *

A large body of Lovecraft's articles, poetry and a number of his stories first appeared in old amateur press publications of the late 1900s and early 1910s without copyright. I personally saw this state of affairs as early as 1946 in various library collections, beside even now possessing a number myself of these uncopyrighted HPL items in AJs.

In addition, there are something like a dozen aliases Lovecraft had used to sign a number of these AJ items. Both points - the first, non-copyrighted appearance of his works (placing them in the public domain) and second, items reputedly his but under other names (aliases, if you will) - places the whole question of just who can legally lay claim to a part of Lovecraft's literary estate. In view of a number of occurrences over the years it is a question that might well be raised and settled from the viewpoint of the Lovecraft scholar.

* * * *

Citadel of magic the Druids know,
Necal of darkness, black sinister vortex
Of unseen forces, evil and complex.
Menhirs, stained with red no rains can erase,
Look on phantom scenes no years can efface -
Idritch rites where some human sacrifice
Captures monstrous demons - and monber vice
Holds sway once more beneath the spectral blue.

- Walter Shedlofsky
H.P. Lovecraft was not a film buff. In the first place, he could ill afford to attend many movies, although the prices were very cheap by today's standards, and he railed against the commercialism of films, with their artistic compromises and their studio-imposed, and frequently illogical "happy endings." He made little mention of actors, although they give face, color and music to a scripter's abstractions. Almost always, whenever he saw a historical film, he could find errors in the architecture, costumes and other such details. Yet I noted from his letters that whenever he visited New York and Frank Belknap Long would "drag" him to a round of films, he could always find at least one to give grudging praise.

For instance, although the Victorian era was a period he detested and he disliked the sentimentality of the Louisa M. Alcott novel, he thought the first filming of Little Women "surprisingly well done" and brilliantly acted by Katherine Hepburn. His all-time favorite film was Berkeley Square, to which he devoted a whole paragraph of praise, since he considered himself an Eighteenth Century gentleman entrapped in the unconfidential Twentieth Century. The film's suspension of natural laws delighted him, and he empathized thoroughly with Leslie Howard.

At the time, I frequently agreed with him that the films of the Thirties were bad. The studio moguls were then at the height of their power and absolutely would order directors and script writers to make changes detrimental to the artistic integrity of their films in order to insure their box-office success. Louis B. Mayer was always far happier with an Andy Hardy film than he was with a Red Badge of Courage or a Strange Interlude made against his better judgment. The evils of the star system were rampant (the classic case of miscasting was Clark Gable as Parnell), and an actor like FrankFord's The Informer were rarely made. Both the Will Hays Office and the state board of censors scissored scenes absurdly. Even if couples in films were supposed to be married, they had to occupy twin beds upon the screen. The use of four letter words was strictly taboo; it was not until 1939 that Clark Gable shocked movie audiences profoundly at the end of Gone With the Wind: "Did you hear what he said? He said damn!"

Yet, paradoxically, the Thirties seem in retrospect to have been the decade of the cinema's greatest glory. Today, with all restrictions off and writers and directors given complete freedom to follow their artistic bent, they are as self-indulgent as...
spoiled children and their resulting films are morasses of mediocrity. Great Puritan that HPL was, he would have been shocked and revulsed by the explicit sex, the language, the themes, the sadism and sexual perversion of today's films. He would have barricaded himself behind the doors of 66 College Street and become a recluse in actuality. The picture was filmed in 1959, has been used for the money very nicely, although one wonders what he would have done had he been offered considerable money for the use of one of his tales by a producer he felt certain would botch it.

One suspects that he would have been less than happy with the film versions of his stories which have been produced so far. No one would expect Emerson Bantock, the film critic of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, to know anything of HPL, yet he wrote recently that the film versions of Lovecraft's stories would not scare a child but that the stories themselves were utterly terrifying.

The first film version escaped the attention of most of HPL's fans. Who would have thought, without prior knowledge (which the advertisements, of course, didn't provide) that Dick Powell, of The Thin Man, who appeared chiefly at drive-ins, was a filming of HPL's The Colour Out Of Space? It turned out to be largely an abolition. The early scenes, although the setting had been shifted to England because the picture was filmed there, did provide some of the essential Lovecraftian atmosphere, albeit the late Nick Adams, the idol of the teenage set, was the antithesis of the Lovecraftian protagonist and Boris Karloff was then much too old to be very menacing but the later scenes were just routine science fiction, with Karloff becoming so highly radioactive that he left luminous fingerprints where he touched things. In these scenes the script seemed more like an adaptation of H. G. Wells' The Food of the Gods than any Lovecraftian work.

Poe's box-office appeal is certain, Lovecraft's uncertain, so the next filming of an HPL work again bore the un-Lovecraftian title: The Haunted Palace. The producer had Vincent Price read the Poe poem in the foreword, then he had to shift around for something filmable and came up with HPL's last novella, The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward. It was a mistake to hire Charles Beaumont to do the screenplay. Chuck was a good writer in his own right and he turned out several quite presentable film scripts, but in his letters to me he frequently proclaimed his dislike for HPL's stories - and his script for The Haunted Palace showed his antagonism. Charles Dexter Ward itself was perhaps the poorest work of HPL's last period, betraying his tiredness and illness, so that it would not have been an easy task for even the greatest HPL aficionado to adapt. For box-office purposes Chuck had to bring in an un-Lovecraftian heroine and devise completely new dialogue. Great Chthulhu, when he is finally seen, is just an obscure swirl at the bottom of a pit. It amused me that in the film it seemed to take forever for the hero and heroine to descend to the subterranean depths of the palace, yet at the very end when the whole place was engulfed by flames, they managed to get out in under a couple of minutes.

The third "Lovecraft" film wasn't a Lovecraft film at all! The Shuttered Room was allegedly a "collaboration" between HPL and August Derleth, but actually, of course, it was completely Derleth's work. Here again the early scenes were promising, and some fine actors, like Olivor Reed and Flora Robson, were around but the bulk of the not-very-good film - was strictly one of HPL's rehash jobs. Having a mad sister locked up in a shuttered room was derived from the Gothic novels like Jane Eyre.

I missed The Munich Horror (1970) which played just at drive-ins in my neighborhood, but from all accounts it was another botched job. It is quite possible that the radio version, in which the late Ronald Coleman starred, was a more acceptable treatment of HPL's famous tale. It is my understanding that the fans were disappointed because the monster did not appear in the film; but perhaps that was just as well, for to date every artist who has tried to follow faithfully HPL's description of the monster has come up with something pretty ludicrous. But one suspects that Dean Stockwell was much too "pretty" a boy to play a Whatelye, even the more nearly human of the brothers.

There was a film several years ago whose title escapes me at the moment (Fritz Leiber was one of the actors) which had some distinctly Lovecraftian touches, especially in the actuality setup book which reminded one immediately of the NECRONOMICON. Perhaps the most Lovecraftian film I have seen to date was Lot's Scare Jessica to Death (1971), although of course HPL had nothing to do with it. But the New England setting, the bishop house, and the villagers seemed to have come straight out of HPL's pages. The title was a misnomer,
not only was there no conspiracy to scare Jessica to death, but Jessica herself was still alive at the end of the film (the only one who was). The film was quite subtle; although there were eerie ghostly moments early in the film, the picture was more than half over before one realized what the theme was. The last third of the film was quite good. There was a suggestion that, just as in The Turn of the Screw, all that had happened in the film had happened just in the heroine's mind.

Trenter was eventually to become a producer and think about filming other HPL stories. One thinks immediately of an omnibus version of some of his related tales. Perhaps, for a framework, it might be necessary to bring in something of his desk writing one of them, or looking out the window and hearing the "Music of Erich Zann" on the soundtrack or tossing restlessly in his sleep while dreaming one of his tales (a number of them, like The Statement of Randolph Carter, had their genesis in dreams). It would not be difficult to find someone to play Lovecraft, for there are a number of HPL lookalikes: the chess champion Bobby Fischer, who could pass for HPL in his younger days; Jason Robards, who could play HPL in one of his irascible moods; the comedian, Pat Paulsen, who could play HPL in an expansive mood; that excellent Swedish actor Max von Sydow (probably the best choice); and even Walter Halle, the retired chairman of the board of a Cleveland department store, who looks much as HPL might have looked. He was alive too.

One thinks of possibly filming the Randolph Carter quartet. The Dunsanian tale, The Silver Key, perhaps wouldn't lend itself readily to filming, but The Statement of Randolph Carter and especially The Outsider seem "natural" for the screen. The Outsider was a kind of sequel to The Statement of Randolph Carter, for presumably the ghoull which spoke up the tube to Carter was the same one as the protagonist list. The Outsider, rather obviously, if The Outsider were to be filmed the subjective camera would have to be used, with the protagonist not shown until he views himself in the mirror at the end. I had thought previously that some actor with a gaunt face, such as Jack Palance or Richard Widmark, should be made up to appear as the Outsider; but by all rights it should be someone who looks like HPL, for HPL, if only subconsciously, pictured himself as the outcast from society, as he was to do again in the last chapter of The Shadow Over Innsmouth. While the idea of The Outsider derives fairly obviously from Poe's The Masque of the Red Death - a suggestion further enhanced by HPL's patent aping of Poe's style - the story emerges as far more than just an imitation. HPL dismissed his story as "mechanical," but it is not that popular of his works, so that when Derleth and Wanderley put together the first of the HPL collections through Arkham House, they called it, appropriately, THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS.

There remain, of course, numerous other possibilities for Lovecraft films. I should like to see my friend and correspondent Robert Bloch do at least one HPL script; he is quite good at omnibus films, as witness his recent The House That Dripped Blood. Just who would be the ideal HPL director is a matter of conjecture. Fritz Lang is now too nearly blind to do much more directing, and Kouben Mamoulian, the director of the memorable version of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde that starred Frederic March, is probably too old and affluent to need bringing in HPL's tales, perhaps The Shadow Over Innsmouth, or for that raggedy superma actor, George C. Scott, to appear as one of the HPL protagonists. While HPL's life was not only output, it was not larger, his output was considerably larger than that of Poe, who has been keeping the producers of horror films busy for years.

AN UNKNOWN HPL ARTIST
By Gerry de la Ree

Late in 1937 a hopeful young artist sent four examples of his work to Virgil Finlay. Ivan Funderburgh typed the following letter to Finlay, who at the time was a rising star among Lovecraftian artists: "I am a young artist struggling to get my work before the public. In a separate container I am sending you four examples of my art work. The scenes are from fantastic stories by my favorite authors. I have but one request: I can only say what so many others do, that I think you are the best artist of the weird in America today. I am an advocate of the old school of drawing which stands for realism both in composition and in rendering. On first sight it would seem that a fantastic subject could not be treated in a realistic vein, but you are able to, and thereby capture that elusive thing - truth. I might add that I have a strong dislike for caricatures and for the dynamite stuff that litter the cheap magazines. Your work is ideally suited for WEIRD TALES, which is in my opinion the highest class pulp you have. I am a correspondent of Robert Bloch who seems to like my work a great deal. Please write and let me know what you think of my drawings."

Three years passed. On one of my visits to Finlay in 1970 he dug out a large, brown envelope containing the above letter and four drawings done by Mr. Funderburgh.

"I never wrote this boy," he admitted. "Why? Well, I was just a beginner myself then and I honestly didn't feel qualified to criticize his work." Finlay was 23 at the time and had been working as a professional for only two years.

Finlay gave me the letter and the sample drawings. The young artist's work was not professional by any standard, but the story was an interesting one and I wondered whatever became of Mr. Funderburgh. He never had anything published in the fantasy magazines, and his name - a unique one, to be sure - was unknown in the ranks of the fantasy fans of that period.

Checking telephone information, I found there were several Funderburths in the Huntington, Ind. area. I took one at random and wrote a letter. The reply gave me a Tucson, Ariz. address for Ivan. A second letter elicited this reply:

"I was certainly surprised to receive your letter; and I must admit, flattered. Thirty-three years is a long time.

"I don't draw anymore, except to amuse the kids. I couldn't possibly draw as good as I did at age 16. Then I had high hopes of becoming a fantasy magazine illustrator. One mag (I forget the name) was going to use my work, but folded before that occurred. Also, another Robert Bloch liked my work, so he sent me a story to illustrate before he sent it to WEIRD TALES. We sent them in together. His story was taken but my art work wasn't.

"After so much disappointment, I switched to the piano and have been successful at music for 30 years. I never hit the big time, but am playing steady now at Shakey's Pizza Parlor, and also carry mail in the daytime.

"Thanks again for your nice letter, and you may keep the pictures. Incidentally, I always thought that Finlay was the greatest!"

This letter was signed by Ivan Funderburgh.

One of the four drawings illustrated H. P. Lovecraft's THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS and it seems oddly fitting that after so many years Mr. Funderburgh's work finally see print (see page opposite). It's only speculation but looking back one can but wonder Finlay, who wrote the youngster in 1937 and offered some encouragement, would it have been enough to spark Ivan into a career of art. That he wasn't completely unhappy with the youngster's efforts can be seen by the fact that he saved these drawings for more than three decades.
AN OLD ONE AND A SHOGGOOTH!
FROM "AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS" BY H. P. LOVECRAFT
IN ASTOUNDING STORIES.
"Life," H. P. Lovecraft wrote in his Commonplace Book, "is more horrible than death."

Death, with its threat of damnation, was horrible enough for the generations of fabulists which preceded him. Horror mongers in the mold of vampire, werewolf or Frankenstein's golen horrified in direct proportion to their ability to maim and kill. In ghost stories, such as Poe's possession tales (Ligeia, Morella) the horror of death appears to lie in the possibility that it may not be complete. Differential death is now a scientific curiosity, within limits, but more acutely expressed to our minds in the materialistic mode of the Ideal-Lovecraft Out of the Looms, HPL's The Thing on the Doorstep, or even Crowley's Testament of Reginald Blight, where the vision of unsuccouring roving vaporously, when the gray was upon little fear. It represents rather a repulsion against life - a doubt as to whether its divers torments have an end.

Even Daturin's Helmoth and Poe's Man of the Crowd, the twin geniuses of all crime, appear to hurry through their lives in dread of the fruits of death. In whatever spot the Man of the Crowd's confidence awaited, it could have treated him no more kindly than William Wilson's did him.

To those who dealt with them, those creatures represented no violation of the natural order, but rather lifted into it. They know it when they know it. True, case creatures and phantoms were themselves caged by certain laws of behaviour and dimension, knowledge of which gave men power over them, thereby freeing them from their terror. It is the rare tale in which hero/heroine does not emerge triumphant even if scathed, affirming life.

Poe's lifetime was not over before the horror tale underwent the next development. The massive cosmic forces buried deeply in the teeming novels of Edward Bulwer-Lytton were perhaps the first profigurings of entities to come, evolving awe (as Scarborough has pointed out) more than fear and it not been the case that they were encountered little. Most readers were only capable of exhaustion. Still, there is no suggestion that the massive shadow on the crater of Vesuvius, or the vague cloudy malignity dogging unsuccessful conjurers can be ordered around or prevented from working damage upon those mortals who accidentally encounter them. The concept world of man is ruptured.

The 1880's this strain was further developed with genius simultaneously by Arthur Machen, who invoked these elemental presences under the name of Classical Deities, and Chambers, who, picking a few names out of The Book of Unnamable Names, produced the first horror-city, where the shadows of men's thoughts lengthen at evening, the maddening book, the irresistible king who in fact wears no mask, against whose ebon glace no mind can do other than witter. That much of the inspiration of the first concepts is due to the introduction to the West of garbled versions of Indic myth presented by the Great Alluring Fat Lady Out Yonder, Ums, and Jains, whose influence in weird writing is constantly either under- or overestimated, is shown by the fact that both Machen and Blackwood were for a time disciples of Theosophy. Such altogether non-human colossi broke through short-ly afterward in Blackwood's classic The Vampires and in Hodgson (Iouse on the Borderland, Night Land, The Hog), but where inusions in Machen were countered with occult knowledge, it falling that suicide (Great God Pan, White People), in Blackwood and Hodgson escape, if occurring at all, was happenstance. There is no suggestion of a malign side of the universe here. Totality is one. In life, one view point is inconsequential. The beings in question were not preoccupied with men, but crushed them as men crush blades of grass. They fit no conceptual framework, but could overpower it in an instant, the order supposed to inhere in the cosmos did not exist. Then the many who became Darwin, Frazer, Planck, Jung, Freud, Einstein, and even the Great Fat Lady, had dismantled the old universe and nobody could put it back together again.

Poe was conscious that mankind violated the dictum that all matter tends to simplicity and disorder, but remade him worthy of his matrix. The horror of these innovators, by contrast, lay precisely in the discovery that one was not made, that the recognisable and identifiable personality is awake within an unidentifiable environment. The threat of mutilation here is to the soul, the human-consciousness, rather than the body, death itself may be a gamble - would it lead to any relief or merely open a better focus soul eye on the horrors? - but a life of horror-consciousness is beyond bearing.

The pabulum of the Existentialists to the contrary, death is not what makes life absurd but what prevents its being absurd. Inability to accept it is as serious a defect as blindness to human mercy, justice or the existence of evil. Stories whose impacts depend upon physical threats to their characters, with a surfeit of perspiring narrators, chimerical monsters, numbed prayers, sorcerers with varying degrees of animosity toward rosy cheeks, have become hackneyed - the joke everything turns into with age.
In the midst of this evolutionary process H. P. Lovecraft at the age of fifteen awoke to a sense of horror - of his own body in the grave. He is stricken with fear of a strange creature, dead before even seen, which is covered with hair. At one time, he stresses, it had been a man. The accretion of animal hair apparently ended its humanity. This adolescent essay was his first exercise in the evolutionary horror which became the dominant theme in his work. "If we knew what we are," he wrote, "we would do what Arthur Jermy did, although one of us did it, even now, when we have seen a degeneration of H. sap into monsters which make his Harkens almost comical by contrast and perhaps harbour a suspicion that a worldwide pyre might be the best treatment for the human genetic condition. It was real to Lovecraft who, even if he may not have foreseen it, would have accepted it."

Such degeneration was only occasionally immediate (The Rats in the Walls), more usually gradual, naturally evolutionary (Arthur Jermy, The Lurking Fear, The Horror at Red Hook). The snarling, cannibalistic beast-self lurked even in those whose ape-ancestors were more than a few generations remote, making HPL's occasional grant of naptic armament against the siege of external entities to his protagonists a cynical concession in view of the time-bombs ticking in their very flesh.

This horror of our origins is not without foundation. We laugh at apes because they are the closest kin we need not feel ashamed of laughing at, but if those bloodstained phylophagous Australopithecines (Machen's little people) survived, would it be funny? The most human of all animals - insightful, communicative, warfiing, xenophobic, cannibalistic, perverted - in fact, are rats, who inspire few of us with fraternal confidence.

It is easy to find horror in the animal nature of man - consciousness pulsing inside the bestial body, rising out of the slime and darkness; the darkness lingers on our bodies and the slime on our mind-bred of murder ever more facile and more augmented - haphazard and loveless breeding - cannibalism - plagues - scavenger-scaping, clawing and stamping, pushing and grinding, dancing around spilt skulls and ripping out beating hearts in an ecstasy of freedom and blood-glut before awesome fires, is that strange alien glow trapped somewhere in the cerubron's soft-jelly, jostled by the slumbering gristle of the medulla, not a parasite, an intruder, a discarnate Mon-bodidian mind? Has it ever done other than shrink from those excesses which are the normality of the beast? There was no reason for the animal man to disdain interbreeding with other beasts, such breeding being, after all, a purely animal function. There is nothing abnormal in Lovecraft's sexual pruridity, which was carelessly imposed in his time and place, but the epithet "hybrid" in his writings expresses not origin but his personal nausea of the spawning beast, applied so often toward the many ethnic groups which disgusted him (in loco mankind in general). In fact, infusion of nonhuman genes simply hastened the process he was sure would occur anyway.

Leonard Cline's unusual and disturbing novel, THE BABA CHAMBER, which HPL praises highly, expressed the identical theme. The horror is innate in the biology of the characters, they "hover", Cline wrote, "in a haze of horror" in the course of life, the same arch for heredity expressed in our madness and death in the aeonian struggle of fang and claw.

The confinement of consciousness within the object of horror was stroke of genius which makes Lovecraft the third refraction-point of weird writing (after Poe and Machen-Blackwood-Hodgeson). We may be free of horrors lurking in the future, but not of those crystallised in the past; formal prison of one's own genes there is no escape. The horror of the human mind netted in strange shapes (The Shadow Out of Time, The Outsider) is one with its persistence in decaying bodies (The Tomb, the Overstep, Cool Air); in the caste society which shaped HPL's thinking there was not even freedom from the behaviour of recent ancestors (Shadow Over Innsmouth, The Festival, The Strange High House in the Mist); sequently, contra Freud and his gloating school, Love-
the monstrous, slobbering, mindless creatures dominating the universe - creating life (breeding) as a sport - quietens, under the evocative cover of darkness, apparently by the chance coincidence of a galactic time-lock, but waiting to break loose again and return man to grunting, rending flesh. That such homicidal jellies managed to get a start upon the human cities can't be explained in human terms, but suggests titan purposes to their apparent chaos, perhaps requiring that human bodies be reduced to gibbering meat to provide the lubrication for cosmic sex. Or was it just the ultimate horror of pointlessness so overwhelming to us that even the Marxists reject it?

The truism that we do not know ourselves is today a platitude. While our cerebrums disport in the wildest visions, the cerebellum and medulla stay behind to operate the body, pumping the heart, squeezing the lungs, zapping tone to the muscles. The animal self is more dutiful, more chained, than the human. Suppose it should decide to throw the man-mind out of its body? The brain has been shown to accommodate up to 4 personalities without stretching. Cancer is merely a case of amoeboid fission on the body's part by which the derivative organism very simply eats its parent alive. Rebellion of the body has afforded significant classics of weird writing (White's Lukundoo, Whitehead's Ring of a God) and even a clutch of short stories in Bradbury's more effective early stories (Skeleton, Fever Dreams). Fear of both life and death in all its forms is of necessity more extreme and agonizing in the non-religious case. Their lack of either the conceptually rational prospect of an alternative, or any superhuman reinforcement against the flesh-dwarfing forces of opposition. Necessarily, such impact is dulled for the reader who is otherwise disposed and its heightened for those who is not. The power of HPL's writing depends from the fact that he seems really to have experienced these irruptions of their nakedness, as in some instances of the more random words, the "Gods!", the hysterical metaphors ("after vigintillions of years") exactly as would have transpired had he been writing from fact. Whether this was designedly, consciously or was the actual outburst of emotional involvement, we cannot say. Either way, it sets an enormous challenge to any successor, for with nothing more than the defective equipment of man, the self-exacing ape, can any mind face the ever more mysterious and more incomprehensible universe?

The more intensely scientific achievement preempts speculative writing, the more pressure is applied to such writers to find new channels to challenge the human drive. With moon landings, Mars probes, cells and gene manipulation, inorganic concepts, memory transfers, maintenance of excised brains and remoulded personalities, claims of life in meteorites and revived from the aeons all accomplished facts, new facets must be turned on the human globe. Magic can be seen now as being not apart from logic, but its result, nor is it generally appreciated on what a close scientific basis many alchemists worked or the fact that their goals - transmutation of the elements, life prolongation and imitatati, universal annihilation of matter - are long since attained. Free exercise of the will by which conformable changes can be made in the environment without other instrumentation now seems less fantastic.

The task of the weird writer since HPL has been not only to find other foci of horror buried in us and cast them in a means suitable for rendering them directly impressible upon the reader's mind - as Tennessee Williams puts it, to "find the words of life more compactly than life does - but to deal with the fact that the contemporary reader already has the entire background of the field of weird writing and reading behind him. The threats, exposed by Jung and Freud, and by contrast to his predecessors, he can be alerted to events by only sparsely scattered signposts. Occult dramas such as Shiel's wondrous Tail of the Turtle and H. G. Wells' Children, suggest a mode. Character development has become more important; fear and revulsion must now be expressed by minor traits rather than by a tiresome repetition of the invariable adjectives.

There will be no room again for monstrous beings which conform to a cosmic system in which human beings wield as much control as they do. Chance escape remains the mainstay (artistically achieved in W. F. Harvey's little-known but excellent Midnight House) and need be no serious handicap, one brainless, ultramicroscopic virus can incapacitate a genius many worlds its own size. Eternal recurrence, the horror which drove Nietzsche mad, has had little reflection in weird fiction, though very interestingly in Chambers; Hodgson's One By One reveals that both halves of the dualistic universe may wear deceitful masks and opens speculations on the finding of diabolic tricks in sincerely good lives. The evolutionary horror has by no means been exhausted of possibilities; and the themes of A Voyage to Arcturus and The Wizard of Earthsea suggest beginnings rather than summations.

Bradbury, Hothenson, Sturgeon and others have written competent and readable tales, but follow no system and contribute little to the development of the genre. Nor have many contributions come from other cultures. Lovecraft's racist nonsense aside, his observation that the Latin temperament possesses "knowing hardness preclusive of sheer panic fright" may not explain his popularity in France, nor the popularity of his imitators there; but it explains their povery of ability, if not the prolific (German) Fleming Jean Ray is the worst of them all.

The works of Borges will undoubtedly be a guide to new aspects of philosophical horror (as Charles Williams showed that theology was a fertile subject); the take-over of our familiar world described in Ubbar Tion, Ursle Tertius is a masterpiece of suggestive subtext, and there are twins to it throughout his work, and through the publications of other Latins - Cortazar, Angel Asturias, Garcia Marquez - reveal to Americans the consistent note of symbolic fantasy characteristic of Latin American writing, their regular fantasists (Ubabo, Ocampo, Iloy Casares, etc.) deal with rather minute spiritual transformations.

In an age when everyday horrors of extreme type have become commonplace, it requires supreme ability for the most Lovecraftian thinker to present us with that dark mirror in a guise sufficiently novel to shock us into such awareness that we see ourselves face to face, ourselves to know.
The Cthulhu Mythos: A Study
BY GEORGE T. WETZEL

(Reprinted from HPL: MEMOIRS, CRITIQUES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES (SSR Publications 1955) with revision and expansion by the author 1971.)

When the body of Lovecraft's prose is studied, it is at once seen that there is a varied and elaborate repetition of certain concepts and supernatural actors to which the phrase "the Cthulhu Mythos" has justifiably been given. The underlying theme in his work, aside from whatever plot is manifested on the surface of individual poems and stories, is the struggle of supernormal entities to regain their mystery over the world and Man from which they were once ousted. The more one studies the Mythos stories of HPL, the more convinced he will become as to their close unity despite their separate fictional frameworks; which brings me to conclude that the Mythos stories should actually be considered not as separate works but rather the different chapters of a very lengthy novel. When viewed this way, many series of stories using the theme of, say, "ghoul changeling" seem logical as they reveal in separate story-chapters the slow disclosure of some particular evil or horror. The gateway between the waking-world and the Hell/dreamworld of the Mythos was one such themes that is not immediately revealed in The Statement of Randolph Carter or in The Temple but only finally in The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath, and similarly the nature and powers of Nyarlathotep which HPL never finished, though he came close to completion in The Haunter of the Dark. There are other half-finished concepts and still unsolved mysteries in the Mythos which only study will disclose, and some that no amount of study will ever unravel, because he died leaving some further tales unwritten which could contain the gradual unfolding of a particular mystery, as indeed would have been the fate of the "ghoul changeling" theme without the final story, Pickman's Model.

As to why Lovecraft created his Mythos - his lengthy novel called THE CTHULHU MYTHOS, if I may be permitted - evidence exists in many of his little known philosophical articles written in amateur journals, and in some of his stories and poetry. In The Materialist Today he remarked: "There is no object or purpose in ultimate creation, since all is a ceaseless repetitive cycle of transitions from nothing back to nothing again. All is illusion, all is hollowness and nothingness - but what does that matter? Illusions are all we have, so let us pretend to cling to them . . . " Then there is some development of this recurrent philosophy in the curious poem, "To an Infant" (printed in the BROOKLYNITE, Oct. 1925) of which the following lines give some idea:

"For dreams, as they are most precious,
are most fragile of all we prize,
And the pow'rs of earth that end cease;
would sear them out of our eyes....
They are all that we have to save us
from the sport of The Ruthless Ones.
These dreams that the cosmos gave us
in the voids past the farthest sun...."

Also, passages from HPL's article, Life for Humanit-y's Sake, prove his reason for creating the universe of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Other facts about his Mythos are not too well known, especially the fact the Greek mythic ideas were formative influences in his Mythos, despite the known fact that the Dunsany stories gave him the initial push toward creation of his own Mythos. From 1917 to 1923 his poetry is full of Greco allusions and outright rhymed Greek mythic narratives. The Grecian influence in his prose is less obvious, though a quick check shows such unquestionable bits as in The Moon Bag, The Tree, Hypnos, etc. Orignation of such things as the Greek entitled NECRONOMICON, the similarity of the Mythos Hell/dreamworld to the Greek Hades, etc., prove again this contention. And in his story, Poetry and the Gods, which is of Greek gods, one sees in Hermes the messenger, the Messenger of Azathoth named Nyarlathotep and in the dream communication of the Greek gods with mortals the same psychic device used later by Cthulhu to contact his cult followers. In the article, A Descent to Avernus, HPL likens the cavernous earth, gliterned by things suggestive of horrors in the Mythos, to the Greek Tartarus. His own poems in A Cycle of Verses likewise have a glimmering of the Cthulhu Horror but with a Grecian taint.
Numerous other interesting facets emerge from the Mythos which a book would truly need to be written to show. Suffice it to remark on HPL's use of the trope of climax, a device used repeatedly by L. White, which gives to the work of both that identical quality of a nightmarish dream which likewise ends on a note of final and terrible revelation. Then HPL used by a number of stories a remarkable single feverish crescendo that builds from the start to the ending, increasing, without any single lessening of its fervor but instead a brilliant upsurge of fear. Lovecraft has been called an amorist, but in his The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath is discernible the one instance of an effective and poetic moralistic ending. Since this novel was not long after his unfortunate New York sojourn, the conclusion that the moralistic ending, and perhaps the rest of the novel as well, is but a fragment of the spiritual autobiography is well founded.

THE NECRONOMICON

Creation of the NECRONOMICON was one of HPL's most interesting ideas, and there is some basis for thinking that he received some of the inspiration from the names of the similarly arcane BOOK OF THOTH that occurs in Egyptian mythology. That he meant the NECRONOMICON to have some antecedents in Egyptian arcania can be shown.

I originally had translated the Greek meaning of the title as "Book of the Names of the Dead", but Donald Susan pointed out that "non:nomos" was more correctly "region", and he interpreted the name to mean "Guide(book) to the Regions of the Dead", which is more logically with the character HPL meant it to have in the early stories.

Lovecraft, in his History of the Necronomicon (1936), states that Alhazred, author of the Book, visited "some other place" the subterranean secrets of Memphis' (Egypt). In the story, The Green Meadow (1927), he tells of an ancient Greek who had translated some awful knowledge out of an Egyptian book "...which was in turn taken from a papyrus of ancient Meroe" (Egypt). The well of forbidden knowledge, then, seems to have been Egypt (within the framework of the Mythos) and Alhazred merely wrote of what he found there in the NECRONOMICON.

In The Statement of Randolph Carter (1919) there appeared an old and nameless book which undoubtedly was the first mention in the Mythos of the book and the fact that Harley Warren in the story used that book in his quest for the graveyard would indicate that it was a guide to where access would be found to the gateways between the waking world and the Hell/Dreamworld of the Mythos. What he encountered below were ghouls who, according to the lines of the poem "Nemesis", guard such places or else lurk there.

Later stories such as The Innsmouth Horror have the usage of the NECRONOMICON more as a source text of evil spells. The phenomena of growth that is found in other concepts and characters of the Mythos is evident in the gradual characterization of the NECRONOMICON.

I do not know where and how Lovecraft first thought of the name, not the idea, of the NECRONOMICON. I can theorize from a datum found in his serialized article, Mysteries of the Heavens, in the ASHVILLE GAZETTE-NEWS for April 3rd, 1927, "Mamillius", referring to the Milky Way in his "Astronomicon". "An erudite reader like Lovecraft, with some knowledge of Greek, well knew the translation of "Astronomicon" and when later on casting about for a suggestive name for an evil book he first came to the conclusion single in The Statement of Randolph Carter, he hit upon the association of ideas of Astro-nomicon, necro (meaning dead) and the fact that a character in the story had used such a book to investigate dark mysteries beneath a graveyard and the NECRONOMICON had evolved.

NYARLATHOTEP

The first appearance of Nyarlathotep was a prose- poem of the same name in UNITED AMATEUR in November, 1920, and a number of clues to some understanding of him - as meant by HPL - lurk in that work. The name of this god of the Mythos, if broken into "Nyarl" and "hotep", has some significance at once. "Hotep", a suffix, is Egyptian meaning "is satisfied". Lovecraft used it because it was a recurring suffix for Egyptian names and thus was a "color to suggest anything Egyptian. "Nyarl", if broken down to just the phoneme "nya" is a prefix found in the names of gods of certain African negroid tribes. One such example is the "nyankopon", sky-god of the Ashanti.

Lovecraft speaks of Nyarlathotep as having arisen out of the darkness of 27 centuries. This would place this god as having something to do with the 25th dynasty - the Ethiopian invasion of Europe. Nyarlathotep must then have been incarnate in some Ethiopian ruler of Egypt - must have been the driving power behind the Ethiopian armies that suddenly rose up and made their conquest.

But Lovecraft makes it plain that Nyarlathotep was not a negro, but a swarthy person, when he appeared in later stories. In fact, he seems to have been, in the Mythos, the embodied symbol not only of chaos and the final destruction of the world but also of darkness, as the black entity in the later The Haunter of the Dark (1935); likewise, the black man of the Witch-Coven in The Dreams in the Witch-House (1932).

Another characteristic of Nyarlathotep was his power of demonic possession (the avatar concept used by HPL) and his hinted shape-changing. In the prose poem of 1920 it was said that he was the soul of the ultimate gods who were mindless gargoyles, which would
indicate his shape changing ability. Something of this seems likely in the black bat-like thing from the steeple in The Haunter of the Dark; and in this same story he attempts demonic possession of the narrator.

The Crawling Chaos (1920) does not mention Nyarlathotep, but the story obviously has some connection with him, as HPL refers to him in The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath (1926) as the "crawling chaos"; and The Crawling Chaos was about the final end of the world and probably the twilight of the Mythos' gods as well. In the Fungi sonnet "Nyarlathotep" (1929-1930) this Ragnarok ends with "the idiot Chaos blew earth's dust away..." when Chaos destroyed, crushed, what he chanced to mould in play." As Chaos seems to have the sense of a deity, here, he must be the creator god of the Mythos, as well as its destroyer. And since Nyarlathotep has the appellation of the "crawling chaos", he must be the creator god. The conclusion is bolstered in part by the fact that he has some close connection with the god Azathoth, who reposes at the center of Ultimate Chaos.

The god Azathoth in the Mythos was never quite developed (though if the fragmentary story Azathoth were ever completed, more might be known as to what his eventual characterization was) but in the prose existing, he does seem to have some connection with Nyarlathotep. Collate the similar spellings of the Mythos god, Azathoth, and the alchemical term, Azoth, meaning "the primogenic source-essence of life." The god existing at the center of Chaos which in the Mythos seems to have been the center of the universe, and life, then consider that chaos was a god in the sonnet "Nyarlathotep" and consider the epithet given Nyarlathotep as "the crawling chaos": what is seen is a part of the Mythos still not quite formed but in the slow process of gestation.

The Hell of the Mythos

It is in the novel, The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath (1926), that the Hell of HPL's Cthulhu Mythos is fully described and made the locale of a story. Though HPL does not identify this curious sinisterra of dream as the Mythos' Hell, it is so nevertheless and can be shown to be so upon study. The most outstanding proof of this is the similarity to the two-fold Hell of Greek mythology.

In Dream Quest HPL wrote of King Kwiones that "he could not go back to these things in the waking world because his body was dead." King Kwiones was then the soul of a man, dead in the outside world; making of locale of Dream Quest the otherworld of the dead, Heaven, the Elysium of the Greeks.

But this pastoral aspect or Elysium of the Mythos' otherworld had contiguous regions that corresponded with the Tartarus of the Greeks, wherein a number of fearful entities might be encountered — like the domain of the Gugs or the mountain peak of Inquanok where Carter meets the Shantak-birds.

Curiously enough, the Hell of the Mythos was also the dream-world wherein a slumberer's psyche existed during sleep. Carter's own perception of the Mythos' Hell was because he entered it in sleep. As sleepers have both pastoral and nightmarish dreams, HPL was able to make his conception of the dream-world coincide with the likewise twin concept of the otherworld of the dead.

When boiled down, HPL's Mythos Hell was a conglomerate otherworld of the dead and the world of dream. The dreamworld part of this Hell concept was further developed in another way; those adventures therein that the dreamer Carter had, like his meetings with the Night Gaunts, were not the peaceful visions of dreams but the dark side, its nightmares. There is a possible suggestion in Dream Quest of such dark entities of this Hell's dreamworld aspect, such nightmares gaining access to the waking world (a temptation to the story at some time) and creating fears by such horrors running amuck in the waking world, certain hideous demons and human monsters and ghouls in the Mythos would be explained.

In the dream novel there were several places where the waking world was touched upon by some of the sinisterra of the Mythos' Hell, places where these embodied nightmares could enter the waking world, giving rise to tales among men of demons, and possibly explaining also why gargoyles atop cathedrals bore resemblance to the ghouls of this place. Where these entrances touched the waking world from the wood of the Zoogs, there shone the phosphorence of fungi; there was a phosphorescent shining abyss in the story The Nameless City (1921) and in the drowned temple in the story, The Temple (1920).

There were some fearsome gates to this Hell through the burrow of the ghouls beneath graveyards, as finally revealed in the dream novel; when Carter visits the ghouls he notes that he is very near the waking world which the appearance of gravestones and funeral urns strewn about indicates all too clearly. The line, "Through the ghoul guarded gateways of slumber," from the early poem Nemesis (1918), which prefigured some of this, takes on a disturbing meaning. Harley Warren, in The Statement of Randolph Carter, obviously came to his doom at the hands of such ghouls when exploring burrows under a graveyard.

In this concept of entering the Mythos' Hell not only in dream or even at certain earthly abysses but also under a graveyard or, more specifically, through a grave, HPL's awareness of Greek beliefs again was used for imaginative and inventive purposes. "Grave" was sometimes used in the New Testament as a synonym for "Hell" and the entrance to Hell (the Elysium and the Tartarus) was through a grave. Lovecraft utilized this idea in brilliant fashion in his Mythos concept.

A Clerihew by J. Vernon Shea

Pickman painted most unlikely things:
Men like rats, and gants with wings.
Though the statement may cause strife,
Pickman always painted from life.
In Lovecraft's hands, many supernatural concepts that were handled by other writers in orthodox fashion, and close to their traditional outlines, became transmuted into something original and refreshingly new. Like the manner in which he elaborated and developed the ghost theme into something not like its traditional presentation and like the manner in which he treated the avatar theme with similarly original presentations, so he did with the ghoul theme, changing some of it from its appearance in ethnic lore. With it, he embodied the changeling concept, a totally different ethnic belief (the changeling idea being Celtic, the ghoul theme, Persian), so that a new supernatural actor or character was invented. By such inventions he gave not only to his own prose a freshness, but also bequeathed to supernatural fiction - already thread-worn with overly familiar supernatural actors - a new lease on life, a new source of plot and character material. This, along with the fusing of science fictional concepts to the supernatural, is what makes his work so interesting.

Who has not puzzled over the identity of the narrator in Lovecraft's 'The Outsider'? Even 'The Rats in the Walls' has several unanswered questions posed within its fictional framework. The mystery produced in these two stories and other tales is found only by their careful study in conjunction with the clue furnished by a later title, Pickman's Model.

To my mind, the start of this mystery was the earlier 'The Picture in the House' (1920). Here, an ancient countryman possessed a book containing pictures of a hideous butcher shop of the Anzique cannibals, and he himself was cursed with a cannibalistic craving. Then in 1921 was created the nebulous and Poe-sque horror of 'The Outsider.' Many explanations as to the nature of the narrator have been put forth by readers of this tale, although it is significant that Lovecraft very obviously refrained from any. Even the climactic discovery of the narrator that a monstrous creature which appals him is his own mirrored reflection does not completely reveal his nature. Beyond the fact that he has existed in a subterranean place below a graveyard, all is vague.

The horrendous 'The Rats in the Walls' (1923) was next to appear. Herein the motifs in the two tales named above reiterate and are further developed. In the grotto beneath Exham's grotto a ghastly butcher shop is found. There are cases of fratricide in the family history of the de la Poers, the owners of the place, for the implied reason that the secret of their character, or their true nature has occasionally been revealed. But most significant is the fact that the passage between the priory cellar and the dreadful grotto was chiselled upward through the foundation rock.

All these evil abstractions reach a peak in Pickman's Model (1926). The protagonist of this story is degenerating, and a ghoulish trend is strongly hinted. Richard Pickman speaks authoritatively of ghouls who kidnap human children, leaving their own daemon offspring in their stead. Old graveyards, he says, are frequently inhabited by ghoulish things that burrow through the earth.

Piecing these clues together gives us a single common theme. The decadent countryman in Picture now assumes the character of a ghoul-changeling. The tomb-dweller in 'The Outsider' is a kidnapper. Pickman has dim memories of some teacher similar to the ghoulish mentors painted by Pickman in his picture, 'The Lesson'. The fratricides in 'Rats' were perhaps necessitated by discovery that family members were shoul-changelings; certainly the evidence of the subterranean passageway bespeaks close connection of some sort between the human beings and the underground creatures.

Where Lovecraft got the central idea of his story, 'The Outsider', was apparently a passage in Hawthorne's 'The Journal of a Solitary Man', from which the following is quoted as evidence:

I dreamed one bright afternoon that I was walking through Broadway, and seeking to cheer myself with warm and busy life of that far famed promenade...I found myself in this animated place, with a dim and misty idea that it was not my proper place, or that I had ventured into the crowd with some singularity of dress or aspect which made me ridiculous...Every face grew pale; the laughter was hushed...and the passengers on all sides fled as from an embittered pestilence. I paused not one step farther but threw my eyes on a looking-glass which stood deep within the nearest shop. At first glimpse of my own figure I awoke, with a horrible sensation of self-hate and self-loathing...I had been promenading Broadway in my shroud!

In his COMMONPLACE BOOK Lovecraft recorded the germ idea of 'The Outsider' and placed after 'Identity' a question mark. Even though he may have only had a subconscious idea of the human identity of the character, the source of the story seems evident. The leaving of loose threads in a story (which he eventually tied together in a later story) is akin to Edward Lucas White's style in that this author gave a true nightmare quality to his prose by such vague and still partially outlined horrors at his terminal climaxes.

Lovecraft recorded in his COMMONPLACE BOOK seven ideas obtained from Hawthorne's AMERICAN NOTEBOOKS and of some of his prose. However, five such basic germ ideas have relevance to the ghoulish theme variations of HPL just considered. To begin with, there is this idea copied directly from Hawthorne's book: '...a defunct nightmare which had perished in the midst of its wickedness and left its flabby corpse on the breast of the tormented one, to be gotten rid of as it might.'

Lovecraft jotted down, with the above quotation from Hawthorne, a variation of it. When one considers the descriptions and habitations of Lovecraft's ghouls - that
is, the facts that they lingered near dream-gates and were perhaps the embodied nightmares of such a realm - it is quite possible that Lovecraft modified the Hawthorne ideas in this fashion.

Though the foregoing is not conclusive but slightly speculative, this note in the COMMONPLACE BOOK: "Man lives near graveyard - how does he live? Eats no food." is not equivocal. Lovecraft obtained it directly from Hawthorne's Dr. Grimshaw's Secret. Its ghoulish hints are too obvious for comment.

There is one more idea, borrowed from Hawthorne, and its variation in the COMMONPLACE BOOK. The original in Hawthorne's own words is found dated December 6, 1837 as follows: "Stories to be told of a certain person's appearance in public, of his having been seen in various situations, and of his making visits in private circles; but finally, on looking for this person, to come upon his grave and mossy tombstone." For comparison, here are Lovecraft's words: "Visitor from tomb-stranger at some public concourse followed to graveyard where he descends into the earth. But the variation of this that Lovecraft jotted elsewhere in his book concerning in essence "a man observed in public with features and jewelry belonging to a dead man" was used in HPL's The Festival.

In 1917 Lovecraft wrote "Nemesis" which was one of the most important poems he penned, adumbrating the concept of the dream-gate and its nearby lurkers. But besides that, "Nemesis" foreshadows bits of the Poesque landscape of The Outsider, particularly these lines:

"I have peered...
At the many-roofed village laid under
The curse of the grave-girdled ground..."

The degenerating picker in Pickman's Model had a chilling genius in the painting of faces, which Lovecraft wrote could be compared in their hollowness only to the gargoyles of Notre Dame. This comparison was reiterated in the dream-novel when Carter, climbing a ladder "saw a curious face peering over it as a gargoyle peers over a parapet of Notre Dame."

The gargoyle theme is also found in Lovecraft's COMMONPLACE BOOK in two entries which, I contend, were inspired by passages in George MacDonald's PHANTASTES. Compare HPL's "unspeakable dance of the gargoyles - in morning several gargoyles on old cathedral found transposed" with Chapter XIV of the MacDonald book, reading in part:

I became conscious at the same moment that the sound of dancing had been for some time in my ears. I approached the curtain quickly and lifting it, entered the black hall. Everything was still as death...but there was something about the statues that caused me still to remain in doubt. As I said, each stood perfectly still upon its black pedestal, but there was about every one a certain air, not of motion but as if it had just ceased from movement...I found all appearances similar only that the statues were different and differently grouped.

Compare as well from the COMMONPLACE BOOK "Ancient cathedral - hideous gargoyle man seeks to rob - found dead - gargoyle's bloody paw," the following from MacDonald's chapter XV:

...But I saw in the hands of one of the statues close by me a harp...I laid my hand on the harp. The marble hand...had strength enough to relax its hold and yield the harp to me.

And finally, knowing Lovecraft's penchant for quaint humor, I suspect the reason gargoyles were considered by him descriptive of ghouls was because "gargoyle" suggested the homophonc "Gar-ghoul" (gar - fish; ghoul - necrophagi).
GHOTS AND AVATARS

The psychic possession theme and the ghost theme, in a Lovecraft story, are altogether different from their more orthodox presentation in the work of others. In the Mythos, both these themes are at times interwoven so that there emerges a concept particularly Lovecraftian. Thus the reason for considering both under one section. For purposes of simplicity, I allow under the psychic possession theme the avatar theme in the Mythos.

HPL embodied both themes in The Tomb (1917), wherein a restless spirit seeks conscripted burial and thereby peace by possession of a man’s body and soul. It is very likely that this story was suggested to him by de la Mare’s novel THE RETURN, which is similar in part. In HPL’s story, the memories and personality of the dead man are infused into the living body of the narrator and shares with him a common soul — this latter delineation appears in the later stories of the Mythos, there is also some mention of the wandering of the narrator’s dream-soul, another significant point in other later stories.

In The Tree (1920) the metapsychosis of the dead artist’s personality into an olive tree occurs. Herbert West: Reanimator (1921-22) deals with reanimated dead — as does the story in The Vault — but by scientific resurrection and is reminiscent of the putrescent horror of Poe’s story, and his ghoul, of which traces are found in the Howard Lovecraft and Others. The Hound (1922) is a story where the concept borders on the classification of a demon entity. An amulet is stolen by two diabolists from the grave of a hound; it is carved with a picture of a winged hound, the lineament of which were “drawn from obscure supernatural manifestations of the souls” of ghouls. This idea that the souls of the dead have terrifying shapes Lovecraft elaborated upon in the later story, The Unnamable. In The Hound, the winged hound is the visual shape of the dead ghoul, which shape kills one of the diabolists and recovers its amulet. When the survivor opens the grave of the hound, there comes from the jaws of the hound’s corpse “a deep, sardonic bay as of some gigantic hound,” and the corpse is again wearing its amulet.

The Unnamable (1923) portrays in fuller detail HPL’s idea that the psychic emanation (ghost) of a dead man is a grotesque distortion, and since in this story the corpse was actually a monster, the half-human and half-animal, this rendered its ghost so much more grotesque that it could be described by a character in the story as “unnamable.” The ghost of such a biological anomaly once living is what attacks the two men in the story.

The Shunned House (1924) is a fuller elaboration of the HPLish ghost concept. The shunned house was built over a graveyard where a vampire had been buried. (In The Tomb, Lovecraft had remarked of the graveyard’s retaining the intelligence of generations). Some of the source material of this story can be very definitely traced. In an unpublished ms which Lovecraft sent to Olaf Stapledon, the words Ato Roger Williams?, there is much of this story’s plot. Somewhat more of the same is to be found in The Green Picture contained in Charles S. Skinner’s MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF OUR LAND, Vol. 1, p.76, in fact, much of the same general description in the Skinner opus appears in the Lovecraft work as comparison will show. It is interesting to note that the fungus actually will grow stories in which the thing has been a burial. Lovecraft also embodied another source, verbatia, of the vampire Roulet from the account given by John Fiske in his MYTHS AND MYTH-MAKERS. In this Roulet is more of the ghosts and vampires that were about it in a luminous vapor (the special Lovecraft idea of a grotesque ghost is not prominent here) and invades the minds and bodies of its victims. “They share its memories and also the same common soul.”

In The Grant (1927) Lovecraft ever came to the usual form of a ghost story and significantly enough when it was printed in! TRYOUT, November, 1925, Lovecraft prefaced it thusly: “Dedicated to C. W. Smith from whose suggestion the central situation is taken.”

Ghosts appeared in other Lovecraft stories such as The Evil Clergyman, The Festival and He (this last in the Vault (1925) is a repetition of ideas in the Mythos stories was the ghost of King Kurnaeas in the dream-novel whose body lay dead in the waking world but whose ghost frequented the dream/underworld of the Mythos.

The avatar concept has been shown to be interwoven with the ghost concept by HPL but he also wrote stories in which he suggested that ghosts possessed a living person. These other stories were of humans with strange magical powers who performed possession or even mind exchange or of outre life forms who did try to do the same done by even the gods, the most notable being Nyarlathotep.

In The Festival (1923) he makes quite obvious what it is that shares a common soul — “the soul of the devil-ghoul is not from this charnel clay but fats and instructs the very worm that gnaws till out of corruption horrid life springs...”

The Thing in The Colour Out of Space (1927) absorbs all in a fungoid dilated area in its own substance, even humans and their minds — again the common soul idea. In The Case of Charles Dexter Ward (1926-27) the invading entity completely ousts the original soul, whereas in The Shadow Out of Time and The Challenge from Beyond, there is mind-exchange as in The Thing on the Doorstep. Beyond the Wall of Sleep is of an alien mind existing simultaneously in the mind of an earthman.

The most interesting, however, is The Haunter of the Dark (1935) where the sentient blackness from the steeple was the avatar of Nyarlathotep that briefly demonically possessed the mind — and body of Robert Blake. This may require some further provo as follows: In this story Nyarlathotep is mentioned as “in antique and shadowy ken taking the form of man” which indicates that god’s power of psychic possession, although in the passage from which the above quote comes (at the story’s end) it is apparent the thing from
the steeple is being referred to. In the same passage it is written: "The late L. C. Braggs of North Wilbraham, Mass., who, though interested in folklore, did not write supernatural prose herself. The blasted heath of The Colour Out of Space (1927) and another one of his stories, The Dunwich Horror (1928) had a physical prototype near her home, which HPL commented upon in a memoir of her."

In that memoir he likewise reminisced about an antediluvian trip on which he had accompanied her to Marlborough, during which she supplied him with the local belief that windows-panes absorbed and retained the likenesses of those who habitually sat by them year after year. This idea is part of the plot of The Unnamable (1923). Likewise, Charles Port documented the phenomenon in his book WILD TALENTS (1932) as happening in 1870 in Lawrence, Mass.

That whippoorwill choir was psychopompic and of a sinister gathering of fiends. Those were ideas HPL learned from her when he visited her farm in 1928. They were both incorporated into The Dunwich Horror. There was one story given him which he never lived to write. It concerned a camp, dark street near her farm and the tenants of the houses on its hillward side who had gone mad or killed themselves. A corresponding state of affairs in The Cats in the Walls would presuppose that ghoul-changelingism was behind the mystery this new idea displayed.

Another contemporary who influenced HPL was Jonathan Hoag, to whom HPL dedicated a number of his own poems. Cooperatively with a friend he published the collected poems of Hoag and HPL wrote a preface. In that preface he expressed his admiration for the awesome grandeur of nature Hoag so artistically caught in his poetry. HPL in that preface resurrected a line from Hoag's "To the Grand Canyon of Colorado" (1919) where in black caves "vast nameless satyrs dance with noiseless feet." When HPL came to write IN THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS (1931) he referred in chapter five to that quoted imagery of Hoag's. (See also HPL's story The Transition of Juan Romero for the same imagery.)

In Hoag's poems "Immortality"(1918) and "Life, Death and Immortality" (1919) he used the phrase "beyond the walls" as a euphemism for death. Lovecraft picked up and used the same poetic image in his "Ex Oblivione" (1921). The phrase itself appears in the title, beyond the wall of Sleep (1919) in which story its symbolism is somewhat baffling until certain scattered remarks of HPL - that life is a dream, a sleep and that death is an awakening - are collated. Until such grim, morose tendencies which are their fullest expression in The Horror in the Burying Ground (1937), a pessimistic philosophy and evidences of a death wish in some of his writing, HPL was not without a balancing sense of humor.
STALKING THE ELUSIVE NECRONOMICON
By Roger Bryant

Every once in a while you get a lucky break, when a solution to a problem turns up serendipitously in a place where you least expected it, and where you certainly weren't looking for it. It's enough to make you believe in the supernatural.

I do believe in the supernatural, by the way. That's how I happened to find this clue. I was reading a book with the imposing title GUDNAD BRUNO AND THE HERMETIC TRADITION, by Frances A. Yates (Random House 1964). Bruno was an Italian philosopher of the late 16th century, a mystic of sorts and also (among many other things) one of the early defenders of Copernicus and the philosophy of science. He was condemned to death by the Inquisition, but his name lives in history by virtue of his role in turning the Renaissance into the scientific revolution.

But the most fascinating thing in the whole book, for me, was a few paragraphs about a book of magic, called PICTATRIX, that just may have been a model for H. P. Lovecraft's NECRONOMICON.

Surely one of the least enduring concepts is that of the fabulously rare, jealously guarded and hideously dangerous manual of magic, the "forbidden" NECRONOMICON of the mad Arab, Abdul Al-Hazres. The great lost model of HP Lovecraft's History and Chronology of the NECRONOMICON has convinced many that the book really exists, and others search for a similar book on which Lovecraft might have modelled his creation.

The skeptic might say that the "sources" of the NECRONOMICON are already in plain view. Grimoires, manuals of magic, were a dime a dozen in the Middle Ages; the idea of a horrible book appearing on rare occasions, and none of which means to light is a theme already used in Robert Chambers' KING IN YELLOW stories, which Lovecraft praised; and sinking R'lyeh, they say, had its roots in the legends of Atlantis and Xul. Anyway, there is no book whose contents resemble that of the NECRONOMICON; the Cthulhu Mythos proceeded largely from Lovecraft's imagination. All this may well be true, but the specific history of the NECRONOMICON is very similar to the story of another medieval magical tome.

The history of philosophy in medieval Europe is tangled and confused (in my opinion). After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century, Europe began a thousand-year period in which the Roman Catholic Church exercised greater control over people's minds and spirits than any of the oft-changing secular governments. The Church in Europe held the complete control of religion, business, education, scholarship and the arts as well. And with this stranglehold on education, they controlled literature. The words "library" and "school" were all but synonymous with "church" and "monastery." And in this kind of situation, the Church found it possible to control the very course of thought and learning. Whatever did not agree with the Christian religion as interpreted by the Roman Church, was not permitted. Great bodies of knowledge and philosophy and of literature and poetry vanished from sight in Catholic Europe, and much of it was completely forgotten. Some of it has been lost forever to us.

Outside Christendom, however, the situation was very different. Moslem scholars retained great libraries of classical Greek and Roman literature and forwarded the progress of learning themselves. A great debt is owed to the thinkers of Islam, for they preserved much of value that might otherwise have perished. Beginning in the 12th century, Europeans returning from the Crusades began to bring bits of this lost knowledge back with them. Gradually, thinkers in Europe began to realize that there was a whole new world of speculation awaiting them, and in spite of the opposition of the Church, a vigorous trade in ideas sprang up between the West and East.

Among the books that made the journey, and found warm welcome in Europe, was a work called PICATRIX. It was originally written in Arabic, probably in the 12th century. Whether it was translated into Latin (a poor translation severely edited) and this edition became popular in the Renaissance. There are references to a Spanish translation, but this version has not survived to the present day.

PICTATRIX is divided into four books and is supplied with tables of contents which are of little help since the book has no real plan. The division into books and chapters is quite arbitrary. It is in short, "a confused compilation of extracts from occult writings and a hodgepodge of innumerable magical and astrological recipes." The author states that he will tell "in simple language" what past ages have "concealed in cryptical words." If you wondered, be informed: he does not.

PICTATRIX has a long and honorable philosophical heritage. It adheres to the gnostic philosophy, which postulates a cosmic All (which some call God) and seeks a way for man to gain union with the All and drink from it an infinite well of wisdom and righteousness. It also recognizes the prevailing astrological world-view of its age: the heavenly bodies represent spirits who control various powers and virtues, and who must be cultivated in order to gain any sort of union with this world. The way to influence the heavens is through talismanic magic, which is exhaustively described.

But the subject matter of PICTATRIX is unimportant. It pales beside the themes of the NECRONOMICON, which can only be likened to PICTATRIX may be claimed as an "antecedent of Alhazred" not because of its contents, but because of its history.

Consider the history of PICTATRIX. "Picatrix" himself is cited in the text, and the form of the title page that has come to us also names him as the author. But in fact, he probably did not write it at all; it seems that he was one of the compilers or one of the sources. He is ideally "learned, more skilled in mathematics" and "very learned in the arts of necromancy." The 18th century writer Arpenius claimed that the book was compiled by "Norbar the Arab" in the 12th century, he gives no source, but the verdict of experts is that the date is as good as any. The Latin manuscripts extant state that it was translated from Arabic to Spanish in 1250, at the order of Alphonso the Wise, but there is no date given for the translation. There are no Latin manuscripts surviving from before the 15th century, though. The book seems to have never been printed and no 15th century Latin writers seem to have read it. It is true that Peter of Abano (b. 1250) was accused much later of having copied from it, but there is no real ground in his writing for this.

However, the book was certainly well-known by the 15th century. Pico della Mirandola (1463-94) who introduced practical Kabbalah to Renaissance philosophy, owned a copy, his nephew wrote an interpretation of it. A Cambridge doctor, writing about 1477, spoke of "Picatrix in his third book of magic." The fellow who accused Abano of plagiarizing it (in 1514) condemned it as unChristian. Agrippa d'Aubigné told in a letter, about 1575, how Henry III of France had imported a number of magical books from Spain which he, Agrippa, had been allowed to see after promising not to copy them. The wide reputation of PICTATRIX is shown by its appearance in Rablais. The great satirist included among the characters of PANTAGRUEL (1532) "le reverend pere en Diable Picatrix, recteur de la faculte diabolique."

1. This, and virtually all the information about PICTATRIX, is from the Thorndike book cited later.
Does all this seem familiar? A book of magic written in Arabic, filtering into Europe, undergoing translations (sometimes poor ones) and being circulated rather surreptitiously among thinkers and "magicians"? It certainly sounded familiar to me. HPL's Black Book followed just such a history, although he dated its origin earlier and added some printing history. The main translation was riddled with errors and deletions, but it was widely circulated. The NECRONOMICON is a disorganized book but it does have an internal multi-book structure. There are parallels of similarity between the histories of PICATRIX and the NECRONOMICON. Now wouldn't it be nice if I could show that Lovecraft had heard of the former?

Well, it is reasonable to suppose that he had at least heard of it in some way. He was familiar with the work of medieval and Renaissance philosophers and alchemists, as shown in his convincing background for THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD. It is possible that he read of PICATRIX in connection with his wide reading in magic and alchemy. Moreover, he was familiar with Rabelais. If his edition of PANTAGRUEL had notes to explain the satiric references to the modern reader, he would have again come upon PICATRIX.

But it is not sufficient to show that Lovecraft might have seen some reference merely to the existence of PICATRIX. It must be shown that he had read of its history, or early history, and could model the history of the NECRONOMICON after it.

And I cannot quite do it, but I can come close. To the best of my knowledge, the first detailed research into the history of PICATRIX in English was published in 1897. J. Wood Brown, writing in AN INQUIRY INTO THE LIFE AND LEGEND OF MICHAEL SCOT'S gave a brief summary of the book's history and expressed the hope that it would never be rendered into a modern language. It is conceivable, but not too unlikely, that Lovecraft had read this book.

But the second volume of Lynn Throindike's A HISTORY OF MAGIC AND EXPERIMENTAL SCIENCE, published in 1923, is the crucial source. This book contained a full chapter on PICATRIX, including full and complete details on its history. 1923...is that early enough?

The first reference to Alhazred in Lovecraft's fiction is in The Nameless City, written in 1921. The NECRONOMICON is first mentioned in The Hound (1922). But what I'm looking for here is not passing references to the name of the thing but for the complex history of the book. In The Festival (1923) there is mention of a Latin translation by Olaus Wormius, but aside from this the first summary of the remarkable history of the NECRONOMICON is in the oft-quoted letter to Clark Ashton Smith, dated 27 November 1927. That leaves more than four years in which Lovecraft might have come across Thorndike's book.

But did he?

Warned if I know! A HISTORY OF MAGIC AND EXPERIMENTAL SCIENCE was a successful book right from the start. The first two volumes were published together in 1923. They were widely praised, widely reviewed, and widely purchased by libraries who were happy to find books on magic whose scholarship was a little more dependable than the naive credulity of Lewis Spence or the mystical incredibility of A. E. Waite. It seems to me that if Lovecraft heard of this book at all, he would have seized the opportunity to read it. It would have been right up his alley.

There is no mention of it, though, in SELECTED LETTERS published by Arkham House. But there are thousands of pages of letters in the hands of private collectors and in the Brown University collection. Lovecraft liked to tell his friends when he found a good book; SELECTED LETTERS are full of such off-the-cuff reviews.

I think it not unlikely that one of these days, someone will notice a reference to the Thorndike book among HPL's letters. When they do, I think we will have good evidence for the book on whose history the shunned NECRONOMICON was modeled.

You people who are fortunate enough to own some Lovecraft letters, or have a chance to browse in the Providence libraries—keep an eye out for it, will you?

2. It was common in the time of PICATRIX to date one's books a century or two or three earlier; it gave them added authority. There are grimoires which claim to be the work of King Solomon (referring blithely to such people as Charlemagne and the Apostle Paul) and the works of Hermes Trismegistus were supposed to be written by a contemporary of Moses.

Personally, I think HPL might have enhanced the idea of a terribile, forbidden book if he'd left out any mention of its being printed. A musty old manuscript, subject to God knows what errors on the part of some harried scribe, evokes a much darker image to me.

3. Or so we're told by Simon Orne, who was "confounded by ye VII. Booke of ye Necronomicon."

4. "Selections from Rabelais' shapeless and pungent GARGANTUA and PANTAGRUEL are timely," says HPL in Suggestions for a Reading Guide.

5. Michael Scot (1175-1234) was a Scottish astrologer and magician who spent many years in Moorish Spain studying the writings of Arab magicians. He eventually became court astrologer to Ferdinand II of Sicily. You can read about him in Lay of the Last Minstrel. Scot may or may not have seen PICATRIX but he was certainly familiar with the sources of that compilation, and helped pave the way for its acceptance when he returned to Christendom.

6. Mr. Brown's hopes were dashed. A German translation was published in STUDIES OF THE WARBURG INSTITUTE Vol. 27, 1962.

7. Somewhere in his published letters Lovecraft mentions that Abdul Alhazred was a pen-name he adopted when he was a boy.

8. Further volumes appeared until the series concluded with Volume 8 in 1958. It's the finest work on the subject I've ever seen. Columbia University Press is the publisher.
The ultimate in fantasy collecting was best expressed by Robert Bloch in his classic story, *The Man Who Collected Poe*. Herein the mad Launcelot Canning had through necromantic processes obtained Poe himself whom he held prisoner and forced to write while in captivity. A collector cannot ask for more than that. Short of sorcery, though, what should one consider when collecting the works of Howard Phillips Lovecraft?

In order to do this properly, the collector must have an understanding of the value and desirability of the items by a literary entity. These items, of course, vary from author to writer but one can make certain generalizations, nonetheless. The most desirable items are holographic manuscripts and drafts. Whereas typed manuscripts (more properly referred to as typescripts) are interesting, their value is often very small. Unless a typescript is signed and contains holographic corrections (the more the better) its value bibliographically is reduced and likewise its financial value. Only where an author is known not to use holograph in creating his works does an authentic typescript approach the value of what that author's handwritten manuscripts would be.

On the other hand, manuscripts, the most desirable object for the collector is a first edition of a work. In almost every case, this is the most sought after and valuable presentation of the item, although some special editions prove an exception to this. Although many have tried to explain, there is no real reason for this value of the first impact of the work in permanent form (except just that - it is the first presentation thus to the literary public.) On every scale of book collecting, though, the top value of a work is assigned to the first edition and this is what the collector should seek in the great majority of cases.

The other important consideration to collectors is the author's autograph on a work, especially his own literary endeavors. The signature gives the work desirability and value through its association with the author. The value of an author's autograph varies greatly from author to author. The signed item itself and whether the author is still living (and thus able to create more autographs) have great bearing on the value of an autographed work.

With these generalizations before us, let us look specifically at the work of H.P. Lovecraft. As to holographic manuscripts - well, unless you're able to buy Brown University, most of these are unavailable. There are some in private hands but their transfer are few and far between and I've only heard rumors of their availability for sale. However, there are a few typescripts available and their financial value is commensurate with whether Lovecraft's signature is upon them and the number of handwritten corrections. An unsigned typescript with only a correction or two does not have much value compared to one with numerous corrections. This should be borne in mind when preparing to make a sizeable investment in one.

About the best chance a collector has of obtaining Lovecraft-autographed material is to get one of his many postcards or letters. I've seen huge prices of up to $50 per page on Lovecraft letters, which is to my mind a bit high for items which number in the hundreds, if not thousands. As much as I admire HPL's erudition (and I do recognize the importance of unpublished original thoughts) I do not feel prices quite so high are justified. Indeed, though, if one does desire letter material but cannot afford such, HPL did write a large number of postcards upon which his microscopic script allowed much, to be said, and these are less expensive. Interestingly enough, HPL's full signature is not that common as it was his habit to sign most communications simply "Ech-Pi-El." Since there are only 3 antemortem works of HPL fiction only these may bear his autograph. They are *The Shunned House*, *The Cats of Ulthar* (a pamphlet) and *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*. In a letter to me, August Derleth said "...less than a dozen of them (THE SHUNNED HOUSE) were inscribed by Lovecraft and they all went to close friends. As to THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH, about 20 of these were inscribed." As to the booklet, my investigations have shown only one signed copy. I can say with authority then that signed copies of Lovecraft books are rare, expensive and extremely desirable.

I've pondered whether to categorize the Lovecraft fiction as to value, rarity or desirability and decided to compromise a bit by lumping them altogether and selecting a Big Three. They are *The Outsider*, *The Shunned House* and *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*. Because of its place as the first Lovecraft story collection (although posthumous), the first Arkham House book, and the best known of HPL's publications, I would suggest *The Outsider* as the cornerstone of any serious Lovecraft collection.*The Shunned House* (1928) was printed in an edition of less than 225 copies and many consider this to be Lovecraft's first book despite the fact that it was never really distributed. Those distributed went mostly as unbound sheets (R.A. Barlow is said to have bound seven copies).
These are the true first state of THE SHUNNED HOUSE and far superior to any other print collection than the second and third states of the first edition sheets as released by Arkham House. The third of my HPL trilogy is THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH (1936). The first and only hardcover book truly distributing a printing for the first time in the library of HPL's, there were only 200 of these bound. In summary, I feel all of these are of equal importance to a collector of Lovecraftiana and form the tricapitate foundation for a solid HPL collection.

I would be remiss not to mention a fourth title which is almost equally valuable monetarily as each of the Big Three, but not a landmark such as a first book. The title is BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP and contains the HPL fiction not published in THE OUTSIDER. It should rest proudly on a shelf with the Big Three.

On the level of the ultra-Lovecraft collection, there are three more titles of vast importance which include THE CATS OF ULTHAR, NOTES AND COMMONPLACE BOOK, and the Stickney memorial poetry pamphlet, HPL. The CATS OF ULTHAR gathers its importance by being one of the only three separate pieces of antiquarian fiction by Lovecraft and its press run of 42 copies does not add up to many available copies. NOTES AND COMMONPLACE BOOK was a 75 copy booklet stating HPL's ideas on story writing, analysis of the weird tale, etc. This was the first permanent edition of this most important essay. Thirdly, in my ultra-trilogy I included Corwin Stickney's memorial chapbook of poems by HPL. This is one of the most esoteric items in Jack Chalker's bibliography of books and pamphlets (DARK BROTHERHOOD, Arkham House, pp. 215-224), there having been a scant 25 copies, distributed only to subscribers to the AMATEUR CORRESPONDENT. I've waived as to whether to include this since possibly only a Lovecraft collecting "nut" would find this of interest but I feel it was the first memorial to HPL, and it did contain the first publication of the now famous Virgil Finlay portrait of HPL so it has definite importance and completes this trilogy.


Let us look now at the amateur material by H. P. Lovecraft. These items are most difficult to classify with respect to value and are downright impossible to obtain in any great quantities. Brochures like the MATERIALIST TODAY (1926), LOOKING BACKWARD (1925) and others are invaluable components to a superior Lovecraft collection but certainly not essential to a sound collection. These booklets and the original publications themselves such as THE TRYOUT, THE UNITED AMATEUR, THE CALIFORNIAN, etc. all are unique and important items if they contain first Lovecraft appearances and add value and distinction to a collection. However, these are largely frills to a collection beautiful, unique and important but frills nonetheless; without the Big Three, having them would be like air conditioning without a house, a saddle without a horse, but they do add that special touch to a collection.

Before ending these notes, it would be unfair to leave out the collector of Lovecraft who is "just a reader" and desires all the fiction of Lovecraft but cannot afford the incredibly high prices of most of the items mentioned previously. I purposefully left out the following 3 hardcover Arkham House titles (which I now include) from my list of important titles. They are DAGON, THE DUNWICH HORROR and AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS. They contain all the Lovecraft fiction from THE OUTSIDER and BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP and cost about $350.00 less. And for those collectors whose purse strings are even tighter or who do not desire hardcover books, Beagle pocketbooks have reprinted almost all the Lovecraft fiction in about 5 softcover volumes.

In conclusion, I have tried to give some comprehensive bibliographic views toward collecting the works of HPL. I hope my ramblings have been of value and aid those many out there who would attempt to build a solid Lovecraft collection of import. Let me wish all of you the best of luck in these pursuits!!!

I am currently preparing articles and lists in the pursuit of nailing down and cataloging the whereabouts of autographed material by HPL. This includes signed books, manuscripts, letters (outside of those at Brown University). Anyone who can help me in these pursuits, please write me at the following address:

Stuart D. Schiff
55 Irma Drive
Oceanside, New York 11572
These notes presuppose that one has obtained bibliographic information on H.P. Lovecraft from the several sources: THE DARK WORLD (Arkham House 1946); NYCTALOPOPS; and BIBLIOTHECA: H.P. LOVECRAFT (David Sutton's publication) of Eddy C. Bertin's lists, or the revisions of Jack Chalker's index forthcoming from Mirage Press. Many of these sources have published Lovecraft material which has recently been brought into contact with the Master through paperback collections, notably those of Lancer, Ballantine, and Ballantine. And these readers will find themselves interested in learning more about the man's work and what others have said about him.

There are two ways for the confirmed Lovecraftian to obtain desired material: either purchase the originals or photocopy them. The 1940s through the 1960s saw the emergence of much Lovecraft material, obtained in volumes published by Arkham House and edited by August W. Derleth and, initially at least, Donald Wandrei. However, the average number of copies of any one edition of collected Lovecraftian material never exceeded 3,500 and was sometimes as low as 1,200. Consequently, many of these volumes are now out-of-print (o.p.), obtained only in the rare book market, if they may be obtained at all. Because of the hold which Lovecraft has on many of his readers, these "books" have often been purchased as keepsakes so that for the most part, they may be expected to be out of the marketplace for good.

Many must, therefore, give up the wish for original volumes and devote themselves to the collection of reproductions of the o.p. materials or their study at an institutional or public library. It is usually possible to obtain photo­graphic copies at ten cents a page or so, which is sufficient for short pieces but hardly practical for a volume of several hundred pages. The recently out-of-print Arkham house editions may be available from various book dealers at less than the reproduction costs of a library copy.

Much Lovecraftian material may be found at Brown University Library, together with many of Lovecraft's manuscripts and letters. This material is non-circulating and must be photocopied there, at a considerable increase in cost. The richest source of published Lovecraft material is the Library of Congress. LOC has been very helpful in sending my local university library some of the books I needed. However, when the material could be found at other libraries, LOC will not send their copy but will instead inform one where the book may be found. Because of this policy, LOC is a panacea for all book problems, although these librarians will help one locate the book in question.

The following is a sampling of the more interesting Lovecraftian sources and the places where they can be located:

- One of the most essential books is THE DARK WORLD. This book is a collection of the bibliography mentioned above, it contains other articles and interpretations of Lovecraft. The libraries of Duke, Emory, and Louisiana State Universities have, and will loan, copies. At least two local libraries have all the material - there are two editions of THE COMMONPLACE BOOK, which differ interestingly but not substantially. The first (Futile Press, Lakeport, California 1938) was edited by an H.P. friend R.H. Lovecraft. Twenty-five copies were printed in hard-bound edition and LOC has No. 38. The other edition (annotated by August Derleth) can be found as a part of THE SHUTTERED ROOM AND OTHER PIECES (Arkham House 1944). This book has been long out-of-print as well, but the Duke University Library has the book and will send it upon request.

Some of the books which I needed in preparing my dissertation could not be sent because of their fragility. I did have the material I wanted copied at the university. Such was the case of BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP (Arkham House 1943). Fortunately, some of the material in this book has been reprinted in more accessible volumes so that I could keep the library copying fees to a minimum.

The Asa G. Chandler Library at Emory University has a copy of MARGINALIA (Arkham House 1944), edited by Derleth and Wandrei. They will lend it, although their copy is well worn and fragile.

Lovecraft's long essay, Supernatural Horror in Literature, as published by Ben Abramson of New York in 1945 is in the library of the University of Illinois. This edition is exactly the same version as is printed in DAGON AND OTHER MACABRE PIECES (Arkham House 1965), except for the short introduction by Derleth, which may be of some help.

THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD (Arkham House 1945) is available at the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore, Maryland; however, it has been rendered much more accessible of late by the Beagle Books paperback edition. This volume contains minor fiction available elsewhere but other material as yet unreprinted is SOMETHING ABOUT CATS AND OTHER PIECES (Arkham House 1949). The well-worn copy at Duke University Library will be made available upon request.
The Indiana University Library has DREAMS AND FANTASIES (Arkham House 1962). This book may possibly be of some use itself, although the stories in it are reproduced elsewhere. There is a 50 page section of Lovecraft letter excerpts containing specimens from the to-be-published 1932-1937 period. All of the other letters except one have been printed in the first 3 volumes of SELECTED LETTERS OF H.P. LOVECRAFT (Arkham House 1965, 1968, and 1971). Two books that I have found of special interest are by August Derleth. One of these, the nearest thing to a biography of Lovecraft, is entitled H.P.-L.: A MEMOIR. It too was published by Ben Abramson in 1945. Its length is 120 pages and the copy which I used is owned by the University of North Carolina library. The other Derleth volume is much smaller - a forty-two page chapbook, in fact. Its contents include articles on the Mythos, the unfinished manuscripts and the writing habits. The book also includes the brief but informative Barlow Journal and 4 Lovecraft letters. It is SOME NOTES ON H.P. LOVECRAFT (Arkham House 1959), and both the Yale University and University of Indiana libraries have the book, the latter permitting its loan.

Much of the interesting material on Lovecraft has been published in magazines over the last 35 years. Yale University stocks Joseph Payne Brennan’s MACABRE and also has the Howard Phillips Lovecraft Memorial Symposium (in the Spring, 1958 issue of FRESCO), edited by Stephen Eisner. The symposium includes several articles by friends of HPL. Another good source for the symposium is Northwestern University Library, which also has THE READER & THE COLLECTOR.

Other libraries in Providence than Brown University’s can be consulted and there is, when all else fails, the New York Public Library. They charge a minimum fee for duplication, so I recommend that all articles needed be secured at one time, if one must use their services.

One final note: I found an informative series of Lovecraft articles in H.P.-L.: MEMOIRS, CRITIQUES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES, edited by George T. Wetzel. It contains 84 pages, most of which are useful; the LoC has a copy and will lend it. (Ed Note: elsewhere in this magazine is a revised and expanded version of Mr. Wetzel’s article on the Cthulhu Mythos from this book.)

This is not an extensive gathering of material by any means but what is here may, I hope, prove useful to some Lovecraft aficionados who are in the midst of discovering more about the complex, creative mind of HPL.

TO MOUNT SINAI

(Dedicated to George F. Haas)

Grim mountain, on your lowering slopes I stand, Cowed by the sound of thunder in the skies, While your dark crowned of cloud spindals o'er the land And stir my mind to yet more dark surmise...

Cow'd by the sound of thunder in the skies, I sense beneath your flanks those monstrous Things That shall one day awaken and arise And - oh! to stifle these mad visionings!

I sense beneath your flanks those monstrous Things, Grim with a hatred vast as outer space, That lurk and strain to burst their imprisonings And rise in power to smite the human race.

Grim with a hatred vast as outer space, Those sleeping Powers shall one day wake and rise To smash this Earth as with a giant mace And strew its shards across the darkened skies.

- Richard L. Tierney

MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS

Grim ranks of frozen spires rear high to face The world like walls that guard far lands of dream - White, ivory fangs whose jagged summits seem To lance the skies and pierce the fringe of space. No life survives in that Antarctic clime, And yet the demon wind that pipes and shrieks Among those spires is like a voice that speaks Of evil things in accents old as time.

No man has seen beyond that range of snow The vast, black city spreading grim and cold, Yet dreamers speak of monstrous things of old That ooze through vaulted corridors below, While some have warned of what may rise again From the black gulfs to face the world of men.

- Richard L. Tierney

MANY-COLUMNED IRAN

(Based upon a legend from THE ARABIAN NIGHTS)

Upon what ethereal scenes of vanished splendor have I gazed? What wild, unhailed, lost desmesnes of old have I seen? What world of imagery, of formlet immortal dreams That haunt my mundane days? What means that horrific hand etched on beams Of porphyry whose purple sheens lie dulled from sand and time, mazed With necromantic tale of queens who sleep in dust beneath the hazed And shrouded moon? - a tale that keens its last lament in the pale gleams Of starlight. Yet, one man careens into that land of mad extremes, And reads the tale on pillared screens and reels out in the desert - crazed.

Doomed now to oblivious night, lost Iran rusts, ever-automnated. Rare, exotic, her golden sight paled to mere insignificance. Allah's paradise, holy-white - her palaces, many-columned, set thick with gems whose blinding light lit all with gold radiance. Enraged at man's audacious light did Allah with horrific hand Crush the pomp and power of this sight and smite to shards this wondrous land?

- Walter Shedlofsky
Cthulhu in Mesoamerica
By Richard L. Tierney

One of my favorite Cthulhu Mythos stories is the Mound, a short novel conceived by Zelia Bishop and published with her name appearing as that of the sole author. Yet we all know that this tale is primarily the work of H. P. Lovecraft. It certainly reads like one and he obviously took a very great interest in it - so great an interest, in fact, that it now stands not only as an incorporation into the Mythos, but as a major extension of it. The ensuing introduction on the topic of Ror in the Museum, Frank Belknap Long also had a hand in it.

The interesting thing about this story is that it really does tie in very well with the religions of the ancient Indians who inhabited Mexico and Central America - the Aztecs, Toltecs, Teotihuacanos, Zapotecs and Mayans - just as Bishop and Lovecraft imply. Perhaps one or both of these authors had a very detailed knowledge of Mesoamerican religions, or perhaps the correlation is due mostly to chance; I do not know. Still, it is interesting to observe some of the correlations.

Francis T. Lane, in his long-out-of-print article, The Cthulhu Mythos: A Glossary, equates Cthulhu with the Aztec god Huiztilopochtli. I have never been able to discover where he might have read anything that would lead him to this conclusion. Huiztilopochtli was the patron god of the Aztecs who led them to the "promised land," the island in the center of Lake Tenochtitlan where they founded a capital, much as Yahwah led the Hebrews to Canaan. He has nothing to do with cold water or "deep ones." It seems primarily a war god - again like Yahweh - and he was born of a virgin-mother goddess. Perhaps the final letters of his name, "chtl", have something to do with Laneys' correlation; at any rate, he would seem to be more likely one of the spawn of Yog-Sothoth, who is known to beget his progeny on mankind...

But in the Mound, we read that the humans who occupied blue-litten K'n-yan, which land lies somewhere far within the earth beneath the southwestern United States, carried on trade or contact of some sort with the surface Indians of centuries ago. The people of K'n-yan worshiped Yig and Cthulhu, and their images often occupied the same temple. Furthermore, it is definitely stated that Yig is the prototype of the great Mesoamerican god Quetzalcoatl, the "feathered serpent.

The interesting thing is that there is a very important archaeological site in central Mexico where Quetzalcoatl was evidently worshipped alongside another god who bears some striking resemblances to Cthulhu. This site is Teotihuacan, a huge ancient city which was abandoned long before the Aztecs or even the Toltecs came to dominate central Mexico, and the god is the one that the Aztecs later came to call Tlaloc, the Rain God.

Teotihuacan, in the Aztec language, means "place of the gods." The pyramids there are so huge that the Aztecs evidently thought they had been reared by the gods in ancient times. The largest one is as big around as the great pyramid of Khufu in Egypt. But the most interesting thing pertaining to this study is that one of the lesser pyramids, a famous one often called the "Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl," contains carvings along its sides of two twin-tailed deity, one of which is obviously a serpent and the other some strange being with perfectly round eyes and suggestions of tentacles around his mouth. These deities are supposed to represent the prototypes of the later Aztec base deities, Quetzalcoatl and Tlaloc. But one of the most amazing things about this pyramid-temple is that along its base, beneath the carvings of the two gods, are bas-reliefs depicting marine motifs - the fact that Teotihuacanos was several hundred miles from the sea. The designs are primarily of snails, scallops and other mollusks.

After the Teotihuacanos (whose city seems to have been mysteriously abandoned along with a great many others around 800 A.D.) the Toltecs dominated the central Mexican plateau. Their principal god was Quetzalcoatl, but they also worshipped Tlaloc. They depict him on temple carvings and as urns as a more human-like being than did the Teotihuacanos, but his eyes are still huge, round and expressionless and there are suggestions of tentacle-like appendages around his mouth. The Toltecs' capital city, strangely enough, is called "Tula"!

Still later, in Aztec times, Tlaloc was worshipped atop the greatest pyramid in Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) alongside Huiztilopochtli rather than Quetzalcoatl, who now had a pyramid of his own. Quetzalcoatl came to be worshipped on circular, truncated pyramids, rather than those in the shape of a coiled serpent.

It was supposed by the Aztecs that there was not merely one "great" Tlaloc, but many subservient ones as well, especially four who ruled over the four quarters of the earth. They were somehow considered to be associated with frogs - a rather striking association considering some of Derleth's stories in which croaking frogs herald the coming of Cthulhu or his minions. Students of Aztec mythology speak of the "croaking of Tlaloc" as the advent of rain and that this is how batrachians were first associated with Tlaloc, the rain god. But HPL students know better, I'm sure.

When we consider other Mesoamerican cultures, the resemblances continue to hold: the Zapotec culture, well inland, depicts its rain-god, Cocisio, as fundamentally human, yet with a queerly long and tentacle-like proboscis and with huge ear-rings that resemble the round, staring eyes of Tlaloc; the Toltecs on the Gulf coast have temples to Quetzalcoatl in the truncated shape, roughly like a coiled serpent. But the really striking correlations occur when we study the coastal Mayans of the Yucatan Peninsula.

The Mayan rain god, the equivalent of the Aztec Tlaloc, is called Chac. He is depicted on the limestone-built temples of the region as a being possessing not only round, staring, expressionless eyes, but with a coiling, tentacle-like proboscis exhibiting suction discs on both sides! In the recently-excavated city of Uxmal, the Laurenz is actually a representation of Chac showing him with several long tentacles protruding from the side of his head - tentacles with suction-discs.

In the long-abandoned city of Chichen-Itza, the Mayans used to sacrifice young men and maidens to Chac by throwing them, dripping with cold water, into the "cenote," which was sacred to the god. Yucatan is entirely a huge, flat plain of limestone, honeycombed with underground caverns winding off to the sea, and pock-marked with "cenotes" or wells marking the collapsed roofs of water-filled caves. Chac was supposed to live at the bottom of the particular "cenote" at Chichen-Itza. If the thing the Mayans actually worshipped was one of the squidlike minions of Cthulhu, it could have easily oozed in from the ocean via the underground waterways draining the limestone peninsula.

Another striking correlation: the Mayan word for the serpent-being was not Quetzalcoatl but "Ik" or "Ix" - a word identical to "Yig", considering that the Mayans had no phonetical alphabet but rather a complex system of hieroglyphics!

Finally, returning to the Aztecs, there was an earth-god Tlaltecutli, who was represented as a huge frog or toad. He is considered to be one of the older gods in Aztec mythology, antedating Quetzalcoatl and Tlaloc. Students of HPL who have read The Mound will recall that the worship of Tsathoggua, the toad-god, (see illustration) preceded the worship of Yig and Cthulhu in blue-litten K'n-yan.
I could make some more correlations here, like equating Cthugha with Huehuetotl, the fire-god of the Aztecs, or Nyarlathotep with Tezcatlipoca, who is the god of Evil and takes many forms including that of a jaguar, or Hastur with Mictlantechutli, Lord of the Dead, whose association with the Dios Muroielago or bat-god seems similar to Hastur's rule over the bat-winged Byakhee. But I won't detail all these associations; I think the reader can see the technique I am using. It is probably the technique theologians everywhere have always used: first establish your conclusions and then correlate them with your data.

This is not to say, though, that there are not some very striking correlations between the Cthulhu and Mesoamerican mythos. I have tried this same technique on other existing religions such as the Incan, the Polynesian and the Hebrew-Christian; in all cases, I have found striking correlations here and there; but to date I have found none more striking than the relationship between these two. Did HPL or Zealia Bishop deliberately incorporate elements of central American myth into the structure of the lore of Cthulhu? I think it quiet possible. Perhaps someone can document this more fully some day.
HPL on NIGHT GALLERY: A Review by Bill Wallace

Last summer at Dallascon Robert Bloch announced that Rod Serling's NIGHT GALLERY would be using at least one adaptation of a story by H.P. Lovecraft. I can recall that my feelings at the time were mixed. I was glad that the media were at last awakening to the potential of H.P.'s work. (Prior to this there had been only a couple of obscure radio plays and the four more-or-less Lovecraftian films.) On the other hand, I was apprehensive that the adaptations would not do credit to their source.

Last year the six episodes of NIGHT GALLERY done as one third of NBC'S THREE IN ONE were all passable. I have particularly fond memories of The Dead Man, The Black Bag, and especially of the excellent adaptation of Blackwood's The Doll. Thus when the season started my hopes were fairly high. They fell as the season progressed and I watched Jack Laird and company fall short of even fair quality again and again.

The first shadow of HPL to appear was in the short (Thank Yog!) segment, Professor Peabody's Last Lecture. Done as an intentional farce it emerged as a fairly amusing effort, loaded with "in" jokes that must have caused vast confusion in the dens of thousands of middle Americans. The skit consisted entirely of a lecture by a Professor Peabody on the "Cthulhu Religion," which he dismisses as pure tripe. The dialog ran entirely on only a couple of mistakes and displaying a copy of the famous black book he pays the price for speaking the name of Hastur aloud. Only a few weeks after this, on December the first, the first of the Lovecraft adaptations appeared. By the end of the show I was praying that it would be the last. Pickman's Model was pretty much of a disappointment; adapted by Alvin Sapinsley, the segment ran for about thirty minutes and starred Bradford Dillman and Louise Sorrell. And I can hear everyone who didn't ask for it calling out for and Miss Sorrell would play in a story with all male characters. The answer lies in the ancient revered belief that a pretty face adds audience appeal. It is the same ancient and revered belief that gave us Sandra Dee in THE DUINCH WORM. The addition of a female character, a Miss Goldsmith, was fairly easy to overlook. It allowed a much better development of Richard Upton Pickman than a male character would have. She is a young art student in one of Pickman's classes who is drawn to him, despite the obvious disinterest on his part. She pursues him for as his studio where she meets with a ghastly set of adventures and visits Pickman's other unspeakable paintings before the artist himself disappears in the arms of an eldritch nightingale.

Doesn't sound too bad? It was. The substitution for Lovecraft's brooding, gathering horror of an agile man with a fondness for smelly ghouls, plus a ghastly suit is all but unforgivable. Only the scenes where Miss Sorrell enters the house and begins a slow walk toward the attic studio hold any of the tension of HPL's story. The painting around which the tale centers, "Ghoul Feeding," is excellent. The attic pictures range from crude sketches to an almost hilarious "family portrait."

It is this portrait which, I think, most upset me. Where Lovecraft achieved rather subtly the revelation of Pickman's inhuman ancestry (completely inhuman...he was a changing...not a hybrid) NIGHT GALLERY chose to reveal it blatantly. In a portrait of Pickman, a human woman and a ghastly male all posed as though for a family photograph. To add to this effrontery, Mr. Sapinsley had to point out to all the mindless tube-addicts, what has been obvious for at least ten minutes in Miss Sorrell's final line, "He painted what he saw...and what he was!!!"

To be completely fair, I must allow that the show did have some good parts: some of the build-up, the ghastly transformation of a picture into a horrifying thing, the scene after theGHoul Feeding" was excellent. I assumed at the time that this was to be used to provide a first person narrative and was dissapointed when it turned out to be only a slight deviation from the setting. There the two men are on the verge of freezing a snarling ghoul. Altogether though, the whole effort made me most unwon for more televised Lovecraft.

Within 5 minutes after of that night's program I knew that my hopes were in vain. The previews showed scenes from a story that could only be HPL's Cool Air. A brief hope flared again within me, however next week was called to have hopes for Cool Air since it is not a particularly Lovecraftian story: that is, it does not involve inhuman beings or unwieldy special effects. I thought that, surely, if any HPL story can be done right on TV, the show will be it.

Cool Air was well done. It is probably one of the best things to appear on NIGHT GALLERY this season. The framing sequence of a person visiting a lonely, wind-swept graveyard was used effectively to allow Barbara Rush to narrate the tale in first person. The pacing of the show was slow and powerful with none of the foreshadowing that weakened Pickman's Model. Sapinsley was again completely faithful to the original (with the inevitable feminine substitution, of course).

Only at the end did the effort fall short of greatness. The nature of the plot line when it is revealed is just not all that horrifying, certainly not the "pool of foulness" that HPL described. I realize that this inability to make things too horrible is an inherent failing of a mass medium like television. Protest over excess horror was one of the factors that killed WAY OUT, probably the best Weird Tales series ever to be televised, but last season, in Leiber's The Dead Man, NIGHT GALLERY managed to create a truly shuddersome corpse. This is, however, a weak complaint.

The other flaw at show's end is the gimmick that Serling, or his producer, felt was necessary. This was a shot of the man's grave in the end of the framing sequence. Refusing to end the tale with the end of Miss Rush's excellent narration, someone insisted on a shot of the gravestone with two death dates, apparently wanting to insure that there was no one in the audience who did not understand the point of the story.

I suppose that what we all have HPL stories that we'd like to see adapted to film. For my part, I would like to see The Haunter of the Dark done properly. There are rumors of film versions of other Lovecraft stories, and I suppose that the possibility of future NIGHT GALLERY adaptations exists. We can only pray to whatever dark gods rule the mass media that they are done right . . .

At present James Schevill teaches writing at Providence's Brown University, which presumably accounts for his interest in HPL. Brown's theatrical group, the Trinity Square Repertory Company (apparently not a square as its title would indicate), asked Schevill, who had acquired somewhat of a reputation as a poet and playwright, to write a play for them; so what more natural than for Schevill to turn to HPL, Brown's chief (perhaps only) literary glory, for his inspiration?

Lovecraft's Follies premiered from March 10 to April 11 of 1970; but news of its existence percolated very slowly through the circle of Lovecraft's fans and former correspondents, and the news apparently was not good, not good at all. Cries of "Sacrilege!" and "Lose majeste!" were heard. "Lovecraft's Follies' indeed," Robert Bloch relates. "Mr. Oppenheimer, knowing the contents of the play, bristled at the title, for Lovecraft, of course, was much too prim and circumspect in his behavior ever even to contemplate committing his name 'follies.' The fans might have gone along with the title, Lovecraft's Idiosyncraticus, for everyone knows he had more than his share of those, but follies..."

I must admit that I came to the reading of the play prepared to dislike it. "One would wish that Mr. Schevill had written the play with more than just a superficial knowledge of the works of H.P. Lovecraft," was a reaction I heard prepared to glow. As it turned out, apparently Schevill does know quite a lot about HPL; I was startled in Scene 1 of Act I by the action of HPL, aged 2, of slapping his father on the leg and saying, "Papa, you're just like a young man!", for this episode was described in just such language in one of HPL's letters to me.

Lovecraft's Follies is not a play about HPL at all; the play is used only as a point of departure, a symbol. The central character is a scientist-artist named Stanley Millsage, who has suddenly left his job in Huntsville, Alabama at the Marshall Space Center to come to Providence, where he has created a sculpture of HPL out of old WIZARD TALES covers. We do not learn until late in the second act that the reason for his flight was that one night precisely like the protagonist in Ray Bradbury's story, The Pedestrian, he had decided to take a walk and during the walk he tripped over some construction work, whereupon he was immediately surrounded by policemen and later taken to a mental hospital for two weeks for "observation." Like Oppenheimer, whose trial as a security risk is re-enacted in the second act, Millsage becomes "suspect"; and the Space Center enlists the aid of Millsage's wife and his brother Paul to try to bring him back to "science." One wonders why Oppenheimer's trial was brought into the play, apparently so willy-nilly, until he reads this explanation from Schevill himself: "I was born and grew up in Berkeley, California, in the midst of the exciting, major discoveries in nuclear physics. E. O. Lawrence, the head of the Radiation Laboratory and the inventor of the cyclotron was a neighbor, and Oppenheimer lived on the hill above our house."

Millsage is not supposed to be a fictional representation of HPL; indeed, he is the antithesis of Lovecraft, for at one point in the play he says, "I don't happen to be the kind of person who can live alone. I don't like to look at myself in the mirror. I like to look at a woman. It's a softer reflection." But HPL's work fascinates Millsage, who tells his wife: "What I am trying to say to you is that maybe we have to go through the fantastic world to get to our own reality."

Possibly, as James Hade claims, the work of someone who died in 1937 has little pertinence to the problems of the modern world; but James Hade does not think so, and this reviewer doesn't either.

Lovecraft's Follies may bewilder a lot of readers. Like all plays, it cries out for theatrical representation, for it is a poetic and descriptive work, and as such it demands ingenious staging. It is very much "with it": like Hair, like Lenny, it is an exciting new stage concept. Perhaps if ultimately fails, but one would need to see it upon a stage to determine that, rather than just a reading. Obviously, it is not great art, but then how many works of the modern theatre are?

A detailed synopsis of the plot would only confuse the reader. For the Lovecraft buff, there are some "goodies": perhaps only crumbs, but good crumbs. There is a very vivid scene in which HPL, aged 2, is forced to climb upon a table and recite "Mother Goose verses while his mother berates his father for his syllabubs. The end of the second scene is utterly chilling, with the actors suddenly chanting the familiar simonister Cthulhu chants and with one scene from The Rats in the Walls re-enacted. And later on Schevill mocks at HPL's theories of Nordic supremacy in a fairly feeble skit in which Tarzan and Cheeta are captured by the Green Goddess and HPL urges Tarzan to "think white."

This, as noted previously, is the play not primarily about HPL but about man's insecurity in a world of technology. As with almost everyone else, Schevill's attitude toward technology is a bit ambivalent: he wallows at man's space achievements (and provides a really superior re-enactment of the moon landing), but is aghast at some of technology's methods and its degrading effect upon man's spirit. And his play, with all its manifold defects, should provide a stimulating evening in the theatre or a provocative reading experience.
In 1946, the late August Derleth announced publication by Arkham House of a volume of selected letters of the fantasy writer, H.P. Lovecraft, his mentor. Nineteen years later, when the book finally appeared, it had become the first of a set of three; now that the third volume is out, the total has swelled to five, and the project has become a posthumous one supervised by the Derleth heirs, completion of which - so far as anyone can determine at this point - may be delayed until the Lovecraft centenary in 1990, or at least the 50th anniversary of his death in 1987.

Derleth had the right idea the first time - one book, carefully edited and pruned, would have been enough. The five-volume set, amounting to a probable 2,000 pages, will be far less useful and enjoyable a monument than a single collection of three or four hundred pages would have been.

After all, as much as we may admire his fiction and his intellect, sympathize with his problems, or respect certain aspects of his personality and philosophy, Lovecraft was not a major figure such as Emerson; his volumes, every word of whose ephemera is apparently of interest, or at least potential use, to the specialists.

And now that Derleth, a fabulous miner in the Lovecraftian depths who has brought forth more gold, and dross, than HPL would ever have imagined he produced, is himself gone, who is there to sit down and refine all this material into a manageable BEST OF THE LETTERS OF H.P. LOVECRAFT?

Like any prolific correspondent, Lovecraft repeated himself, sometimes describing the same places and events (he cared little for people) in virtually the same words in several letters. Though the epistles have been shortened by the editors, not all this repetition is eliminated.

In addition, as he himself recognized, Lovecraft used his voluminous letter-writing to formulate his own views and attitudes, and to bounce them off his various correspondents in a slow-motion version of the give-and-take of face-to-face discussion denied him by his self-imposed isolation. (More than one of these letters comes to over fifty pages in print!) All this presupposes a degree of prolixity.

This third volume, covering only the years 1929 to 1931, represents the emergence of the mature thinker. Lovecraft still clings to his insular preference for Nordic-Anglo-Saxon civilization, but finally admits that, rationally, this is simply because of the circumstances of his birth and environment, not due to any intrinsic values, which must necessarily be denied by a scientific analysis.

He still judges " primitives " as inferior, including the negroid race; but this is probably unavoidable in a natural snob raised on the pseudo-scientific racism of Cobineau and Houston Chamberlain, at a time when they were still taken seriously.

The respect which he grants, however grudgingly, to Orientals, Slavs, Italians and Jews as members of high cultures sits oddly with the fulminations against minority groups that still strew these pages. But he goes on record quite clearly as opposing not only miscegenation but any close contact whatever between differing cultural groups, on the grounds that such groups are fundamentally and irrevocably hostile to one another - an observation which is not much that happens in the U.N. today would tend to disprove.

There are passages of amusing whimsy and exotic prose in these pages; of warm nostalgia and penetrating observation. But it is not disparaging Lovecraft's pre-eminence as a letter-writer - earned in term of sheer volume alone! - to point out that he has some epistolary quirks that can become annoying. As if to compensate for his ornate 18th century style and archaic spelling, he regularly throws in frivolous passages of current (now dated) slang or crude patois, a device that probably didn't bother the recipients of the letters, but which palls over hundreds of pages.

But taken all in all, the real man is there in these letters, concealed as he may be in mannerisms and Mandarinism: this complex blend of neuroasthenic invalid and Nordic superman; of arrogant poseur and lonely misfit; of cosmic fantasiste and rigorous scientific materialist; of scholar, scoffers, and seeker; of life hater, and lover who never found object worthy of his love, or who never found himself worthy to offer love, save in the indirect guise of these torrential, compulsive letters which both clamor for and repel that affection which was, after all (as he never realized) simply his due as a human being.
THE DERLETH MYTHOS
By Richard L. Tierney

(Illo by Virgil Finlay for Derleth's The Return of Hastur from WEIRD TALES; original loaned by Steve Lowerth of the Haunted Bookshop (see last page) and permission to reprint granted by Mrs. Beverly S. Finlay)

The "Cthulhu Mythos" is largely the invention of, not H.P. Lovecraft, but August Derleth. Lovecraft, of course, did the groundwork. He invented most of the gods, demons and servitors - and, above all, he provided the spooky, gothic atmosphere necessary to the genre. Yet it seems to me that it was Derleth who established the concept of a "Mythos" to comprehend all the Lovecraftian concepts.

Lovecraft himself seems never to have entertained such a concept. His outlook on the supernatural and the cosmos had been basically dynamic - it was constantly developing through out his life. Derleth's attitude on the other hand was laconic; he appreciated Lovecraft's concepts but cared less for developing them than for systematizing them. His efforts were interesting but less than successful from an aesthetic point of view. This is not to say that Derleth was unesthetic but merely that, in my opinion, his basic outlook, his non-Lovecraftian and his attempt to carry on the Lovecraft tradition left out something vital.

Derleth probably coined the term "Cthulhu Mythos." If he did not, he certainly developed the attitude that goes with that term. Consider the basic premises of the "Mythos": a cosmic cluster of "good guys" (Elder Gods) protecting the human race from the "bad guys" (Ancient Old Ones) who are striving to destroy it (humanity)! Derleth maintains that this is all a parallel of the "Christian Mythos," with a twist against good vs. evil, but without the central point of view. Evil Ancient Ones are striving to take our planet from us, but angelic Elder Gods always intervene in time to save us.

Derleth's pantheon differs from the human's. In his view of the cosmos, the bad thing is that he has made all too many believe that his view is that of Lovecraft also. This is simply not true. Lovecraft's picture of the universe and Derleth's are completely dissimilar.

Lovecraft seems determined to link the Cthulhu pantheon with Christianity and the Medieval tradition by making it a struggle between "good" and "evil" from an anthropocentric point of view. Too, the concept of "elemental forces" in the Mythos seems to be Derleth's own - borrowed from the ancient theory that all things (souls) are compounded from the four elements: fire, water, earth, and air. Derleth runs into many contradictions here. For instance, he makes Cthulhu and his minions water beings, whereas The Call of Cthulhu has them coming down from space and building their cities on land, only later to be submerged by geological upheavals, and this is a catastrophe which immobilizes the Cthulhu spawn. Hastur is portrayed as an "air elemental", but at the same time Derleth implies that he lives on the bottom of the lake of Hali. Yog Sothoth and Nyarlathotep, probably the two most purely Cosmic of all Lovecraftian entities, are sited in the "earth" category, while finally, he invents the fire elemental, Cthugha, to round out his menagerie of elementals. (Lovecraft invented no beings that could be construed as "fire elementals"). Cthugha comes from the star Fomalhaut - presumably because Lovecraft once mentioned that star in one of his poems.

Elementals aside, the whole basic concept of Derleth's "good-versus-evil" Mythos seems as non-Lovecraftian as anything conceivable. Lovecraft actually regarded the Cosmos as basically indifferent to anthropocentric outlooks such as good and evil. The "shocker" in his best tales is usually the line in which the narrator is forced to recognize that there are vast and powerful forces and entities basically indifferent to humanity because of their overwhelming superiority to man.

Most writers continuing the "Cthulhu Mythos" in fiction or documenting it in scholarly articles are merely perpetuating the misconceptions begun by Derleth, and feel Lovecraft reached his highest imaginative peak in the two novels, The Shadow Out of Time and At the Mountains of Madness. In both these tales, Lovecraft turned the whole universe into a haunted house, so to speak, linking the findings of modern science to the flavor of Gothic horror. In so doing, he created a type of "creepy" story that 20th Century man could continue to believe in even after the traditional trappings of cemeteries, crumbling castles, haunted mansions, etc. began to acquire the flavor of cliches. But Lovecraft's followers have never pursued this line of development, without exception they all leave Man and his values at the center, in the Derleth tradition, and most of them even continue to use the non-HPL devices of "Lidor Gods", "elementals" etc. while writing endless variations on the basic Lovecraftian themes dealing with Dunwich and Innsmouth.

To sum up: The Cthulhu Mythos as it now stands is at least as much Derleth's invention as it is HPL's. The line of Lovecraft's development remains open - no one has really taken up as yet where he left off and it leads toward the cosmic. Yet if one wants to get to the heart of what Lovecraft felt about the cosmos, one must sidestep Derleth and his followers.
Although I was born in a drab, raw industrial suburb of St. Louis forty years after H.P. Lovecraft made his appearance in the ancient New England seaport, I grew up in a Lovecraftian childhood, in the sense that I was overprotected, reclusive, bundled up against the cold, and developed precocious interests in astronomy, paleontology, mythology, and the scribbling down of little liminal fantasy stories (the first actually dictated to my father before I could write).

My present situation shows some parallels, too; since, during a dozen years of residence in South Korea, I have made most of my living for most of this time by revision and ghost-writing—primarily of English publicity for the Korean government, plus the editing of journalistic and scholarly material, translations and otherwise.

However, I diverged from the Lovecraftian pattern to develop into a composer, not a writer primarily, notwithstanding the thousands of newspaper and magazine pieces, the fiction, and the three books I have published. In addition, I am an enthusiastic seafood lover and a connoisseur—occasionally even bibulous—non-Puritan; have contracted a lasting marriage; and am in the midst of raising an identifiable if untypically American family on foreign soil.

There comparisons end, becoming too attenuated. I write, however, veneration of a dedicated Lovecraftian "fan", collector, commentator, and sometime imitator since I first discovered H.P.L. via that rich yet inexpensive treasury, the Tower Books edition of THE BEST SUPER NATURAL STORIES, which I purchased for 49¢ in Woolworth's in 1945, when I was 15.

I was soon in touch with Arkham House via its ads in WEIRD TALES, of which I became a regular reader about this time. But I was just too late to acquire the first two Lovecraft omnibuses at list price (how I obtained them gratis, and then lost them again during a hectic three-month period in 1959, is another story).

I soon added to my collection MARGINALIA and THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD, books I still possess, plus every subsequent volume of the pantheon; though at first I was awed by the New England stories such as in THE VALTIN TALES of the Mythos tales. Before long, though, the daring cosmic escapism of the Myths found resonance in my early scientific interests, and I immersed myself in the universal mythology of THE SHADOW OUT OF TIME and AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS.

During the two-year period 1945-46, I wrote a sonnet sequence seeking to honor Lovecraft in the 18th century language he so admired (eventually published in THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR No. 4); a blank verse narrative with a Mythos basis, and a long story combining several Mythos themes (the latter two items are now being brought out as curiosities in THE DARK BROTHERHOOD JOURNAL).

The novelette I hopefully sent to August Derleth of Arkham House, who criticized it severely, not realizing that it was the work of a 16-year-old. (It was hardly more clumsy or derivative than the weird fiction he himself was writing and selling at that age and much earlier.) This rebuff ended my Lovecraftian writing phase for 21 years; though I did turn out half a dozen or so dissimilar horror tales in my twenties that are now beginning to receive professional publication.

In 1967 I learned that Arkham House was planning an anthology of new and old Mythos stories primarily by writers other than Lovecraft. Coincidentally, TIME carried a report on Dr. Lilly's research into dolphin intelligence that suggested to me a link with Lovecraft's undersea races. The result was my 10,000 word novella, The Deep Ones, published in Arkham's TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS and reprinted (in a somewhat longer and different original version) in the second volume of the Beagle paperback in 1971 (a French edition is due too, I understand).

Having belatedly re-entered the world of H.P.L. as an active writer, I tossed off two satires: A Darker Shadow Over Innsmouth (THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR No. 5) and a mass-media spoof (THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR No. 10), plus several essays and specialized studies for "fan" publications. There is some interest on the part of the NATIONAL REVIEW, for which I have written literary essays, in publishing future studies of Derleth and perhaps Lovecraft that I might undertake.

The recent death of my old friendly enemy, Derleth, however, put an end—so far as I can see—to any feasible future professional markets for new fiction in the Lovecraft tradition. Perhaps this is just as well since Derleth's own efforts to continue the Mythos pattern—usually, and unforgivably, with Lovecraft listed as co-author—have been lamentably weak and unconvincing. It is probably better to regard the Mythos as a closed universe, including only the Lovecraft writings and a few stories written in his lifetime which he approved or even revised himself.

Lovecraft's influence on me (and others) has not been confined to the narrow field of macabre fiction. Study of his life, letters, and personality gave me an early admiration for him as a man of uprightness, integrity, and dedication to high ideals (as he saw them), battling a devastating array of psychic handicaps and hang-ups, turning his agonies into myths and, yes, occasionally art.

I never shared his prejudices, predispositions, or peeves; but examining them has helped me gain, I think, an understanding and a more tolerant sympathy for those who are different and, at first glance, unprepossessing. This tolerance, I hope, characterized Lovecraft himself at his best (which may not have been often; but who can claim more?).

Thus I don't think the time and energy I have devoted to study and emulation of this greatest of the Old Ones of modern fantasy have been wasted. Lovecraft, with his strange but oddly attractive personality, and his posthumous Svengali, Derleth, are both gone now. But their influence continues to spread like bright ripples radiating across the stagnant flow of fantasy fiction, that meandering, beguiling literary stream in whose shallows, for reasons that seemed to them sufficient, they chose to skulk.
In the first place, much of the Gulf Coast exists in a state of so-called tidelands - shifting ocean floors, small land masses rising and falling constantly. A gradual shifting of the entire cartographical overview, this causes thorny tax and boundary problems for the state and federal governments.

In my Louisiana-Cthulhu stories I have used such actual settings as Isles Dernieres, Raccoon Point, the Black Bayou, and Morgan City. In addition I have invented (so far) the Delarieu plantation, known as the Black Plantation, where in the last century a family of alleged sorcerers maintained an uncommonly large slave population - which seemed to remain constant despite heavy purchases of human chattel on the New Orleans blocks. And of course Colin Wilson's Gruden Itza will figure prominently.

The story under immediate attention at the moment is a 7,500-word piece about a confrontation between a pawn of the Old Ones and a wise Kabbalist, entitled The Spengler Sabbath. Others - tentatively titled The Dark Plantation and Gruden Itza - will follow.

Advice to would-be Arkham House writers: use your own home ground. Research your region's dark history and its geography, and fit it into the Mythos. In such a way the tapestry of the tales of Cthulhu grows - and you become a writer.
The lighthouse gleams in hues of red, as night accedes to waves and foam; the spectral light, as of the dead, repeats itself through field and loam.

The winds conspire and speak tonight, the music of the clouds contends; the sunken city shines with light, the effulgent pillar portends.

The human hands release the wheel, the human hands in weakness halt; the dreaming poets speak, then feel the movement of the benthic fault.

The moon obscures with bat-like forms as throaty chants are consummate; the lighthouse for its keeper mourns and the hearts' pulsations abate.

The earth, the sea, the sky converge, combine in sharp response at last: babblings of eldritch horror urge pennings of the cosmically vast . . .

The tragic tale surely ends here: the ravings of a mind gone mad, but is it aught save wild-eyed fear? or glimpse of real horrors he had?

- John Jacob

CRESCENDOES FOR THE WIND WALKER

So weary of my tawdry times
And seeking solace in the past
I put aside my nightmare rhymes
And travel where the myths are cast.

I walk alone, a trespasser,
In the twilight lands of doom,
Where shadow shapes of night bestir
To play dissonances of doom.

The Moon, my once proud journey mate,
Is lost in spawning stellar clouds,
While all the worlds have met their fate
Their ghosts wear nebula shrouds.

The haunted nightland cities burn
And nothing will rise from their pyre,
Comets in their orbits writhe and turn
As I seek the Guardian of Fire.

In judgment's midnight radiance, I dream
And set my course through star mists,
Down time's whole unbounded stream
With all its labyrinthine twists.

Down pallid paths, through R'lyeh's mouldering ways
I am hunted by a grim and silent stalker
Who knows where great Cthulhu stays
And calls me "The Wind Walker."

- Richard Heffern
The Weird Tale of Phillip Love

BY JOSEPH F. PUMILLA

I screamed. My anguish cry was lost in the angry howl of the arctic wind, tossed across the hideously luminous sea and smashed upon the ice-crusted towers of a demon city older than Man. The roar and rattle of the wind seemed to presage the end of my universe, as though all eternity was being sucked down into some cyclopean maw. Again and again the relentless waves snatched at my feet, thrusting ravenously up the basalt precipice where I clung with bloody fingers. I was certain that the fluttering shadows cloaking the moon were not clouds, but the wings of unspeakable flying things of slime and fang and hard leather, gristle, blood and claw, soaring after nocturnal prey. My fingers began to slip even as I clutched at precarious safety, and horror upon horror - the sea opened, and there arose a great and heaving monstrosity which mere language is inadequate to describe.

I screamed.

Far below me came a terrible cry from a thousand bestial throats, "Utl! Utl! Utl!"

"Heigho, wake up, Sonny! It's just a bad dream."
The calm clear enunciation of the words seemed to give me more reassurance than the words themselves. When I opened my eyes, I saw the pale, long-jawed face hovering over me, and the large arms reaching out of the old grey dressing-gown to pull the covers up about my chin. At the same time Snowball came crawling up to see what the excitement was about, peering into my sleepy eyes with his green slitted eyes.

"Gawd! If you weren't having a roaring nightmare," he said. "Maybe it was those three helplings of ice cream right over your big swallow of Eddie Poe that loosened the unnamable horrors in your punkin' head, eh, kidlet?"

There was a squeak of springs and a minor earthquake as my cousin sat down on the old couch and yawned.

"Is it morning?" I asked, hopefully.

"Oh, goodness no. It's three in the ayen, an unholy hour for Sonny to be up and around." Snowball scratched at his sleeve, and he took her into his arms and began to pet her. "There must be some sinister emanations sopped up by my sanctum sanctorum that leaked out of the walls to produce such terrible nightmares your first night here. But never mind. Go back to sleep and I'll sit here with Snowball to fend off the foul fenny fiends till you're snug in dreamland."

"I don't want to go to sleep," I said in a small voice. "I'm scared."

"Nonsense. There's no such things, whatever they were. Take Grandpa's word for it. If there were, I wouldn't have to invent so many of them."

I curled up my legs and rolled up against my cousin, and with my face half into the pillow, confessed, "They were hollering 'Utl! Utl!'"

The springs squeaked again. "Utl? That's a coincidence, isn't it, Snowball? Snowball purred as Howard scratched her chin. He yawned again. "Back to sleep, now, so Grandpa can catch up on his own. I won't take no for an answer."

And he sat there till I lay very quiet, and I don't think I went to sleep just then, for it seemed as though I can remember him moving around on his side of the room and talking to Snowball. It sounded like: "Hear that, kitty? Utl-utl. And do you suppose it came from the sea, too? Ah, there never was a-kinda more noble than that man from our foreign George III, God save him!" After that there was a rustle of paper and - sleep.

One day about two weeks later two things came for cousin Howard: a visitor and a letter. While he was splashing in the tub upstairs, the phone rang. Aunt Lillian sent me upstairs with the message, and seconds later my cousin appeared fully dressed and ran downstairs to take the call. It was a writer-friend from his "long lost childhood," and while he was waiting for him to arrive, he began to sort through his mail, which I'd brought to his room earlier.

"This is damned strange," I heard him say. I watched solemnly from the door as he ripped open a big manilla envelope. He took a scrap of paper from inside, scanned it, studied the postmark on the envelope, then peered at some other papers inside and frowned. "I'll be damned!" he repeated.

Then there was a wild honking and bellowing from out front, and his expression changed completely. He snatched his coat, ran to the window and waved, and pattered me on the head on his way out.

"Keep out of trouble, Sonny," he called to me. "I'll make a full report when I get back."

"Can't I go?" I asked plaintively.

"No, not today. Don't know when I'll be back, and your aunt would have me on the rack if I kept you past naptime. Go and read that book I showed you - stars and planets, and all that."

And he strode with long steps down the front walk and climbed into a battered old Essex where a smiling man with a straw hat and green suspenders was waiting. After they drove out of sight, I ran back to his desk to look at the envelope.

The first scrap of paper he'd read was a handwritten note: "You can't fool me, Howard. I'd know your stuff anywhere, especially your bad stuff. Of course, this is a joke. Or is your doting aunt trying to market your prepubescent juvenalia? Why don't you pretend somebody else wrote this and then revise it? Don't forget to pay yourself, of course! Come on, send me some of the good stuff. And get your typewriter fixed." It was signed by the editor of a popular pulp fiction magazine.

The papers inside the folder were a manuscript of two typed, single-spaced pages. The corners of the pages were badly mutilated. There was no return address anywhere. On the first page of the manuscript was the title and author:

THE PHARAOH'S CAT
by
Phillip Love

The rest of the manuscript, though typed, was hardly legible. Scarcely a word or line was not without incredible errors of spelling or composition. But the story itself reduced me completely to a trembling state, not because of any intrinsic horror but because it reproduced in detail my terrifying dream of a few nights before!

Not knowing what to make of this mystery, I replaced the papers as they had been, and took up the astronomy book he had recommended to me after I had
asked him some questions about the origin of the universe. The book was but one of the nearly 1,500 books he had managed to cram into his tiny reading room. I spent the rest of the day in his library but I'm afraid my mind wasn't on astronomy. And when Aunt Lillian came to announce dinner she told me I was surely following in her nephew's footsteps, for he had been a bookish and precocious child.

Howard was actually a distant cousin. He was not old, even though he called himself my Grandpa. He and his aunt had generously taken me into the house after my mother had died, leaving me alone, and I greatly appreciated this kindness, for they were by no means well off. There was a small income from a mortgage they owned on an old quarry on the outskirts of Providence, but otherwise, source of income was my cousin's revision work which consisted of revising stories for would-be authors - that and his own writing, of course. Despite the fact that it print as trite and unimaginative in the supernatural in any form, he specialized in horror stories, or weird stories, as he called them.

We lived in a big Victorian boarding house on Barmo Street. Howard's apartment was in a covered downstairs, and my aunt lived upstairs. I had been provided with a garret room.

It was summertime in Providence, and I was spared the burden of scold for half-carrying ists to various branches of the family searching for someone to take me in permanently. There weren't many children of my age nearly, and I often spent the day wandering about, which until I encountered Howard's TALES he kept on top of the bedstead. Sometimes I would open up the glass-doored cabinet and read through Howard's unpublished manuscripts, of which there were three and the top not one of which there were only a few. Those he had not transcribed on his 1906 Remington were almost totally illegible, and he often said that sometimes he couldn't read his own writing! Yet he chanced typing up a long story, and sometimes stuff would languish for years in this hieroglyphic form.

While he wrote mostly for WEIRD TALES, he had a very low opinion of the magazine. He considered the stories in those pages and unimpressive and said that the editors had turned down some of his stuff because it was over the heads of "the herd." He did not consider himself a commercial author, however. Howard thought of himself as an Edward who dabbled in literature. He once told me that if he could find the kind of stories he liked, he wouldn't bother to write any.

A curious thing about my cousin is that, though he'd lived in Providence virtually all his life, he knew very little about certain sections of the city. Old Providence, of course, was his dearest love, and Howard was a lively interesting filey colonial structures, in the quaint carvings upon its gravestones and in the twisting streets of the ancient slums. For the modern town with its autos and business sections and drab, modern buildings he had little love.

His acquaintance with certain of the older areas of town led one night to a great adventure that I shall never forget. This escape and the Byzantine intrigue that led to it was precipitated by the unexpected visit of one of my cousin's correspondents, a writer of weird stories like himself. He arrived one evening with the moon at his back and was welcomed into Howard's quarters where they sat up late drinking coffee and discussing life, art, weird fiction, THE WITCH CULT IN WESTERN EUROPE, prohibition and an occurrence of de'Ja vu which my cousin had once experienced himself and which the lucrative filey play as the remembrance of a similar scene in a dream. I sat through part of this discussion, but at last the nine o'clock curfew rang from the steeple of the old Baptist Church and then Lillian came to usher me to my quarters in the top of the house. I don't remember dreaming anything in particular after falling asleep, but I was subsequently wakened in the dead of night by two spectral orbs looming over my bed. One was my cousin and the other was his visitor.

"Ere ye wake, kidlet?" Howard asked. "The Sultan and myself are going slumbering in yonder dream-world on a quest for mystery and horror. He pointed a crooked finger out of the window at the quaint streets and angled roofs. "And we need an interpreter for certain prehistoric hieroglyphs and a guide through the nether regions."

"What the devil did you say?" I protested. "The dear child need never know," said Howard, and taking my hand, he led us tiptoe down the hall, past the rooms of the other tenants, and down the stuccoised the Sultan bringing up the rear. He scurved the front door like a trio of desponders on the run."

My blood was racing at the prospect of this journey, the appreciation of which was heightened by the delicious sense of the forbidden. Howard, who could see extraordinarily well in the dark, took the lead, but fortunately for me the moon was nearly full, transforming the ordinary wooden houses and familiar flowers into an enchanted world of crystal and gossamer.

As we walked down the silent streets that twist ed over the hills of Old Providence, my companions engaged in a discussion of the phantoms of WEIRD TALES. Sometimes I would let me in some especially ghastly sight, such as the huge mansion near our place that had been built in 1801 and was now said to be haunted. By the light of day, I'd not notice the third glance, but its brooding nocturnal appearance was enhanced greatly by Howard's recitation of several eerie tales probably fabrications on his part but scaring none the less.

How can I ever describe that pilgrimage through the uncharted labyrinths of that nighted city? What map could ever lead me to those wonders, those fantastic places. To myself revealed to my wondering eyes lies within the bounds of no map ever drawn. The sites I visited that night belonged to Howard's world, not ours.

Where did we go? Names come to mind - the mysterious Quinsinimmer woods, the dark banks of the twisting Seekouk, the horrible alleys in the slums of Federal Hill, the rotting warehouses and wharves of the antique waterfront, the weed-bordered road and loathsome hills of the three cemeteries of St. John's, haunted in life by Edgar Allen Poe himself, and all the hidden places that covered beneath the looming gambrel roofs and crumbling, hollow-eyed steeples.

My two abductors whisked me cheerfully along with them, sometimes half-dragging, half-carrying me to the crests of high hills, where they stretched out bony fingers on moon-paled hands, aiming my eyes at far fantasies, past the jagged roofs, marching gables and crooked spires to great circles of hanging stones where the bloody Druid-folk readied for battle against the legion of Imperial Rome, domed, bulbous mosques and tottering minarets and beyond, far beyond to the zigzags of Ur and the sacred Olympus.

There - there lies Carcosa, beyond that shroud of mist. Where the lady pillow'll - he only moved his hand but it seemed to me that there was a great rent in time itself, drawing back the curtain of stars to display a hideous, terrifying, cosmic vista of black emptiness and transmundane horror where in burned five unnamable hells. Those are the Hyades, where great Hastur lies bound in the lake of Hali!"

"Aye," said the Sultan, "even as it is written in the book of the Arab."

And there were unpaved streets and skulking shadows in the darkness, seething shadows that oozed over fences in a stealthy tide, that loomed from high trees and all manner of shadowed places. These silent daemons followed us in our journey through chur-
chards with lichen-crusted headstones, past crumbling crypts and toppled crosses, watched us on our journey into their nighted realm - the catacombs of Providence.

They meowed, screeched, sniffed, padded, leaped, flew, crawled, crept and flowed around us, a liquid tide of night-walkers; these denizens of the midnight land were only visiting.

"Where'd they all come from?" I asked.

"From the catacombs, of course," said the Sultan.

The light of the torches them two-fisted shells, Abyssinians, Maxaxes, inscrutable masked Siameses, Angoras, Persians, graveyard cats, alley cats, two-fisted tom cats, and, of course, the rare Tibetan temple cat and the sacred cat of Egypt.

And as high above us on a crazy-angled roof we saw a black shadow with a long tail on one end, two fire-fly eyes on the other and a hunched back between this contorted hieroglyph punctuated by an unearthly shriek deciphered by the keenest of our unnamable ears, undeniable Lord of the dark brotherhood sporting at our feet.

At the command of the cat-sultan, the feline tribe retired in a fury about a big and some of the lieutenants made answer. Another screech soared from the throats of that four-footed mob and before our eyes the cat-nation vanished as one in soundless thunder down the twisting, torturous tunnels of the alley-ways, the streets, dark alley-ways, and subterranean tributaries.

And now, high above us, on a crazy-angled roof we saw a black shadow with a long tail on one end, two fire-fly eyes on the other and a hunched back between this contorted hieroglyph punctuated by a unearthly shriek deciphered by the keenest of our unnamable ears, undeniable Lord of the dark brotherhood sporting at our feet.

"This can't be the thing I just sent - it's too soon for that to be returned. What can it be?"

He tore it open. He read a letter inside. "It's from little Farnie," he said. "Maybe he wants something revised downward so his moronic readership can understand.

Looking at the accompanying manuscript, his expression changed. He frowned. "I'll be damned," he said, softly. He looked at me, then at the manuscript, "I'm an amateur," said my cousin, "You asked me to read a letter containing the title 'Z' to which I drew special attention.

"Notice the break in the angular slant of the letter," he said. "It is identical with the 'Z' on this here machine; ergo, this abomination was engendered on this very same Remington - Q.E.D. Elementary, my dear Watson, eh, wot?"

I could only shrug helplessly.

He sat back in his chair, which emitted from its decayed springs and bolts a squeak of Pythonian proportions. "Little Farnie apparently had the perspicacity to recognize a rough parody of my own style, a talent no doubt worn into the slippery grooves of his brain through a long history of rejecting my stuff. Since the appearance of the Sherlock Holmes comic coincides roughly with the coming of the Sultan from his eastern haunts, it could be the old fellow's having a little fun with senile old grandpop."

However, a consultation with our friend on a later visit only deepened the mystery, for he swore by various divinities that he had had no part in such a ruse, though he admitted that it wasn't a bad jape.

But there was an eerie side to the mystery, for when I had read through but a part of the strange, badly typed story, I recognized it as a poorly-written account of some true and accurate, of the second dreadful nightmare that I experienced since my stay in this house. This dream had occurred some nights..."
after our journey through the benighted city and I had completely forgotten its substance, which this manuscript was to recall.

When I had explained this, with some trepidation on my part, to Howard, he had exclaimed, "Now there's one for Charles Fort!" but he remained too ambivalent to say what he meant by that. Now in the presence of his friend and myself, he admitted that the exact same dream had been experienced by him the same night!

"I didn't dream it," Howard thought you might be frightened. But fortunately, everything can be explained rationally."

"Aw, shucks," said the Sultan. "You mean you aren't hooked into the forty-line worlds beyond? I knew it was too good to be true."

"The only possible explanation is as follows," said Howard. "Both times, it was myself who was originator of the dreams. This is a logical assumption, because you drank the uncomumely susceptible to such weird forays into dreamland."

"But how could I have dreamed the same dream?"

"Simple," he said. "I talked in my sleep. My unconscious musings reached Sonny's damp little ears and took root in his dreaming mind. That first nightmare occurred when Sonny slept in my room his first night here."

"And the second nightmare? He was sleeping upstairs and you were downstairs. Explain that, without dragging in thought-transference, if you can.

"Why are you so hot on thought-transference? I wouldn't be surprised."

"We were both sleeping, and our brain activity during our sleep, I believe, had produced, in the first instance, a dream we both shared."

"But the second time, in the street!"

"I have an answer for that, too. First, my junior assistant here didn't reveal to us the substance of either dream after he had read those two strange manuscripts..."

"Which I hope you can explain, by the way."

"I can. And since we're all agreed that the human mind's responses and memories can be moulded by certain events, it's my contention that Sonny 'misremembered' his dreams to fit the manuscripts, making a superficial similarity even stronger."

"But didn't I tell you that after his visit, he had read those two strange manuscripts..."

"And I said my cousin. "It's just that these poor grey things in our skulls sometimes play tricks on us. They make us forget things we want to remember, and sometimes even make us remember things we never actually experienced in the first place."

"But our visitor only shook his head, laid a hand on my arm, and said, "In the brain..."

"I'm sorry, kid. Don't believe a word of that stuff. Mental telepathy is the only answer possible."

"I asked Howard, and I discovered the answer, the remainder, no matter how improbable, must be your answer."

"And there's no li'lor protestuce. I spent the rest of the summer at the house on Barnes Street reading in the library of my cousin, visiting a cinema show at the Strand with him occasionally, and sometimes fine the town with him, or, in a more restricted fashion, on my own.

By mid-August, after a vigorous letter-writing campaign to scattered relatives, arrangements had been made for me to live with the family of another distant cousin who had done some business with my father years ago in Boston. I realized the necessity of the move, but I was sad. I was, indeed, to leave the bustling Barnes Street household, the wonderful library, and my peripatetic cousin and his encyclopedic interests."

"Howard was deluged with ideas for making the transition painlessly. For the last week of my stay, we toured his beloved Old Providence and its verdant hills. Some of what we saw he undoubtedly must have transformed before he kept up a pretense that it was all new to him."

"No, Sonny, don't believe I've ever been up this way before. Why, heigho! I never saw that court. Look at those vines, look at those crumbling bricks. Don't they just hint at elder mysteries? Can't you just feel the ancientness of it all?"

"Occasionally we seemed to strike on new territory that was new ground, even to him. Sometimes when we did so, he would pause for a moment, genuinely puzzled, and say, "I don't think I've ever been here, but it looks so familiar." Especially the prospect of his指南 posts and those garbage heaps so well, kfaa, you'd be damned. Let's have a look, eh, kid? Lead the way for old grandpa."

"On my last night there, I summoned the temerity to show him some juvenile attempts at poetry that I had produced, in the first instance, a dream we both shared."

"And then the old First Baptist Church rang out its doleful nine o'clock curfew and Aunt Lillian appeared with a string of diamonds and a promise to keep me in pretty clothes."

"I lay awake long into the night, watching the scintillate moon slice its way through the cloak of night, chasing shadows around the room. And I dreamed.

"And I dreamed. There was the queerly twisted image of a sleeping, yet malignant city - all sharp angles and impossible curves, like something reflected in a shattered mirror. Through those cobbled streets, I wandered, low over the ground as though in a throbbing apprehension of the arachnid-architect of this tangle metropolis. I walked, I ran, I leaped, I climbed, skipping nimble and catlike atop the oddly-peeked roofs, inhaling terrible unearthly odors, billowing like unhallowed incense offered to the unhallowed gods. Over all this was the eldritch presence of a ravenous something from beyond and a soundless cry within my brain, a terrible soundless chant somehow emanating from within...

"Ull! Ull! Ull! Ull! Ull!"

"I knew that I was on some dreadful quest, the object of which seemed to elude my searching, grasping thoughts. That it was something ancient and awesome I did not doubt. That it or some manifestation of it was harbored in the tenebrous recesses of this angled city was a certainty. Though at first my attitude was one of curiosity, soon it intensified to a mania, a compulsion, and there grew in me the lurking fear that somehow the thing that was the object of my quest was drawing me inexorably to my doom."

"The sense of horror was heightened by the fact that I gradually became aware that I was not inhabiting my true form!"
Looming about me were terrors impossible to describe, terrors whose barriers of fear I crossed no longer out of antiquarian interest, but because of some driving force beyond me, drawing me onward, as the moon draws the sea. I was certain now, as I approached the place of final horror, that this was not a dream. The house on Barnes Street, my cousin, my aunts—all wisps of dream. This was reality. But what lay beyond that pall of darkness looming before me? What the source of that hideous snarling?—those eyes, those fangs—Ai, at—almighty Bast, protect me...

Beyond the window the spires and roofs of the ancient city dreamed under a silver moon. Far, far in the distance a dog howled. I cowered against the wall, clenching the bedclothes protectively around me, shivering.

We buried Snowball the next day in a shady nook behind the house. Howard told me that it could only have been coincidence that I knew of the cat's death, and that I had found the body so easily because I had determined the direction of the howling dog the night before—the dog that had destroyed poor Snowball. He said that he could not recall his own dream of the night before.

I didn't press my own theories on him, since he's already made his scientific materialistic outlook quite plain. He regretted not being able to see me off but assured me that only the most pressing of appointments had necessitated his absence. After some cheerful parting words, he left me in the company of the faithful old Deilah, Aunt Lillian being ill that morning with a bad cold.

While waiting for the bus at the Eddy Street terminial, the faithful old Negress said to me, "That's awful terrible about that cat. He sure was a run-around scalawag. And he was smart, too. Why you know what I seen one day when I came in to clean up, and Mr. Howard was sleeping? That cat was all over that typewriter, a-hitting at the keys like nobody's business. I sure did laugh."

"Did you see what he was typing?"

"Don't be silly, child. Cats can't write words."

And then I remembered the dreadfully bad typing of the "Phillip Love" stories—almost as though they had been typed by someone whose fingers were too big for the keys. And the curious mutilation of the page corners could have been caused by a cat's teeth. And the missing stamps... But it was all so unbelievable! Yet my cousin always did have a strong personality, and I read something years later about the famous talking mongoose case in Wales, which Fodor had investigated. Could the case of Snowball have been the same thing? Could Howard's unconscious mind actually possess the animal, and sometimes roam the streets at night in control of the cat's body, later remembering these experiences as dreams? Perhaps this is why he so loved those nightmarish twisting alleys of the decayed slums. I think that such a theory would explain those incidents of deja vu better than Howard's concocted after-the-fact rationalizations. Perhaps this strange nocturnal symbiosis was a unique thing, peculiar to this man and this cat. But after all, he always did have quite an affinity for the feline..."

Which causes me to wonder whether, when he died early that morning in March, 1937, in the Jane Brown Memorial Hospital, his literary output on the very brink of oblivion, perhaps as his hardy Yankee soul sprang free, perhaps down on the street behind, where the janitors had industriously piled the refuse of the day before, perhaps there was a wandering cat...
SOME UNPUBLISHED H.P. LOVECRAFT CORRESPONDENCE

(Between the years 1933 and 1936 it has been reported that H.P. Lovecraft engaged in correspondence with Mr. A. Walterton of Redditch, as well as with former Welsh Tattle and other noteworthy periodicals. For years scholars have searched, albeit half-heartedly and in vain, for traces of this alleged correspondence, as only recently did the news burst upon startled, but basically unreceptive, community of Lovecraft fans that this correspondence had been unearthed. Unfortunately, there are no extant letters from HPL in any of it and the following sample should be as much as, if not more than, anyone could ask.)

7 River Street
Ottawaquechee, Mass. 01933
12 December, 1933

Mr. Howard P. Lovecraft
10 Barnes Street
Providence, R.I. 02910

My Dear Howard,

How delighted I was to hear again from you. I was very much afraid that my negligent and careless loss of your original was AZATHOTH, and that you were forever beyond my ken and most deservedly so. What a forgiving nature you possess. Let me hasten to recount by way of apology the circumstances under which this tragedy occurred:

I had, per your thoughtful suggestion, taken pains to set a proper mood for the reading of this story, to wit: I proceeded upon receipt of it to procure candles, a warm shawl, and a camp stool and went out to the Indian burying grounds in the hills beyond the town. Placing the largest of the tapers firmly atop one of the megaliths which abound there, I sat on the camp stool and patiently awaited the falling of the night. Then I lit the candle and started reading, drawing the shawl close about me to guard against the cool of the eve. I was just at that scene where (illegible) had taken (uncipherable) to (untranslatable) over the (indescribable), when all of the sudden I know that someone, or some thing, was close behind me! The guttering candle threw long eerie shadows on the megaliths in front of me and a low, keening noise came to my ears. A cloud drifted over the moon and the whippoorwills struck up a chorus of ululations. The manuscript was fluttering in my hand. It was a moment straight out of one of those tales, or short stories, or poems, or essays of Lovecraft's, or Blackwood's, or Machen's or my own, for that matter. I screwed up my nerve and turned around abruptly and... the candle went out! For in my absorbed reading of your story I had completely disregarded the hour and the length of the candle. There, in the pitch black with nothing to defend myself but those many, many papers of piece, covered with your fine, crabbed handwriting, I felt I had but one choice - I stood up and flung those pages straight at the nameless horror behind me and ran like hell for town.

The next day with several cronies I returned to the spot and there to our horror we found... the remains of a small campfire, an open tin of beans (empt) scorched rather badly on the bottom, and no sign at all of my camp stool! One of the chaps pointed out that the fire seemed to have been started by crumpling together a vast quantity of paper and applying one of the matches I recalled having left behind, but I believe you and I know that these superfluous clues are merely intended to deter further investigation of the nameless rite doubtless conducted there to which I would have fallen victim had I been unembellished as I am now. (The name was surprisingly free of hoofprints, though.)

Looking forward to your most recently completed manuscript, The Lurker at the Threshold, I remain...

Yours,
Arr- Dubul-yoo Aitch

P.S. You neglected to mention what you thought of my poem, "The Creature from the Black Lagoon". Do you approve of the change of title from what it was originally, "Godzillia"? - R.W.H.

31 Cobblestone Street
Johnstone, Mo. 00913
11 March, 1934

Mr. H. P. Lovecraft
10 Barnes Street
Providence, R.I.

Dear Mr. Lovecraft,

It was very nice of you to suggest that I read the stories of Mr. Ambrose Bierce. I spent all last winter and this spring doing this and have written him many letters but have received no reply. Would it be troubling you to ask for a better address than care of his publishers?

Despite what you say, I still maintain that you are my literary idol and that I must strive to capture the essence of cosmic outsideness of which you speak. Compared to your works, such stories as Machen's The Willows or Blackwood's The White People pale to insignificance.

Frankly, I cannot see what you find of interest in old buildings. We've got a lot of old shacks up here, some built as early as 1873! I am not sure what you're talking about but I don't think any of these have gambrel roofs; in fact, not many of them have any kind of roofs at all, not the ones that are that ancient anyway.

You know, sir, since we started correspondence, when I was 12, I think I've grown up a lot, thanks to your influence. I mean; it takes a certain maturity to be able to send stuff to Farnie once a month, every month for 3 years now, and get those same rejection slips back, without taking it personally. Do you agree? Should I use a pseudonym?

Well, after a lot of thought I decided that I'm going to change my field of writing, so I'm going to
give you some of my story ideas that will really sell. You see, I’ll get the benefit out of seeing my ideas in your stories and you’ll get the money. Won’t that be great!

Here’s the first one: There’s this old witch, or maybe three old witches - use your artistic judgment on the matter. They see this knight coming by on the moor and they tell him he’s going to be king one day. They tell him that he can’t be killed by anyone who was born. So he and his wife kill the old king and that makes him king. It can be really bloody about here. Then he thinks that he’s got it made because nobody can kill him who’s been born. Then this big gloop comes out of the stars and splatt it’s all over for him because it had never been born. Neato, huh?

Best wishes, Artemis Flinch

Mr. Lovecraft
Providence, R.I.

Dear sir,

Ken ye well, I were clearing ground near Round Mtn. nigh fortunit ago and come on an old book. It had writ on it WEIRD TALES and inside I found where you had writ some too. Young Obed - that’s me - talked to me the meaning some and I fetched it to the cave - cave, I said, cave and we commenced to study on it. Freaded to tell ye, some as ye writ come close, which, I mean, which is not a Good Thing. So little Obed here - that’s me, again - is writing down like I tell him and I be telling him to tell ye, BEWARE! - Mister, he really means beware.

Yrs. (name withheld by a curse)

Mr. Howard P. Lovecraft
65 Prospect Place
Providence, Rhode Island Colony

Dear Mr. Lovecraft:

My solicitors, Bartleby, Bartleby & Scrivener, have advised me that I would be within my rights in making the following demands respecting certain of your allegedly "fictional" accounts which have caused me considerable pain, suffering, anxiety, and trouble to wit: By maternal grandmother was born in Ancestor and spectral legend has it that as a girl she was servant to a certain de la Poor family in whose service she was rendered quite completely mad by what she saw in a garden. Troubled with rats and Tifton & Meyer, Publishers, were considering a certain short story by you for inclusion within a new publication, GHASTLY CREEPS; in the course of such consideration, they changed to hasher name to Twattle, who serve them as well, and these gentlemen were struck by the libellous element of your tale. Naturally, Tifton & Meyer rejected the story as honour would behave and so to close properly the good name of Twattle it will be necessary for your publishers whom I understand are currently serializing an arctic adventure fortuitously not set in a recognisable portion of Great Britain, to print a retraction. I would not presume to advise as to the manner in which reparation could be made; this is entirely up to you and your solicitors - however, inasmuch as there are future installments of this arctic adventure and I have some skill with the king’s English, I have gratuitously supplied on separate papers enclosed an odd chapter which you might include at some point or other which will set the matter right. No conformity be named of the characters to your own story at that point but in essence, it is a scene in a grotto near Ancestor in which the servant girl (grandmama) approaches a sheep with rats and offers him the use of her cat, Ulthar. The swineherd guesses his gratitude and remarks upon the child’s clarity and sanity - even after her experience in the garden - while his fanged beasts nod approvingly.

Awaiting your next publication, I remain...

Yours,

Josiah Twattle

Mr. H. Phillips Lovecraft
66 College Street
Providence, R.I.

My dear Mr. Lovecraft,

through the good graces and astute acumen of a marvelous lay preacher for whom you have performed revisionary services, I have your address and take pen in hand to write you concerning the possibility of securing your services in revisions of my writings. I am assured that your rates are most reasonable which is fortunate since my writings tend to what some might term excesses.

(p.21) ...needs revision and more "local color" as I have not had the opportunity to travel west of Spokane nor east of Twin Bluffs. or, where a one summer I...

(p.34) ...if you would be so kind as to undertake this assignment, I shall ring my uncle (a cattle shipper) to reserve a box car on the next Saturday’s eastern sojourn of the Flat Rock, Topeka and Burlington R.R. to transport the mss to you for a quick look, and while I’m thinking of it, could you possibly suggest a pseudonym not too dissimilar from my own???

(p.52) With fondest regards, Opal Buckley

Page 63
THE BOOK OF MADNESS

The shop was old and odorous
And hidden in a nook.
Beneath a pile of manuscripts,
I found the mystic book,
A book where worm had made their nests
To feed on gray mould.
I turned the pages back and forth
And read the runes, and knew
I held the eldritch tome of old,
THE NECRONOMICON.

The gateway to the nameless voids
Where Azathoth had gone.
I put the book beneath my arm
And headed toward the door,
Through twisting catacombs of shelves
That wound about the store,
Past books that rotted in great piles,
And bins where mold oozed deep,
Down ancient, flaking corridors
Where shadows seemed to creep.

I bought that book and took it home,
I read it night by night,
And studied all its necromantic lines
By dancing candle light.
And on the last page of this book
In cryptic, crooked hand,
Here runic words, signed by Abdul,
That gleamed like fiery brand.

I read those words and made the signs,
I did not dread nor fear,
I voiced the magick runes out loud
For ancient gods to hear...
...The Arab stood before me now,
Conjured by ancient spell;
His robes smelled of some noxious spasm
Released from Cthulhu's hell.

"Ah, you are sealed to my mind,"
The necromancer said in tone;
"You called me back with my own words
From mouth of the dead,
And you must follow where I go,
Through gulphs of endless night,
Through time and space, cross voids o'erland
Pierced with a nightmare blight;
Come, come with me, and watch the gods
In eul and hideous guise
Tormont mankind, deform the best,
Revert and haunt the wise!"

"This cannot be!" I gasped, and screamed
"You are not what I have seen.
Though raised by magick from the dead,
You're nothing but a dream!"

THE QUARRY

A hunted creature pauses, panting, at the brink of a dream
Chilled by quick backward glimpses of a grotesque shape
Lined against the whimpering cream cards of the frozen sky.
Heavily it hunches through the city gates, beyond the gleam
Of reflected firelight, into the silent sewers that gaze
With antiquated liendens covers strewn savv'y;
Through the fetid jungle pipes that teem
With phantom vermin, past the catacombs below
Where the wounding mummys of the old ones undiscovered lie;
Piercing the dusty cobwebs of the world until the tunnel seems
Impossable. There the desolate creature confronts his hideous foe,
And one can glimpse the quarry clearly: 'tis 1!: 1!

- N. Paul Ganley

THE DOOM PROPHET

(DEDICATED TO H.P. LOVECRAFT)

I have gazed beyond the Gateway
At the meeting of the Spheres;
I have seen the dreadful beings
That wait out the countless years,
And have heard Yog-Sothoth's voice
Reverberating on my ears.

In a mystic sphere of crystal
I have peered down Nightmare's well
And have seen the bat-winged legions
Flying on the night-wind's swell
And the flame-eyed unseen comanon
Straining at the gates of hell.

I have seen the primal creatures
Spoken of in ancient lore -
The monstrous, star-born Eternals
Who ruled here long before,
And the bloate, loathsome Shoggoths
Hurrowing in the earth's dark core.

I have seen the deathless evil
That survives from earth's dark past;
I have sensed its lurking menace
In the sinister cavern vast
And I know what dreadful destiny
Must face us at the last.

Now I see the Spawn of Yuggoth
Winging down from outer space,
Bringing thundering destruction
To the trivial human race,
While the clouds before the sunset
Form a skull's sardonic face.

- Richard L. Tierney

PSYCHE

The mind is like a piece of bright-lit, cultivated land,
Where logic reigns, and boundaries are straight, and corners square;
Around it spreads a swampy, torrid hell, bottomless
Where gaudy blooms arise from vine-hung bogus in steamy air.

Along the vines, with eightfold coronets of diamond eyes,
Colossal, hairy spiders stalk gigantic butterflies;
And silent, scaly reptiles softly scull and slither where,
Below, among the rotting roots, the still, black water lies.

Beyond this dubious March, unknown and lightless regions stand,
Where nameless, formless, unseen creatures shamble, bowl and glare,
And sometimes they break in, and then the rule of reason dies.

- L. Sprague deCamp

FOUND IN A STORM-DESTROYED LIGHTHOUSE

Few know the horrors earth's dark past has spawned -
Horrors that reigned before the age of mankind swarmed.
Few guess what flowers from vast, trans-stellar spheres
May yet traverse the gulf of intervening years
That shields us from the things we must not see
lest knowledge send us fleeing to insanity."

Few dream what slumbering, green-eyed evil sleeps
In the black canyons of the ocean's haunted depths.
Nekkith - bland fools! - you could not bear to see
The monstrous doom that only 1 -- 0 God! -- have seen.

- Richard L. Tierney

- Walter Shufolfsky

I read a book, an evil book,
Filled with black arts of blasphemy.
Fear ripped my heart, my senses shook,
And evil thoughts invaded me.

I chanted spells and called to things
Beyond the gulf of time and space -
The window burst to monstrous wings,
And nightmare leered with loathsome face.

Fear-petrified, my brain grew cold
With mind and soul by horror bound -
Then dawn's bright gold destroyed the hold,
And horror fled with flapping sound.

Now I read the night when stars are right
And horror wings from timeless pole,
To claim the prize no spell or light
Of a rem thwart - my mortal soul.

- Walter Shufolfsky

THE煉魂士

(DEDICATED TO H.P. LOVECRAFT)

I have gazed beyond the Gateway
At the meeting of the Spheres;
I have seen the dreadful beings
That wait out the countless years,
And have heard Yog-Sothoth's voice
Reverberating on my ears.

In a mystic sphere of crystal
I have peered down Nightmare's well
And have seen the bat-winged legions
Flying on the night-wind's swell
And the flame-eyed unseen comanon
Straining at the gates of hell.

I have seen the primal creatures
Spoken of in ancient lore -
The monstrous, star-born Eternals
Who ruled here long before,
And the bloate, loathsome Shoggoths
Hurrowing in the earth's dark core.

I have seen the deathless evil
That survives from earth's dark past;
I have sensed its lurking menace
In the sinister cavern vast
And I know what dreadful destiny
Must face us at the last.

Now I see the Spawn of Yuggoth
Winging down from outer space,
Bringing thundering destruction
To the trivial human race,
While the clouds before the sunset
Form a skull's sardonic face.

- Richard L. Tierney

PSYCHE

The mind is like a piece of bright-lit, cultivated land,
Where logic reigns, and boundaries are straight, and corners square;
Around it spreads a swampy, torrid hell, bottomless
Where gaudy blooms arise from vine-hung bogus in steamy air.

Along the vines, with eightfold coronets of diamond eyes,
Colossal, hairy spiders stalk gigantic butterflies;
And silent, scaly reptiles softly scull and slither where,
Below, among the rotting roots, the still, black water lies.

Beyond this dubious March, unknown and lightless regions stand,
Where nameless, formless, unseen creatures shamble, bowl and glare,
And sometimes they break in, and then the rule of reason dies.

- L. Sprague deCamp

FOUND IN A STORM-DESTROYED LIGHTHOUSE

Few know the horrors earth's dark past has spawned -
Horrors that reigned before the age of mankind swarmed.
Few guess what flowers from vast, trans-stellar spheres
May yet traverse the gulf of intervening years
That shields us from the things we must not see
lest knowledge send us fleeing to insanity."

Few dream what slumbering, green-eyed evil sleeps
In the black canyons of the ocean's haunted depths.
Nekkith - bland fools! - you could not bear to see
The monstrous doom that only 1 -- 0 God! -- have seen.

- Richard L. Tierney
The Terrible Parchment

by Manly Wade Wellman

Preface: "It strikes me that this is a period piece. It's set in the apartment we had back during the 30's on east 34th Street, NYC - comfortable though not showy. The couple here might well be myself and my wife, whose name is not Gwen. The Kline mentioned was the late Otto Adelbert Kline, a good friend of mine, a writer and an Orientalist. Clark Ashton Smith and Robert Bloch are themselves. Father O'Neal was an old family friend in another part of the country.

The 1920's were grim, with the depression in full cry and Adolph Hitler making unpleasant noises, but Kline and Smith and that great editor, Farnsworth Wright, were alive and vigorous, and you could buy WT for a quarter if you had a quarter." - Manly Wade Wellman 10/10/72

(To the memory of H. P. Lovecraft, with all admiration)

"Here's your WEIRD TALES," smiled my wife, entering the apartment.

"Thanks, Gwen," I said, rising and taking the magazine she held out. "But surely it's not the first of the month."

"Not for two days yet," Gwen assured me. "But just as I came to the front door, a funny old man bobbed up with an armful of magazines - advance copies, I guess. He stuck a copy of WT right under my nose. I gave him a quarter and - oop!"

I had opened the magazine and a page fluttered to the floor. We both stooped for it, both seized it, and we both let go.

Gwen gasped and I whistled. For that fallen page had a clammy, wet feel to it. Dank is the word, I think. Still stooping, we grimaced at each other. Then I conquered my momentary disgust, picked up the page and held it to the light of my desk lamp.

"It's not paper," Gwen said at once.

No more it was, and what could it be doing in WEIRD TALES? Though it looked weird enough. It was a rectangle of tawny, limp parchment, grained on the upper side with scales, like the skin of some unfamiliar reptile. I turned it over. The other surface was smoother, with pore-like markings and lines of faint, rusty scribbling.

"Arabic," I pronounced. "Let's phone for Kline to come over. He reads the stuff."

"There's a Greek word," Gwen said. Her pink-tipped finger touched the string of capitals at the upper edge:

NEKPONOMIKON

"Necronomicon," she spelled out. "P would be rho in Greek. Sounds woogey."

"That's the name of H. P. Lovecraft's book," I told her.

"Book? Oh, yes, he's always mentioning it in his stories."

"And lots of W.T. authors - Clark Ashton Smith and Robert Bloch and so on - have put it into their stories," I added.

"But Lovecraft imagined the thing, didn't he?"

I laid the parchment on the desk, for my fingers still rebelled at its strange dankness. "Lovecraft describes it as the work of a mad Arab wizard, Abdul Alhazred, and it's supposed to contain secrets of powerful evils that existed before the modern world. It's become legendary."

Gwen stared at it, but did not touch. "Is it some sort of Valentine or April Fool joke, stuck in to thrill the subscribers? If so, it's cleverly made. Looks a million years old."
and it's bedtime. Let's not dream any philosophies that'll turn into nightmares." Once more I picked up that clammy parchment. "I'm putting this under stoppage."

Opening the dictionary on the stand beside my desk, I laid the parchment inside and closed the heavy book on it. "There it stays until we get a line here tomorrow. And now to bed."

To bed we went, but not to sleep. Gwen squirmed and muttered, and I was weary in every portion of my body except the eyelids. We got up once for sandwich-es and milk, and again for aspirin. A third time we lay down and I, at least, dozed off.

I started awake to the pressure of Gwen's fingers on my shoulder. Then I heard what she had heard, a faint, stealthy rustle.

I reached for the light chord above the bed. The room sprang into radiance, and through the open door I could see the living room. I sat up in bed, staring.

Something hung down from between the leaves of the dictionary by the desk, something that moved. Something that would be rectangular if laid flat, but which now seemed to flow from its narrow prison like a trickle of fluid filth.

"It's going to come here for us," breathed Gwen, almost inaudibly.

The parchment worked free and dropped to the floor with a fleshy slap, as though it had soft weight. It began to move across the rug toward the bedroom door. Toward us.

Perhaps I might describe painstakingly how it looked as it moved, how it humped up in the middle and laid its corners to the floor like feet. But how can I convey the horrid nastiness of it, how visualize for you the sort of wicked power that it gave off in waves almost palpable? You might get an idea by draping a sheet of brown paper over a creeping turtle...No, that sounds ludicrous. There was nothing funny in the way that parchment moved, not an atom of humor.

Gwen crouched, all doubled up and panicky, against the headboard. Her helpless terror nerved me. Somehow, I got out and stood on the floor. I must have looked unheroic with my rumpled hair and my blue pajamas and my bare feet, but I was ready to fight.

"Fight what? And how?"

It came hunching over the door sill like a very flat and loathly worm. I saw the writing on it, not rusty-faint but rusted and made of a wafer-thin glass from the bedside table, I hurled it. The foul thing crumpled suddenly sidewise. The glass splintered on the floor where it hit. The parchment came humping, creeping toward my bare toes.

"Smash it," wailed Gwen. She must have been ready to faint.

Against a chair leaned her little parasol, with a silken tassel at its handle and a ferrule of imitation amber. I seized it and made a stab at the invader. The point thrust the center of it against the floor, pinned it there for a moment. Then I saw in what manner it had changed.

At the top NEKPONOHKON still stood in aged ink; but the Arabic writing was transformed into English, large and bold and black as jet. Stopping to pin it, I read at a glance the first line.

A thousand times since I have yearned to speak that line aloud, to write it down, to do something to ease my mind of it. But I must not, now or ever.

Who shaped so dreadful a thought? Abdul Alhazred is a gift of Lovecraft's imagination. And Lovecraft's human. I could never have dreamed those words that lie on my mind like links of a red-hot iron chain. And they were but the start of the writing. What could it have been like in full?

I later came to realize. But suddenly I knew this for truth, as I tried to crush the parchment beneath the inadequate parasol - the formless evil of centuries had taken its place. An author who had fancied the book, others had given it being by their own mental images. The legend had become a fearsome peg on which terror, creeping over the borderland from its forbidding realm, could hang itself, grow tangible, solid, potent.

"Gwen," I called, "hide your eyes. Don't look. Don't read."

"What?" her pale face moved close as she leaned across the bed.

"Don't read!" I yelled at her.

The parchment squirmed from under the tip of the parasol. It reached my foot, it was climbing my leg.

Would it sink into my body, drag itself upon my face, force its unspeakable message into my mind? Because then I'd have to speak.

The burden would be too great. My lips would open to ease the torture. 'Chant out the spell...' and the world would be crushed under the fearsome feet of Cthulhu and his brother-horrors. What sins and woes would run loose? And it would be I, who spoke the words to release them.

Dizzy and faint, I ripped the thing from my leg. It clung, as though with tendrils or suckers, but I dragged it free and dashed it into a metal waste basket, among crumpled bits of paper. It tried to flop out again. I snatched my cigarette lighter from the bedside table. It worked, it burst into flame and I flung it into the basket.

The mass of paper kindled into fire and smoke. Up from it rose a faint, throbbing squeak, to be felt rather than heard, like a far-off voice of a bat, deep-er into the little furnace I jabbed that outcast messenger of destruction. It crinkled and thrashed in the flames, but it did not burn.

Gwen was jabbering into the telephone.

"Father O'Neal!" she cried. "Come quick, with holy water."

Then she hung up and turned to me. "He'll be here in two minutes." Her voice quavered. "But what if the holy water doesn't work?"

It did work. At the first spatter, the parchment and its gospel of wickedness vanished in a whiff of ashes. I pray my thankfulness for that, every day I live. But what if the holy water hadn't worked?
THE BURROWERS BENEATH

BY BRIAN LUMLEY

Dedication: This one with special thanks, for the memory of August Derleth, who sanctioned it; and for all those splendid scriveners of macabre tales who, over the years, have enlarged upon or borrowed from the Cthulhu Mythos of H. P. Lovecraft. In so doing, they have helped to keep the Mythos alive for the rest of us to enjoy:

That is not dead which can eternal lie,  
And with strange eons even death may die.

"The nethermost caverns are not for the fathoming of eyes that see; for their marvels are strange and terrific. Cursed the ground where dead thoughts live new and oddly bodied, and evil the mind that is held by no head. Wise is the tomb where no wizard hath lain, and happy the town at night whose wizards are all ashes. For it is of old rumour that the soul of the devil-bought hastes not from his charnal clay, but fats and instructs THE VERY WORM THAT GNAWS; till out of corruption horrid life springs, and the dull scavengers of earth wax crafty to vex it and swell monstrous to plague it. Great holes secretly are digged where earth's pores ought to suffice, and things have learnt to walk that ought to crawl..."

I

THE NETHERMOST CAVERNS
(From the Files of Titus Crow)

Blowne House, 19th May.

Dear Mr. Harvey,

I am given to understand that you were the literary agent of Paul Wendy-Smith, the young writer of tales of romantic and/or macabre fiction, and that following his mysterious disappearance in 1933 you became executor to the estate. I was only a very young man at that time, but I seem to remember that because of certain special circumstances publication of the writer's last story (showing, I believe, strange connections with the disappearances of both the author and his uncle, the explorer-archeologist Sir Amery Wendy-Smith) was held in abeyance. My query is simply this: has the work since seen publication, and if so where may I obtain a copy?

I am, Sir - hopefully expectant of an early answer - Yrs. sincerely,

T. Crow

Blowne House

Dear Mr. Crow:

Regarding your inquiry, (your reference 55/196 of 19th May,) you are correct, I was executor to the estate of Paul Wendy-Smith - and yes, there was a tale held in abeyance for a number of years until the Wendy-Smiths were both officially pronounced "missing or dead" in 1937. The story, despite being a very slight piece, has seen publication more recently in an excellently presented and major macabre collection. I enclose proofs of the story, and, should you require the book itself, the publisher's card.

Hoping that this covers your inquiry to your complete satisfaction, I am, Sir:-

Yours sincerely --

Edgar Harvey

Blowne House

25th May.

Ref: -58/196-

Features Reporter,
"Coalville Recorder;"
77 Leatham St., Coalville, Leics.

My dear Mr. Plant,

Having all my life been interested in seismological phenomena, I was profoundly interested in your
article in the issue of the RECORDER for 18th May. I know your coverage was as complete as any man-in-the-street could possibly wish, but wonder if perhaps you could help me in my own rather more specialized inquiry? Tremors of the type you described so well are particularly interesting to me, but there are further details for which, if it is at all possible you can supply them, I would be extremely grateful. Calculations I have made suggest (however inaccurately) that the Coalville shocks were of a linear rather than a general nature; that is, that they occurred on a line almost directly South to North and in that chronological order - the most southerly occurring first. This, at least, is my guess, and I would be grateful if you could corroborate, or (as no doubt the case will be) deny my suspicion; to which end I enclose a stamped, addressed envelope...

Sincerely and appreciatively
Yrs, I am, Sir -- Titus Crow

Ref: -57/196-
Raymond Benthyn, Esq.,
3 Alston Crescent,
Alston, Cumberland

My dear Sir:

Having read a cutting from a copy of the NORTHERN DAILY MAIL for 18th May, I would like to say how vastly interested I was in that article which contained certain parts of your report on the condition of the deserted sections of North Harden Mines. I said with regret, and feel it a great pity that Sir David Betteridge, scientific advisor to the North-East Coal-Board, has chosen to look at your report in so unenlightened and factually inaccurate a manner.

To me, while admittedly knowing little of yourself or your job, it would seem rather irresponsible on the part of so large and well-founded an industrial board to employ for twenty years an Inspector of Mines without, during that time, discovering that his "Faculties are not all that they should be!"

Now, I am not a young man myself, indeed at 63 years of age I am far and away your senior, but I have complete faith in MY faculties - and since reading certain of the things in your report which I can (in a rather peculiar way) corroborate, I am also sure that you were QUITE CORRECT in the observations you made in the complex of the discontinued Harden workings. Just how I can be so sure must, unfortunately, remain my secret - like most men I am adverse to derision, a point I am sure you will appreciate - but I hope to offer you at least some proof of my sincerity in writing this letter.

Thus, to reassure you beyond any doubt that I am not simply "pulling your leg", or in any way trying to add my own sarcastic comments to what has already been made of your report, I return your attention to the following:

Other than mentioning briefly certain OUTLINES which you say you found etched in the walls of those new and inexplicable tunnels which you discovered down there cut (or rather "burned", as you had it) through the rock a mile below the surface, you seem reluctant to describe in detail the content or actual forms of those outlines. Might I suggest that this is because you did not wish to be further ridiculed - which you feared might well be the case should you actually describe the etchings? And might I further TELL you what you saw on those unknown tunnel walls: that those oddly dimensioned designs depicted living creatures of sorts - like elongated octopi or squids - but without recognizable heads or eyes - tentacled wonders in fact but of gigantic size?

Dare I say my cards on the table yet more fully and mention the NOISES you say you heard down there in the depths of the earth; sounds which were not in any way the normal stress noises of a pit, even given that the mine in question had not been worked for five years and was in poor repair? You said CHANTING, Mr. Benthyn, but quickly retracted your statement when a certain reporter became unnecessarily facetious. Nonetheless, I take you at your original word: you SAID chanting - and I am sure you meant what you said! How do I know? Again, I am not at liberty to disclose my sources; however, I would be obliged for your reaction to the following:

Ce'haile ep-ngh fl'hur G'harne fhtagn,
Ce'haile fhtagn nh Shuddle-M'ell.
Hat G'harne o'rre ep fl'hur,
Shuddle-M'ell tcan-foantaca fl'hur o'rre G'harne.

Restricted as I am at this time regards further illuminating my interest in the case, or even explaining the origin of my knowledge of it, but still in the hope of an early answer and perhaps a more detailed account of what you encountered underground I am, Sir

Yrs. sincerely - Titus Crow
"Coalville Recorder,"
Coalville, Leics.
28th May.

Blowne House

Dear Mr. Crow --

In answer to your 5/8/1916, of the 25th:
The tremors that shook Coalville, Leics., on
the afternoon of the 17th, were, as you correctly
deduced, of a linear nature. (And yes, they did oc-
cur south heading north; have in fact continued...or
so I believe, farther up-country). As you are no
doubt aware, Coalville is central in an area of ex-
pending mining operations, and doubtless the collap-
se of old diggings was responsible, in this area at
least, for the peculiar shocks. They lasted from
4:30 until 8:00 P.M., but were not particularly se-
vere - though, I am told, they had a very bad effect
on certain of the inmates of the local Thornelee
Sanatorium.

There were too other slight surface subsidences,
not nearly so bad, almost a year ago. At about that
time also five miners were lost in the collapse of a
very narrow and unproductive seam which they were
working. The twin brother of one of these men was in
a different part of the mine at the time, and much
sensational publicity was given his subsequent condi-
tion. I did NOT cover his case though it was done up
pretty distastefully in a hack contemporary of the
RECORDER under the heading: "SIAMESE MINING HORROR!"
Apparently the living twin went stark staring mad at
the very instant his brother and the other four men
were killed!

You should be interested in a series of articles
which I am at present planning for the RECORDER: "A
HISTORY OF THE MIDLANDS PITS," to be published later
this year, and I would be pleased to send you the
various chapters as they appear if you so desire.
Your faithfully
-- William Plant.

Blowne House

Dear Mr. Crow,

I got your letter yesterday afternoon, and not
being much of a writing man, I'm not sure how to an-
swer it, or even if I can find the right words.
First off, let me say you are quite right about
the pictures on the tunnel walls - and also about
the chattering. How you could know about these things I
can't possibly imagine! So far as I know, I'm the
only one to have been down that shaft since they
closed the pit, and I'm damned if I can think of any
other spot on or under the earth where you might
have heard sounds like those I heard, or seen draw-
ings like them on the tunnel walls. But you
obviously have! Those crazy words you wrote down
were just like what I heard...

Of course, I should have gone down there with
a mate, but my Number 2 was off sick at the time
and I thought it was going to be just another rou-
tine job. Well, as you know, it wasn't!
The reason they asked me to go down and check
the old pit out was two-fold - I'd worked the seams,
al of them, as a youngster and knew my way about,
and of course (to hell with what betteridge says) I
AM an experienced inspector - but mainly someone
had to do the job to see if the empty seams could
be propped up or filled in. I imagine that the ma-
ny subsidences and cave-ins round Iden and Black-
hill have been giving the Coal-Board a bit of a
headache of late.

Alston, Cumberland;
May 28th.

Anyhow, you asked for a more detailed account
of what I came up against underground, and I'll try
to tell it as it happened. But can I take it that
everything I say will be in confidence? See, I
have a good pension coming from the Coal-Board in
a few years' time, and naturally they don't much
care for adverse stuff in the press - particularly
stuff to worry local landowners and builders. Peo-
ple don't buy property that's not safe - or ground
that's liable to subsidence! And since I've al-
ready had one ticking-off as it is, well, I don't
want to jeopardize my pension, that's all....

I think what really annoyed the bosses was
when I went on about those tunnels I found down
there - not old, timbered seams, mind you, but TIN-
NELS - round and pretty smoothly finished and cer-
tainly artificial. And not just one, as they said
in the "MAIL", but half-a-dozen! A proper maze it
was. Yes, I said those tunnel walls were burned ra-
ther than cut, and so they were. At least that's
how they looked - as though they'd somehow been
coated on the inside with lava and then allowed to
cool!

But there I go running ahead of myself. Better
start at the beginning....
I went down the main shaft at Harden, using the old emergency lift-cage which they hadn't yet dismantled. There was a gang of lads at the top just in case the old machinery should go on the blink. I wasn't a bit worried, you understand, it's been my job to keep one in hand and I know all the dangers and what to look for.

I took a budgie down with me in a little cage. I could hang the cage up to the roof timbers while I looked about. It's one of the old-fashioned methods you can't beat, I reckon, and the budgie was so I'd know if there was any fire-damp down there - methane to you. A heavy gas knocks a bird out in a wink, which lets you know it's time to get out! I wore protective gear and high boots in case of water - Harden's not all that far from the sea, and it's one of the deepest pits in the country. Funny thing, but I EXPECTED water, yet as it happened I was quite wrong; it was as dry as a bone down there! I had a modern lamp on my helmet with a good, powerful beam, and I carried a "map" of the galleries and seams - standard procedure but hardly necessary in my case.

Well, anyway, I got down the shaft all right and gave the old hand-set at the bottom a twirl to let the boys on top know that everything was well, and then I set out along the largest connecting shaft to the west-side galleries and coal-seams. Now, you have to understand, Mr. Crow, that the main passages are often pretty big things. Some of them are almost as large as any single light-tunnel I know of in London! That wasn't shut in, like, or suffering from claustrophobia or anything like that, and it wasn't as if I hadn't been down a pit before - but there was, well, SOME-TING.

It's hard for me to explain on paper like this, but - Oh, I don't know - I had this feeling that - It was as if - Well, did you ever as a child play hide-and-seek and go into a room where someone was hiding? You can't see him, it's dark and he's quiet as a mouse - but you know he's in there all the same! That's what it was like down there in that deserted mine. And yet it was TRULY deserted - at that time anyway....

Well, I shook this feeling off and went on until I reached the west-side network. This is almost two horizontal miles from the main shaft. Along the way I had seen evidence of deterioration in the timbers, but not enough to explain away the subsidences on the surface. So far as I could see, there had been no actual cave-ins. The place did STINK though, like nothing I'd ever smelled before, but it wasn't any sort of gas to affect the budgie or me. Just a very unpleasant smell. Right at the end of the connecting shaft, at a spot almost directly under Blackhill, came across the first of the new tunnels. It entered into the shaft from the side away from the sea, and frankly it stopped me dead! I mean, what would YOU have made of it?

It was a hole, horizontal and with hard, regular walls, but it was cut through SOLID ROCK and not coal! Now, I like to keep slap up to date on my methods, but I was pretty sure right from the start that this tunnel wasn't dug using any system or machinery I know of. And yet it seemed I must have missed something somewhere. The thing wasn't shown on my map, though, so in the end I told myself that some new machinery must have been tested down there before they'd closed the mine. I was damned annoyed, I'll tell you - nobody had told me to expect this!

The mouth of the tunnel was about eight feet in diameter, and although the roof wasn't propped up or timbered in any way the bore looked safe-as-houses, solid as a hinge. I decided to mark this to show to him if I ever saw him. It was all of half-a-mile long, that shaft, Mr. Crow; none of it timbered, straight as a die, and the nearest bit of tunneling work I've ever seen underground in twenty-five years. Every two hundred yards or so similar tunnels would come in from the sides as if part of the plan, and at the end of these actions there had been heavy falls of rock. This warned me to be careful. Obviously, these holes weren't as solid as they looked.

I don't know where the thought came from, but suddenly I found myself thinking of giant moles! I once saw one of these sensational film-things about just such animals. Possibly that's where the idea sprang from in my mind. Anyway, I'd no sooner had this thought than I came to a spot where yet another tunnel joined the main one - BUT THIS ONE CAME DOWN AT AN ANGLE FROM ABOVE!

There was a hole opening into the ceiling, with the edges rounded off and smoothed in some way I don't understand, as if by heat like I said before. Well, I went dead slow from then on, but soon I came out of the tunnel into a big cave. At least, I took it to be a cave - but when I looked closer at the wall I saw that it wasn't! It was simply a junction of a dozen or so of the tunnels. Pillars like stalactites held up the ceiling. This was where I saw the carvings, those pictures of octopus-things etched in the rock, and I don't think I need add how much THAT put the wind up me!

I didn't hang about there much longer, (apart from anything else the stench was terrible,) but I only stuck my head up and the place was all of 50 feet across and that the walls were coated or smoothed over with that same sort of lava-stuff. The floor was flat enough but crumbly, almost earthy, and right in the middle of the place I found four great cave-pearls. At least, I THINK they're cave-pearls. They're about four inches across, these things - very hard, heavy and glossy. Don't ask me how I got down there, I don't know, and I can't see how they might have formed naturally, like other cave-pearls I remember seeing when I was a kid. Anyway, I put them into a bag I carried and then went back the way I'd come to the terminal of the west-side workings. By then I'd been down there about an hour and a half.

I didn't get far into the actual coal-seams. The first half-dozen were down. They had collapsed. But I soon found what had brought them down! In and out of the old workings, lacing them like holes in gorgonzola, those damned smooth-lined tunnels came and went, literally honeycombing the coal and rock alike! Then, in one of the few remaining old seams that still stood and where some poor-grade coal still remained, I came across yet another funny thing. A tunnel, one of the new ones, had been cut right along the original seam, and I noticed that here the walls weren't of that lava substance but a pitchy, hard tar - exactly the kind of deposit you find bubbling out of hot coal in the coke-ovens, only set as hard as rock!

That was it - I'd had enough - and I set off back toward the main shaft and the lift-cage. It was then I thought I heard the chanting. Thought? Like hell, I thought - I DID hear it! And it was just as you wrote it down! It was distant, seeming to come from a very long way away. It was coming to the sea in a shell or hearing a tune you remember in your head. But I knew I should never have been hearing things like that down there at all, and I took off for the lift-cage as fast as I could go.

Well, I'll cut the rest of it short, Mr. Crow. I've probably said too much already as it is, and I just hope to God that you're not one of those reprobate fellows I wanted to get it off my chest, so what the hell are I?
I finally arrived at the shaft-bottom, by which time the chanting had died away, and I gave the lads on top a tinkle on the old hand-set to haul me up. At the top I made out my report - but not as fully as I've done here - and then I went home. I kept the cave-pearls, as mementoes if you like, and said nothing about them in my report. I don't see what good they'd be to anyone anyway. Still, it does seem a bit like stealing. I mean, whatever the things really are they're not mine, are they? I might just send them off anonymously to the museum at Sunderland or Radcar. I suppose the museum people will know what they are...

The next morning the reporters came round from the "DAILY MAIL". They'd heard I had a bit of a story to tell and pumped me for all I was worth. I had the idea they were laughing at me, though, so I didn't tell them a deal. They must have gone to see Old Betteridge when finally they left me - and, well, you know the rest.

And that's it, Mr. Crow. If there's something else you'd like to know, just drop me another line. Myself, I'd be interested to learn how you come to know so much about it all - and why you want to know more....?

Yrs. sincerely---
R. Bentham

P.S. Maybe you heard how they were planning to send two more inspectors down to do the job I'd "messed up". Well, they couldn't. Just a few days ago the whole lot fell in! The road between Harden and Blackhill sank ten feet in places, and a couple of brick barns were brought down at Castle-Ilden.

There's had to be work done on the walls of the Red Cow Inn in Harden, too, and there have been slight tremors all over the area ever since. Like I said, the mine was rotten with those tunnels down there - I'm only surprised (and thankful!) it held up so long! Oh, and one other thing. I think that the smell I mentioned must, after all, have been produced by a gas of some sort. Certainly my head's been fuzzy ever since. Weak as a kitten, I've been and damned if I don't seem to keep hearing that awful, droning chanting sound! All my imagination, of course. For you can take it from me that Old Betteridge wasn't even partly right in what he said about me...

R.B.

Blowne House
30th May.

To: Raymond Bentham, Esq.
Dear Mr. Bentham:

I thank you for your prompt reply to my queries of the 25th, and would be obliged if you would give similar keen attention to this further letter. I must of necessity make my note brief, (I have many important things to do,) but I beg you to have the utmost faith in my directions, strange as they may seem to you, and to carry them out without delay. You have seen, Mr. Bentham, how accurately I described the pictures on the walls of that great unnatural cave in the earth, and how I was able to duplicate on paper the weird chant you heard underground. My dearest wish now is that you remember these previous deductions of mine, and believe me when I tell you THAT YOU HAVE PLACED YOURSELF IN EXTREME AND HIDEOUS DANGER IN REMOVING THE CAVE-PEARLS FROM THE HARDEN TUNNEL-COMPLEX! In fact, it is my sincere belief that you are in a constantly increasing peril every moment you keep those things!

I ask you to send them to me; I might know what to do with them. I repeat, Mr. Bentham, DO NOT DELAY BUT SEND ME THE CAVE-PEARLS AT ONCE; or should you decide against it, then for God's sake at least remove them from your house and person! A good suggestion would be for you to drop them back into the shaft at the mine, if that is at all possible, but whichever method you choose in getting rid of them - do it with dispatch! They may rightly be regarded as being infinitely more dangerous than ten times their own weight in nitro-glycerin!

Yrs. V. Truly---
Titus Crow

Blowne House
5 p.m., 30th May.

To Mr. Henri-Laurent De Marigny.

Dear Henri,

I've tried to get you on the telephone twice today, only to discover at this late hour that you're in Paris at a sale of antiques! Your housekeeper tells me she doesn't know when you'll be back. I hope it's soon - I may very well need your help! This note will be waiting for you when you get back. WASTE NO TIME, DE MARIGNY, BUT GET ROUND HERE AS SOON AS YOU'RE ABLE: Titus......
DARK PROVIDENCE

By Jerry Saunders

The speaker had gone overtime because of a flood of questions from the floor, so the lecture did not end until a quarter after ten.

The member of the audience who perhaps had gained the most pleasure from the talk was a thin gentleman in the second row. This man had asked no questions but had listened intently, mentally comparing his own exhaustive researches of the heavens with those of the speaker. At times he would flicker across his face as he caught an erroneous statement from the man on the stage.

When at last the talk began to empty, the thin gentleman breathed a sigh of relief. Much as he had enjoyed the lecture, he was beginning to wish that he had not ventured out. He did not feel well and knew that he would soon feel worse if he was not made very cold outside by this time. He buttoned his coat securely as possible and made for the door.

Upon reaching the threshold he automatically glanced up and found his favorite constellation which had been noticed in the address. He frowned as he saw only blackness above. The stars were obscured by thick clouds, and to his consternation he felt an icy wind strike hard against his face. The weather had undergone an abrupt change, and while it was merely inconvenient for the others, it was perhaps deadly for him. All his life cold had been his enemy; maybe tonight it would achieve his final victory.

The lights of the last automobile had disappeared into the gloom now and the footsteps of the last pedestrian who had died to make his way were gone on the sidewalk, alone as he had often been during his life, as a child and now as a man. But he was not truly alone now, for as the wind knifed through the inadequate coat of the Grinch the speaker seemed to pace soundlessly near him. So far to walk before he reached home...

Clenching his teeth and bending forward, he struggled against the onrushing gale. It was slow going, and soon he began to feel desperately weak. Nausea attacked him and his head throbbed. A numbness slowly spread through his legs, causing his steps to slow even more. His eyes watered profusely, blurring his vision and making it ever harder for him to find his way.

On he stumbled against a streetlamp post and as he rubbed his aching head he used the meager light cast by the lamp to take stock of his surroundings.

To his absolute surprise he found that he had evidently lost his way and had already been gone since leaving the lecture hall, and he could find no familiar landmarks of any kind around him. This was curious, for he knew the city perhaps better than anyone else who lived there. Also, he had been used to the streets at night, having habitually taken midnight strolls along the thoroughfares of both the older and newer parts of town. Yet, his present position seemed utterly at odds with him.

As he stood thinking amid the yellow pool of light, two things happened, each of which startled him. A tiny flake of wet coldness fell upon his face and at the same time he thought he glimpsed something moving in the shadow of an old building to his left. A moment more convinced him that it was snowing and that someone or something was following him. He wanted to stay in the light and make use of whatever feeble protection it could afford him, but he decided not to tarry since he had no weapon, should one be required.

He moved up a small street, glancing behind him as he went. His second backward look showed him something slipping through the shadows of buildings, carelessly avoiding the light. He stopped for a moment and so did the movement in the shadows. Suddenly he had the distinct feeling that he was being watched, and from several directions. He whirled to look, but his right and left could not penetrate the smooth contours of shadow.

Now he was almost to a second streetlamp. It was a good thing, for the effect of the light was at the best lamp had never been off. He was near to collapsing, but his will overruled his weakness. He was in a strange place and was being followed by the unknown. It was no time to succumb to his failing body and taut nerves. He waited for fresh signs of his stealthy pursuers. He had not long to wait before he made out at least four of them. They were flat-tening themselves against the tumble-down buildings and shunting the small expanses of light.

He did not know what it meant, he had never heard of street gangs in the city. He had always felt safe to walk the streets at any hour. But as he considered this, the thought came home to him that he had heard stories about them. He was not watching as he took his nocturnal walks. Sometimes the sensation had crept up on him as he traversed some particularly dark street, other times it had started when he stepped out of a house at night.

He expected to be rushed at any moment by those who lingered in the shadows. This, however, did not serve as their reason. He thought he might be calling loudly for the police but did not do so. For one thing, such an action might call forth a violent assault from the mysterious group. Besides, he did not believe that any policemen were near this desolate spot.

A low howl, like that of a wolf or dog, came to his ears. He shuddered at the sound. Howling at night had always made him uneasy. Another howl came, followed by another. And it was almost more than he could do to keep from fainting when he saw one of his pursuers get a little farther into the light, drop down on all fours and produce one of the howls which he had been hearing.

The snow was falling heavily now and a good amount had accumulated on the ground. His feet slipped in it repeatedly and he was dashed to the pavement. His mind reeled and he knew it all must be a dream...

There was a long succession of dark, twistingstories, all with the same idea of the speaker who seemed to pace soundlessly near him. So far to walk before he reached home...

"What's going on there?"

The cry brought him back to his senses, and he suddenly felt himself falling. He hit the soft snow and with an effort struggled to his feet. A policeman confronted him.

"Are you all right, sir?"

He looked up. He didn't recognize me. "I'll confess I thought you were drunk, the way your friends were carrying in you. Guess I scared them off. They sure ran like blazes.""

"Carrying me - did - did you say that they were carrying me?"

"Sure! But look, sir, we better get you to a doctor."

"No, no, I'll be quite all right - I must get home - I live at Sixty-six College Street - if you could help me get there...."

"Why, I don't have to help you! You're there already! That should be your home." He looked where the policeman pointed.

"Yes, yes, it is. But how - how did I get here?"

The last thing I remember was being in a strange neighborhood."

"I told you, sir. Your friends must've brought you here. I saw them carrying you."

"You mean you saw them?"

"Well, just from a distance. But you did know them, didn't you?"

"Why, yes - yes ...."

He left the policeman for a moment and walked to where a light flooded the snow-covered street. Bending down, he looked at the several sets of tracks in the snow. None of them were his. And none of them were human.

"Look out, you!" cried a hoarse voice.

An automobile, driven by a young man far gone in drink, narrowly missed him..."
OTHERS WHO ARE NOT MEN

By W. Paul Ganley

I had purchased twelve acres of woodland in the Black Mountains of West Virginia some eight or ten years ago, upon a happy occasion when I had been particularly fortunate in a stock transaction—some Canadian uranium properties I had obtained for pennies a share had blossomed, and I sold them for dollars before the price could dwindle again, as it subsequently did. The region was utterly wild and unspoiled, save for a dilapidated shack near the foot of a waterfall that bordered my property. The land, a narrow strip crossed near one end by a nameless stream, was a patch of privately owned country sandwiched between two state parklands, and should have been relatively expensive, but was not. I had spent an occasional weekend there, fishing and hunting, when I could escape from the constant pressure of business, camping out because the deserted shack was unsuitable as shelter.

When I celebrated my forty-first birthday with a mild heart murmur, my physician warned me that it would be necessary for me to take a lengthy vacation, preferably in a location where I could enjoy mild exercise, breathe unsullied air and, most important, not be subjected to business worries. "Hank," he told me, "you must be a fairly wealthy man. You own a thriving business. You're a widower with no family responsibilities. Sell Hartley Enterprises' outright, or put it under a good manager for a few months, and take off for that woodland mecca you're always telling me about. Do some physical labor, light labor; don't exert yourself too strenuously, though, at least at first. I don't guarantee a full recovery, but I'd give odds on it if I were a betting man. What I do guarantee you is that if you keep on as you have been, you'll be dead inside of 2 years."

I had been working hard. Partly to keep from thinking about Eleanor and Bill, and how they might be alive today, if I had just thought to take—but that is another story, one best forgotten. I had not been to the place in over a year, and I resolved to follow Doc Parry's advice, though I feared solitude and what paths my quiet thoughts might follow.

I made arrangements through a friend to have a small log cabin constructed above the waterfall, barely out of sight of the ruined shack, and spent some time arranging to have my business carried on by a manager. Larry Hanover, whom I chose for the job, had been with me for years, and I looked on him almost as a younger brother. Although not brilliant or imaginative, he was trustworthy. In fact, I have arranged to leave the business to him, if I do not sell it first, since I have no close relatives, and he loves the work nearly as much as I do.

I arrived late on a chilly early afternoon in mid-March. The cabin, newly completed, was damp and cold. I parked my Ford wagon about two hundred yards downstream and toted a light bag and some groceries up the gentle knoll to the cabin. When I reached the door, I was panting, despite the very slight nature of my exertions, and I was disinclined to return to the wagon and fetch my remaining belongings. So I pulled the door to, latched it, and set about starting a fire in the tiny stove. In these times, with chemical starters and fuel-impregnated charcoal, this was relatively simple, and within twenty minutes the chill was gone from the atmosphere within the room. It had had an odd, musty odor that was out of keeping with its newness, but soon I no longer noticed this. The four-hour drive and the subsequent short walk had made me tired; so I ate the remainder of my travel lunch, lay down on the bunk and slept soundly till dawn.

In the morning I unpacked the stationwagon and stowed my belongings away in the cabin. This first week I did not hunt or fish, but I obtained a modicum of exercise by walking aimlessly about the woods or along the stream with my old polaroid camera, searching for interesting compositions. Gradually I was recovering my stamina, and although I followed Doc Parry's injunction against too much exercise too soon I could feel my body growing stronger.

I had brought no reading matter with me, preferring to express my own thoughts, sensations and speculations, so I had decided to keep a journal; and each evening, after the dinner plate had been washed in the stream, I recorded the trivial events of the day. Particularly in view of later events some of the things I wrote were puerile and others intriguing. I have since destroyed much of that journal as arrant nonsense, but have incorporated some of it into these notes, which detail only the important happenings and skip the trivia.
"I'm down for the whole summer," I said. "Bit of a rest. Been doing too much." "Didn't see you here at all last year." I nodded. "Too busy at the office." "Funny thing happened here last year," Bill said, lighting the stump of his cigar. "My dog got himself killed." "How's that?" "You remember old Silver? Brown and white-haired old pooch. I fetched a few things and I was getting set to turn back for camp. We were upstream, down near the edge of your acreage. Silver caught some kind of queer scent and went storming off, barking for all he was worth. I took after him fast, because I'd never seen him act that way before. But I lost him." "What happened?" "I heard him give one loud yelp, and then nothing. Hank, that sound put the hairs on my neck on end. I tried to find him and stumbled around for about half an hour, mad as hell, but saw no signs of him. Then I came across that old shack downstream. You know? He was there, just outside the rotten walls, lying on the ground. Dead. Dead as a door-nail." "What killed him, Bill?" "Dammed if I could tell," he said, shaking his head in puzzlement. "But..." I frowned. He said with acerbity, "Sure, I'm a physician. I could tell if he was shot, or strangled, or mauled by a bear, or even poisoned. Or whatever. But as far as I could see, the damned mutt was in perfect shape, physically, except that he was dead." He paused. "Of course, I didn't do an autopsy. I buried the fella there in the soft ground and chalked it all up as just one of those things. But..." "Yes?" "Well, nothing. Nothing. Only it was damned queer. I could see something else was on his mind, but I couldn't persuade him to admit it. I didn't try very hard. What was a dead dog, to me, anyway?"

As May turned to June, a few other hunters occasionally stopped by for a word or two, and I started doing a bit of hunting myself. One of the others was a fellow I knew pretty well - we had swapped stories over the evening campfire a number of times in the past, and I liked him as a hunting companion. He usually knew when to talk and when to listen. This time he decided to talk. "Seen Bill Fowler this year?" I nodded. "Tell you about his dog." I nodded.

"Strange. Dog dying like that, not an old dog either. No reason why."

I said, a little worried, "I suppose an excited dog could suffer a heart attack, or something, even a fairly young one."

He shook his head. "No, there's something queer about it. I'll tell you. I've gotten in with one or two of the local crowd. My wife's mother has cousins hereabouts. They told me some of it. Bill doesn't know the details, but he guesses." He lowered his voice. "Silver wasn't the first dog to die there, like that. There have been two others, maybe three, in the past twenty years, and still others have disappeared from sight around that area."

"What do you mean? Did they die here by the waterfall?"

"By the shack. That shack back there. It's why the locals don't care to come around here, I guess, Hank. They say there are hauntings here."

I frowned. "You mean... ghosts?"

"I don't know what I mean, exactly. But you won't catch any of the townpeople near this place after dark. Even the one who built your cabin - they were gone from here by four o'clock every afternoon."
"Rov," I said, and I meant it.

Afterward I went on thinking about the situation, however. It was queer enough, certainly, but not so queer as all that. Dogs do die, after all, and in a twenty year period it isn't so strange that three or four should die in the same general locality. Especially when there is hardly a dog around to compete with an animal or two might have made nesting places. That would draw dogs, surely.

No, there must be something else, as well; since I was becoming just a wee bit bored, I decided to find out what that something might be. My plan was simple — there was a doctor in town, Dr. Jason Rigby, an old G.P. who was retired but kept up a local practice. He was original from his youth, and had mostly practiced in Henderson (the county seat), thirty miles southwest of here, and I thought he could be approached. I had the perfect excuse to see him.

Next afternoon found me stripped to the waist in Doc Rigby's office. He probed for a while with stethoscopes and things and took a blood sample. Finally he told me to get dressed, and I sat down as he finished scrawling indelible comments on my record card. I waited in silence.

"Course, I don't have any of the new-fangled electronic gadgets down here," he said, "But I'd say you are in a pretty bad shape. Some of these modern doctors haven't got the sense of a midwife, but yours seems to have done all right by you."

"Then I'm cured?" I exclaimed incredulously.

"Well on the road to it," he replied. "Stay healthy, live outdoors, don't get any physical exercise, you might live to be ninety."

"And if I go back to my business in the city?"

He shrugged. "The strain got you once. It may come again. It's your decision."

I thought about that a minute. Then I decided to let it go and make a frontal attack.

"Doctor, you're familiar with the local situation. Is that where you really are healthy, or safe, for me as I thought when I came here?"

He stared at me oddly, but did not reply.

"I mean," I stammered, somewhat disconcerted, "I've just been wondering about a couple of things."

"Dogs?" he inquired drily.

"For one thing, dogs," I agreed. "And people, too. It took a lot of persuasion to get some of the local people to build that little cabin of mine. I've spent some time wondering why."

I finished almost apologetically, "I have quite a lot of time on my hands for wondering, these days."

Rigby stared at me with his piercing eyes for so long that I was convinced he would refuse to reply. I fidgeted. Then he asked, "Have you been sleeping soundly?"

I acquiesced, surprised a little. "Very well."

"Rumors — that's all there are, outside of the dogs..." His voice trailed off. "But I do know a little about old Zacharias."

Back when his grandfather was a young man, Rigby told me, old Zacharias had moved into the region and built his shack on my property, where he then lived with his son. The son was even more mysterious than the father, for few people even caught glimpses of him, those few remarking on his apparent ugliness. He was reputed to be an invalid; at least one of those who had caught a glimpse of him outside the cabin remarked that his hands were bandaged and that he appeared to walk with an infirm gait.

Old Zach was very much of a recluse, and rarely entered the town except to obtain a few stores such as salt and molasses. Children out hunting might spy his traps occasionally, or even see him fishing, and he would mutter a few words of sullen greeting, but that was all. The son never hunted or fished, presumably because of his infirmity.

Then one evening the thing happened. A toddler, the doctor's own great grandaunt Anne, disappeared from the town, and the most diligent search failed to locate her. The doctor did not know how suspicion came to dwell upon old Zach, or even if it was justified, but apparently that was what had happened. Six men, armed with rifles and shotguns, went to the shack at sundown of the following day.

Outside the door, just off the trail, legend has it, lay a small sandal, recognizable to Anne's father as having belonged to her. At that, their uneasy and nebulous suspicions confirmed, the men broke into loud curses, and shouted wildly for old Zach and his son to come out and face them. One or two shotguns were fired at the cabin.

Now the doctor's story became indistinct, as though no one had ever told him the exact details of what had occurred. Clearly the men themselves never quite knew. Apparently a wild shriek issued from the cabin, and there was a loud rumbling sound, as though the earth itself were trembling.

Then the shack collapsed with a violent clap, like thunder.

As the doctor told it, the men tried to probe the ruins for the bodies of Zach and his son, or for a sign of the child, Anne; but there were evidently traces of gas about the place that prevented a thorough search. The gas, or whatever it was, was described as having a musty odor, and as producing faintness. Two of the men were rendered unconscious by its effects, and had to be carried away from the vicinity by the others. The result of this superstitious dread of the region that has persisted even to the present generation.

Dr. Rigby told me his father had a scientific theory regarding the whole affair — he believed that there was an underground pocket of natural gas in the region which had been breached by the construction of a cellar or storage pit under the house. The shotgun blasts having been too much vibration, the gas broke loose from its subterranean cavern and blew up the shack, killing old Zach and his son instantly.

Privately I wondered. The shack still had most of three walls standing, and much of the roof remained intact even after seventy some years. The other part, as I recalled, had collapsed inward, almost as though some modern Sampson had pulled the entire structure down upon him. Would this have happened if a gas pocket had exploded under the house?

As an afterthought, Rigby told me that the body of little Anne Rigby had been washed ashore the next morning far downstream in the creek. It was apparently much battered, and it was bruited about that she had been swept over the waterfall; but he said he had the distinct impression that there was something about the corpse that was horribly queer, something his elders would not tell him, and would scarcely discuss among themselves.

"The gas theory would explain the death of the dogs!" I exclaimed, after Rigby's tale was concluded. "There must still be some gas leaking out there, at least sometimes."

"If you believe the theory, then perhaps so," he replied.

"What other theory can there be?" I queried.

He shook his head, "I don't know." And he refused to discuss the matter further.
After a week of contemplation I decided to take action. I loved hunting, fishing, the outdoor life in general, but this was due to a heavy regime of mental activity, and I was.bored. However, I had a second reason for acting, besides pure curiosity. A practical man, I needed a practical motive. And I remembered in the doctor's tale that the shack was described as 'small, and filthy, and musty.' I began to look it up, and I worked my way back through the remains of my original journal to my account of the day I had first arrived at the cabin. Yes, I had recorded the fact that my cabin smelled musty, despite its newness, when I had first entered it.

Did it mean anything? I thought it might. It could mean that the gas pocket extended under my cabin as well as under old Zach's, and that could be dangerous. Furthermore, I had little wonder whether this gas, anesthetic in small dosages as apparently it was, might not be the prime cause of my dreamless, sound sleep. I had never slept so well in my whole life - perhaps in this respect the gas was not dangerous to me; many poisons, when taken in small amounts are beneficial. But I was unhappy, to say the least, at the prospect of continuing to live over a veritable powder magazine...

When I determine upon a definite course of action, I make my preparations carefully and methodically; this has been a trait of mine since childhood. My initial preparation, in this case, was to order some equipment, including a surplus mask and scuba diving kit with tanks of compressed oxygen and air. I also purchased two canaries. Despite the advances in technology made by our twentieth century culture, the best contamination-detector for air is still a canary! Of course, Larry Hanover must have been puzzled about my instructions, for he acted as my agent in making the purchases, but I am sure he lost no sleep over the matter. As I have explained before, he is a good fellow, but badly equipped when it comes to imagination.

Three days after Labor Day, I was ready. I had noticed that the canaries had little difficulty in adjusting to the living conditions in my cabin. Was it my imagination that they were less active than most such birds? - perhaps; I had never kept canaries before. In any event, the valley was generally windy; the breeze that swept down from the northeast was welcome in the heat of the summer, and my window was constantly open. This might have counteracted the major effects of the gas that I suspected was seeping up through the clay.

I brought the gas mask and the oxygen tank, which I had equipped with a breathing mask, down to the old shack in my Ford Wagon, which I drove right up to the front door, for the ground was not too humpy in this area. It was six o'clock in the morning. No one was around for miles, I was certain. I took the cage in which I had bought one of the canaries and approached the ruined shack, keeping a cautious eye on the bird's demeanor. It was angry at me for disturbing it, and a little fearful, but it seemed to be perfectly all right physically.

I looked over the ruins. Odd that I had never noticed - the weeds were not growing anywhere near it. Well, I hadn't known before that the shack was over seventy years old. The wood did not look rotted. I sniffed the air. No musty smell. The bird was quiet.

I decided to begin my explorations at the wall that was least ruined. In this wall the front door stood, tightly shut. I had taken along a heavy hammer and a chisel and these proved to be more than sufficient for the task at hand. Two solid blows severed to tear loose the crumbling hasp and in another moment I had prised open the door and stood blinking into the dusty interior. Light entered through the many damaged places. I could not tell for certain I did not overlook anything, I lit a Coleman lantern and hung it over the entrance on a peg.

Evidently there had been two rooms in the shack and this part was not terribly damaged at all; the partition was bent away, and a few timbers from the roof had sagged floorward, that was it. The second room, to the rear, that had suffered most of the damage, was not so bad to pull through the worst part of the ruins. A small block and tackle I had rented was lying in the stationwagon; I had no intention of clearing up the splintered logs and the other rubbish that one must start with the job, I wanted to look over the relatively intact portion of the place thoroughly.

Occasionally I glanced at the canary, whose cage I had put down on a primitive-looking bookshelf, but it had performed so reliably in the coolness of the morning, the gas did not seem out, but I would take no chances. I went back out and dragged the oxygen tank into the shack and draped the gas mask around my neck. I could don it in two seconds flat, should the necessity of doing so occur.

The room struck me as being perfectly normal - the kind of parlor a hermit of rather primitive means would be expected to have. It had probably never been neat or orderly. In fact, it resembled the inside of my own cabin. There was only one difference. I had brought along no reading matter with me; I was not much of a reader, anyway. My fellow had about five large volumes crammed with books. I glanced at them curiously, but most of them meant nothing to me. By a freak of chance, the roof above the bookshelf had remained almost intact, and they had not been exposed. I realized that they were in fine condition; many must have been ancient and faded even before old Zach could ever have purchased them, they were so old. I decided to take some of them back to my cabin with me for study and began to stow them away in the wagon. Once started on the task I kept at it until I had them all; I decided that would be safer, for some of those books looked valuable and one or two of them looking valuable sent me on my feet, to the fact that the structure was none too sturdy, and might collapse when I began to clear away the debris in the back room.

At this time, even with concrete evidence before me, I had not the slightest inkling or premonition of the true situation. I had worked out a scientific theory, or one that I thought was scientific, based on Rigby's explanation. The only flaw in the gas theory, I had decided, was that an explosion would have blown the wreckage out, whereas the place had obviously collapsed. Once, in college, I had been considering majoring in science and I had a course or two in chemistry. My recollections, though dim, were that a chemical reaction using a combination of any inflammable material and the products of the reaction (normally carbon dioxide and water vapor) are gases at a high temperature, and they therefore push outward at a high pressure. This outward push is the explosion. But what if some unknown gas were to produce a solid product (I remembered vaguely that phosphorus pentoxide was such a solid compound) would not this lead to an implication not an explosion? Surely the result would be that the gas mixture might ignite to produce a solid compound, leaving almost a perfect vacuum behind. Air pressure from somewhere would collapse the walls. The only difficulty is that I knew of no gas which would have such an effect.

After packing the books, I decided to take everything else in the shack that could be moved. Things like the table, the chairs, and the cot that had lain in one corner of the room I left outside. There were a few small items that I stowed away in the Ford. They were curiosities. I wondered about them, but they could have been souvenirs of a trip abroad. For example, there were five little statuettes of the general sort I have seen for sale in Hawaii and in African shops. Ugly little monsters. One was especially disgusting; the creature must have been human, but deformed, at least by a pretty wild nightmare. It had tentacles about its head, and - but there is little point in describ-
ing the abomination in these notes: it is, after all, right here in the room with me. Odd - once or twice, I have decided to destroy the cursed image, and have actually picked it up with the intention of tossing it over the waterfall. Each time I have changed my mind. Ugly as it may be, but useless a work of one of the most realistic idols I have ever seen, for all that it is a fantastic design.

After cleaning out the accessible part of the shack, I prepared the road to the right side again, for I had raised a lot of dust. But there was no sign of gas, and the canary was perfectly all right. I took his cage with me. The job of removing the fallen timbers and logs was not easy, even with the aid of the block and tackle. I worked the job in an attempt to enlist the aid of the reluctant (and expensive) natives and the visiting sportsmen had now quit these parts. By mid-afternoon, I could see that I would need another half-day to finish, but I persisted until near sundown.

It was with a sudden start of fear that I saw my canary lying on its side in the cage. Its wings were faintly fluttering.

I reacted by grabbing the gas mask. With fumbling fingers I put it on and cautiously breathed. I was trembling. Obviously I had been affected, too, because it must have taken ten or fifteen seconds, not too, for me to adjust my face. I felt dizzy, suddenly, and felt myself sink to the ground. I knew the fumes would be stronger there, but I could not help myself.

Gradually I breathed more easily and my head cleared. The gas mask was performing its job. I was thankful - I had never been quite sure it would be effective against an unknown vapor. As soon as I could, I got to my feet and stumbled toward the Ford, carrying my bird cage. I used the small oxygen tank to try to revive the canary, but it was useless - the bird was dead. Shaken, I removed the mask and drove to the cabin.

Strange to say, this unfortunate experience did not deter me from my self-appointed task. If anything it strengthened my resolve. To tell the truth, I had begun to wonder if my elaborate preparations (the gas mask, the mask, and so on) were really necessary, or just a bit of rather juvenile posturing. Now that the canary and the gas mask had probably saved my life, I felt justified and a little smug.

I found that the after-effects of my experience, a general lassitude only partially attributable to my physical exertions, were erased when I tried breathing pure oxygen. I did this cautiously, for I knew that it was not safe to inhale pure oxygen for long periods of time; but no after-effects occurred.

That night, for the first time in well over five months, my sleep was disturbed. I dreamed incessantly. I do not recall the dreams very vividly but they seemed to center about figures resembling the statuette I had rescued from old Zach's hut, particularly the ugly one with tentacles. It seemed to me that I chanted his name, a name that resounded in my brain, a word of great power; but then I woke and the memory faded and was gone. I was drenched in sweat and had fallen out of my cot onto the floor.

I must have hit a bang, for I would swear that those figures had moved, changed their positions a little from where I had placed them. At the time I shrugged this off as nonsense, but the half-memories of those dreams still disturbed me. When I tried to compose myself for sleep, nothing happened. Finally, I hunted down the package of capsules Doc Parry had given me to use as a sedative. It was a medicine I had never needed, once I arrived here in this valley. I swallowed two of them and returned to bed. Soon I slept, and if I dreamed again I have no recollection of it.

Next day it rained and I was dog tired anyway, so I put off finishing the job at the shack and decided to explore my cache of books instead.

I had made quite a collection, now realized. Some of them were perfectly ordinary treatises on scientific subjects - for instance, there was Newton's PRINCIPIA and an old volume on optics by the German poet Goethe. More heavily represented were books on the pseudo-sciences. There were treatises on astrology, on alchemy, on palmistry and phrenology, on Tarot cards, and the like. Most of the books were in English, German or Latin. All were annotated in English in a neat script.

These accounted for perhaps half of my literary treasure trove. The remainder seemed to consist of books on religion or magic or mysticism. I had heard of Albertus Magnus and of the Tibetan book of the dead and a few others. But I had never encountered such authors as Ibn Fozlan, Cosmas, Jules Bois, and Petrus Cirrillus; and I had never dreamed of the existence of such treatises as Muller's BEITRAG ZUR GE-SCHICHTE DES HESENGLAUBENS UND HEXENPROCESSES IN STE-BURGEN, J. G. Dalylell's DARKER SUPERSTITIONS OF SCOTLAND, Dom Augustin Calmet's TRAITÉ SUR LES APPARITIONS DES ESPRITS, Casselius' DE SACRIFICITIS POR-CINIS IN CULTU DEORUM VETERUM, or Collin de Plancy's DICTIONNAIRE INFERNAL.

These represent only a few of the books that I found. Finally, after sorting through this group, I came upon a set of five other books, wrapped carefully in oilcloth. I call them books, but they were really notebooks, filled with the neat hand of an unknown another. I never noticed earlier in the margins of some of the other volumes, old Zach's no doubt. I read parts of them out of curiosity. They seemed to have been copied from some sort of magical texts or treatises, perhaps ones so rare that old Zach could not buy (or steal) copies, and thus was compelled to make them by hand. But his neat handwriting was as easy to read as a Xerox copy of the original would have been.

And some were imprisoned in the farthest stars, others in limitless spaces beyond the Earth. But paths exist between the realms of Earth and those places where they abide. The gates that lead to these ways are closed and locked but keys may be discovered in concealed places. When the stars form the right symbols in the skies, when the proper invocation is recited and the proper sacrifices are made, these gates will open and those that dwell beyond will enter this world. Even when the stars are wrong, men with power can call to them across the vast spaces and they will answer. A likeness, or simulacrum, of the prisoner ones
can be used to aid in the conjuration; and such an object can be inhabited temporarily by an extension of the one-who-is-called. Men with the power and the knowledge exist, worshipping in secret and waiting until the sky turns round to reveal the proper time, and others, who are not men, also wait. Some of these others have bred with the sons and daughters of men, giving birth to strange and damned creatures called Zathor. These, in particular, have the power to call upon the imprisoned ones, and, even when the stars are wrong, possess dominion over their messengers. When the Zathor call, the messengers will answer. But their answer means death if the ritual is imperfect or incorrectly voiced.

The others who are not men wait in secret regions beneath the waters of the world and among the snows of the high places and within the sulphurous bowels of the earth.

I was extremely uncomfortable after reading parts of those blasphemous notebooks and as soon as the rain ended, took a long walk until dark. As I fell asleep that night with the help of sleeping pills, I kept thinking of what I had read concerning the sacrifices necessary for calling on the "messengers". It involved the blood and entrails of a child, and I could not help feeling certain that I knew, now, what there was about the body of little Anne Rigby that was "horribly queer," the subject which the doctor's elders refused to discuss. For in the margin of this notebook, old Zach had written in that clear hand: "Cirrelius implies that a female child under the age of six is ideal here, but that the blood of calves will sometimes do instead. Cannot take a chance on the calves - it will have to be a child."

The following morning was overcast but not rainy. After some breakfast, I felt better, though I had a slight headache from the sleeping tablets. I managed a fairly early start and had finished dragging away most of the debris from Zach's place by noon. Apparently gas tended to seep out only in the afternoon; I was not bothered again by any such manifestation, though I kept a careful watch on my second canary. The pickings were slandering, compared with the books and curios I had found earlier in the intact portion of the shack. Several rusted pieces of metal, what seemed to be an old notebook but was now a mass of yellow pulp, and one of the curious statues and the skeleton. It was a human skeleton, of that I was certain, and since it was about five and a half feet in length I assumed it was that of old Zach, who had been caught in the shack when it collapsed. Near the skeleton was the trapdoor.

The door was set into the earth where the far wall of the cabin had been, and consisted of a heavy stone slab with a solid brass handle imbedded therein. The slab was locked by a rusty bolt. Once I had the trapdoor opened, I found the going moderately easy. Pulling the tank along behind me, flashing my light in front, I moved slowly forward on my initial search of the subterranean passageway.

Understandably, I equipped myself with the flashlight and replacement batteries since the lantern was probably useless in the atmosphere below. A sudden inspiration took me back to the Ford where in the glove compartment I had cached a stack of political bumper-stickers. These reflectors might serve as trail markers if the subterranean passage was extensive. It was difficult for me to get the cart-carried compressed air tank down to the floor of the tunnel, though it had been easy to open the huge trapdoor using the block slab and the old chain. In any event, however, I found the going moderately easy. Pulling the tank along behind me, flashing my light in front, I moved slowly forward on my initial search of the subterranean passageway.

When the passageway branched, I chose the right-hand path, for the other was smaller and I thought it might be less interesting. I marked it with a reflective sticker. The floor now became relatively smooth as though worn by the passage of many feet over millennia. Now the walls too became less irregular; the cavern gradually took on the aspect of a real tunnel, being quite uniformly rectangular, though limestone formations still appeared on the high ceiling. Suddenly, without prior warning, I encountered a barrier. At some time in the past a rock fall had apparently occurred, partly blocking the tunnel. Indeed, I thought initially the blockage had been complete, but on carefully sweeping my flashlight across the rubble I discovered a small passageway near one wall. In the shadowy illumination it appeared almost as though the path had been cleared by someone after the rockfall had occurred, but I dismissed this notion as fancy. This damage must have been made at the same time as the destruction above ground, and after that who or what could have survived down in this atmosphere of unknown gases?
With some difficulty I managed to drag my equipment through the opening and in a few minutes I was beyond the mouth of the cave in utter confusion as I flashed the light around.

I stood at the entrance to a huge cavern, almost an amphitheater, so extensive was it that the beam from my flashlight did not reach the farthest points. Scattered about throughout the gigantic room were countless numbers of shadowy figures. Their indistinct outlines made me shudder with cold fear, as the grotesque shapes seemed to mock at the efforts of the flashlight to pierce their heavy gloom. Scattered about throughout the gigantic room were countless numbers of shadowy figures. Their indistinct outlines made me shudder with cold fear, as the grotesque shapes seemed to mock at the efforts of the flashlight to pierce their heavy gloom.

Then I let my breath out in a heartfelt sigh of relief. My nerves were playing games with me. They had only seemed to move, in the beam from my flashlight. Slowly, fear and excitement mounting, I went from statue to statue, studying each for a few moments in the waning light from my torch.

There was no doubt of one thing - the batteries would not last much longer. I had purchased them in town and they obviously hadn't been very new. I would have to switch them.

I had practiced such a maneuver in the dark some time ago but now my hands were trembling and a curious cold sweat was settling on my forehead. I was actually afraid to turn the light off long enough to make the change. Was there a concrete reason for feeling fearful? Had I heard or seen anything on which other than ancient statues? No. It was purely instinctive reaction, caused, I decided, by the eeriness of the statues.

For the statues were queer - bizarre and unearthly. Some of them were life-size replicas of the tiny statuettes I had found in old Zach's cabin. Others depicted more of the snout-faced, claw-handed creatures with monstrous unblinking eyes. The rest showed men - Indians, white men, orientals, primitive humans who looked to me amazingly like Neanderthals, and fathers not properly men at all, unless one might call them ape-men.

The ape-men were always shown in attitudes of supplication or worship, and the objects of this distasteful submission were always the claw-handed ones or the other, more horrible shapes whose tiny replicas Zach had possessed. One of the scenes shown I could interpret only as a kind of ritual sexual intercourse between one of the male claw-handed creatures and an Indian woman, her face showing a kind of unholy joy, and in a subsequent scene the woman was shown bearing a child with the features of a human being, but the hands of a claw-thing. Another scene depicted a child, a human being literally torn to pieces by several of the claw-handed ones who were present - a ghastly sight, respectably on an altar to the tentacled being, the worst abomination of all. It was disgusting, the more so because each figure was so finely molded as to make one believe it had been sculpted from life! And one is compelled to imagine how much more the life-size figures affected me when even the miniature ones had revolted and depressed me.

I took a firm hold on myself and opened the back of my flashlight, dumping the worn-out batteries on the ground, and carefully inserting the new ones. I realized that I had my eyes closed, suddenly, and op-
Next morning I awoke at dawn, having gone to sleep almost immediately after taking a hasty meal. I had been utterly exhausted from exertion and fear. But in the morning I felt refreshed. In the cheery glow of the dawn sun my adventure of the previous day seemed absolutely incredible. And my fear of that unearthly clicking sound seemed irrational and laughable. I was keen to go down into that amazing cave again. This time I intended to take photographs and, if possible, to bring back some other tangible evidence of what I had discovered. I still possessed one full tank of compressed air, and I had a box of magnesium flares which could produce the intense light I needed for my polaroid.

Though chuckling at my own cowardice, I also decided to bring along a rifle. If something more substantial than phosphorescent fungi or dripping limestone formations lurked in that cavern, a bullet would take good care of it, should it prove hostile.

But nothing could live in the foul atmosphere of those caverns!

By tonight I shall have photographic evidence of the most spectacular anthropological find ever made anywhere - a site to make Easter Island and Stonehenge look like rejects from Disneyland! I'm too weary, though, to speculate on the origins of the grotto or its meaning. Let the experts at Harvard puzzle over it.

Here end the notes left by Hank Hartley, my boss and my friend. About two weeks after the last entry, a passing hunter had discovered Hank's body sprawled in his cabin. The death had been a violent one - gore splattered the floor and walls - and the corpse had been badly mangled and mysteriously clawed.

Since Hank had no surviving relatives, the funeral responsibilities devolved upon me. I was his only heir. I at once left the business I had been managing for him, anxious to find out what had actually happened, and headed for West Virginia. I ran up against a stone wall. The authorities attributed the murder to a homicidal tramp, had stamped it unsolved, and seemed to be trying to forget all about it as quickly as possible.

They were not uncooperative in minor ways. They did let me see all the evidence, released Hank's belongings to me, and even let me use the cabin for a while, though they warned me casually that it might be a dangerous place to stay.

The station wagon was still parked off the road - its battery had run down and I could not start it. It was still filled with a lot of Hank's odd paraphernalia, and apparently it had not been searched. I saw the thorough cleaning of the cabin (with the aid of a very nervous local woman); then, more or less settled in, I decided to conduct a careful search for any further clues to what had been happening. The journal that I showed you is one of the first things that I found - in the front seat of the station wagon, where Hank had apparently stored it in preparation for a trip to the village.

Unfortunately, the journal left even more questions unanswered than before. Had Hank gone insane in his solitude? I found no traces of the strange old books or the demonic carvings or statuettes he had written of. If they had been in the cabin before his death, they had since vanished.

I continued to search the auto but found nothing else of major interest. Then I concentrated on the house, hoping that something ignored by the police would prove to be of significance in the light of what I now knew. Shoved under the bunk bed I found the one chilling piece of evidence without which I might even now dismiss the whole affair as a bout of temporary madness on the part of a sick man. Even now I do not know how completely I believe my own deductions (and Hank had said I was unimaginative!), but that evidence...

One other place I decided to search carefully was the clearing. I found to my astonishment that it was a total wreck. But Hank's block and tackle arrangement came in handy and I cleared away some of the debris over the rear part of the building. I found the transpose as if it had been dripped down against the ground and only after many attempts with the block and tackle did I succeed in wrenching it loose. Below I found nothing but a solid mass of tumbled rock and dirt - the tunnel, if tunnel there had been, was entirely blocked.

Near the trapdoor, under debris, I made my other significant find - one of the abominable figurines Hank had described. It was one of the ugly claw-handied ones, entirely unhuman except that it walked on two legs. I carefully stowed it away with Hank's journal in the back of my car.

In his notes Hank characterized me as unimaginative and stolid. Perhaps I am or was. But I am good at one thing that all engineers should be good at - examining evidence and putting it together; erecting a structure of logic. Now here is the evidence that struck me as undeniable and meaningful:

1. Hank's discoveries of the underground passageways leading from the old shack to a marvelous collection of statues or idols.
2. The facts regarding a sort of black magic incantations and the blood and entrails of a murdered child (not necessarily that the magic would work!).
3. Hank's observation of a presumably claw-hand ed, snout-faced thing that was able to live in a nox-
ious atmosphere, but apparently feared his flashlight. Was it trapped below ground until Hank cleared the fallen timbers away from the stone slab?

4. The disappearance of all the books and idols that Hank had found, coincident with his death. (I believed in their existence, now that I had found the one in the debris of the shack.)

5. The fact that Hank had apparently been clawed to death - and not by any animal.

6. The fact that the murderer apparently drank some of Hank's blood and ate his entrails - or at least these were missing; as perhaps was the case with little Anne Higby long ago.

7. The occurrence of another phenomenon I had uncovered - a minor earthquake that had taken place on approximately the same date as Hank's murder.

If some monstrous creature exists or once existed along the line in those subterranean passageways (certainly not old Zach's son by a non-human mother - wouldn't that be absolute nonsense) it might have been able to escape via the trapdoor and to follow Hank to his cabin. That it retrieved the books and idols when it killed Hank seems a forgone conclusion. Did it use Hank's blood and entrails as part of some ghastly calling down ceremony that is beyond any reasonable imagination? Say that the earthquake was a coincidence, a welcome perhaps in the course of things. Unlikely, I think. We'll never see Hank again. Indeed, that very first night I began to experience the oddest dreams - I never dreamed before, as a rule - dreams of far-off places and old creatures. And last night I swear I was awakened by a growling that made an old, rhythmic clicking sound. Luckily I had installed a solid night latch on the cabin door. I had no weapon with me, and I did not investigate.

A thought occurs to me. Hank mentioned a second passageway in that tunnel. Could it have led to the waterfall? That would account for the little girl's body having been found far downstream, rather than being lost in the caverns. If the passageway had been clogged by the first earthquake (what Hank thought to be an implosion) might it not have been opened again by the second one?

Could that creature still be alive and hunting me? Now that is imagination!

Nevertheless, I have decided to leave at once. If it wants me (if it is out there - and I am coming to believe this, despite all common sense) then it will have to trace me all the way back north. This manuscript will be safe from marauders in the library at Brown - they make a specialty of strange manuscripts and books there - and just let that thing even try to find me in the middle of Boston! At least I'll know it if I see it, for I have its picture.

Hank must have gone back down below, as he planned. He took a polaroid camera with him. The camera had been under the bunk bed, as I mentioned before, empty but for the last remnant of a roll of film - whatever photographs he had taken were gone with the books and the idols. But I was smarter than the creature in this respect at least. If it tossed the empty camera aside, I did not. When the last picture from a roll of 47 polaroid film has been taken, the negative remains in the camera. And if it is not exposed to light long, it doesn't fade. Furthermore, it may be made permanent by rubbing over it the same solution normally squeegeed over the prints themselves. The picture had evidently been the last one Hank had had time to snap. Then he must have run from that underground cavern as though all the demons of the dark were after him.

For at least one of them really was. Even on the negative one could see clearly that the main figure in the photo, limned against a background of weird, misshapen idols, was a living, menacing being.

It was coming toward Hank and it had its peculiar claw-like hands outstretched. It looked a great deal like the claw-handed statue I had found, except for its features.

The worst part, I think, is that its face, though grotesque, is recognizably manlike.

-VII-

Brown University
Providence, R.I. 02910
March 11, 1972

Dear Mr. Frierson:

Re your recent inquiry, the original of this curious manuscript was recently removed from our closed stacks under very distressing circumstances - a night custodian was mysteriously clawed to death, but of course we make microfilms of all our special materials. A copy of the idol was also taken, though the original remains locked in our special vault. We have made inquiries of the man in Boston who delivered these notes into our keeping - a Mr. Lawrence Hanover, an engineer - but he seems to have disappeared under mysterious circumstances.

Perhaps in the course of your studies you will be able to elucidate these mysteries.

/s/ Walter Quadnau
Chief Librarian

Enc: microfilms of journal of H. Hartley; statement of L. Hanover; photograph of claw-handed idol; copy of a negative of a polaroid print. Publication rights granted.
The Return of Zhosph

BY GARY MYERS

(lllo, also by Gary Myers, has nothing to do with this tale but it fits, so why not...?)

In which of the Seven Cryptical Books is forgotten, Hsan records this peculiar and exceedingly doubtful fact: that wisdom possessed in life is not permitted to pass with the soul toward whatever dwelling place it may have found, but cleaves to the moulder corpse to fester and diminish even as flesh beneath the gentle nibblings of worms. Perhaps the reason dust from certain graves is valued in unlawful practices, and why necromancers, trained in worms, acquire arcane knowledge: it is better they should not have. And such most certainly drove Snurd in searching for the high iron gate of Zulan-Thek, a gate which crept onto that dim, star-litten plain where they of Zulan-Thek were wont to inter their dead in dreams that died because Zulan-Thek's sun was not forever.

Of Snurd and his dubious parentage men once hinted unmentionable things, indicating as evidence that hitherto only the destestable ghouls and kindred horrors were known to inflict such enormities upon the dead. What, they inquired of one another, possessed of voices, became of the fat miller before the sextons came, and who defiled Klotlei's grave and Shek's in the night? Then they would gesture knowingly but make no more lucid answer. Little did Snurd care! He knew how the bones were taken down from the high place where the camels passed from Gaik, laden with bright silks and spices of exotic name, and where malefactors were displayed, only that morning, that purpose, that morning they were taken and dragged by the muffled sextons whose duty it was, to the catacombs where their odour would not offend the camels. He guessed the nature of those crimes for which this penalty was exacted, and that all to some degree approximate witchcraft. And few knew better than Snurd what is written in Hsan's Cryptical Books.

He went out with only one fear to see: they of Zulan-Thek were fearful of their dead, and kept the Night securely bolted out of doors and peering vainly at shuttered windows. How the Night finally overcame the barriers it is a tale to elevation all the lamps and hope, does not concern this tale. Snurd feared neither darkness nor the buried dead. But leaping grotesquely in the deep shadows of crumbling mounds, he heard his tongue tingling in his throat, as a hunger not often manifested by fully human persons. He remembered the screams of the carrion foul flapping darkly in the gloom around the mewing bundle on the hook, and how the bundle lost its tongue trying to charm the raven from its eyes. Perhaps, ah, perhaps the avid beaks could not wholly penetrate those bleeding sockets to the maddened brain. Perhaps it was still shut away within the clean-picked skull.... And Snurd laughed and leered at the frightened Moon.

It did not take him long to find the path the sextons used in their particular trade; for Snurd was more familiar than any sexton should have been with the starling ways of that path. The weeds there grew too quickly, and made little rustling noises even without the wind. But it was no business of Snurd's who stirred the weeds. He hurried over a confused valley, and beyond the Judas, leaving boulders and moments ere the Dawn paled the East in whosomter lands and the tides of Night receded, Snurd crept near to that vine-hidden stone door with the hippogriff's head, and entered, his eyes in the opening. The serpent signs on the faces of those images were too worn to ascertain their correct meaning; but the swollen vi-nes slithered quietly back at his approach, and Snurd passed through and down the fifty-seven lightless steps to those deeper lower halls where it must be blasphemy that light should ever come. Snurd had not that inconvenience of requiring light to see, and moved quickly and with improbable sureness over the floor pomegranate and worn thornbush by the passage of nameless things and Time, disturbing the rats and less pleasant things with his breathing. The rats were whispering plotts in the dark with uncouth scarabs. One crept up toSnurd and whispered something behind that door rattled its moldy claws and snarled, and made him think better of opening it. He came at last to a little unlighted vault and found where the sextons had deposited the leavings of the grisly hook. It was doubtlessly only his imagination that the pale skull grinned when Snurd entered the room....

Thus ends the unhappy tale of Zhosph as recorded elsewhere, and told once by them of Zulan-Thek until the Night came with his retinue of shadows to feast in Zulan-Thek's palaces and fanes, attended by fear that when the sextons who had carried Zhosph's bones returned to the hippogryph-guided entrance on a matter of unfinished business, they found things not quite as they had left them. The faces of the hippogriff, left altered and strangely smear'd, and the vines misbehaved shockingly, deliberately tripping the frenzied rats as they fled madly from the catacombs, and strangling them in a manner the sextons did not like. But worse was the wailing in the depths that had frightened the rats. One man later averred that it moaned disturbingly of something evil that should have been dead but scratched subtly in the back of the mind, changing things for a purpose and tittering within. And certainly they all heard that tearing scream in the dark, and saw afterwards the queer little being with large ears that scampared up the dark stairs and made an invisible Sign at them before drying its curious wings and fluttering back toward Zulan-Thek against the cryptic stars, to bargain with the Night.

When at last the sextons had conferred in bleak whispers and descended to that tiny room where they had left it, they found the skeleton of Zhosph the thaumaturge disturbed, the skull split like the rim of a serpent mouth, the horn of the cryptic sign devour'd. This was attributed to the activities of rats, until later. One other thing they found which was less easily explained: a shrivelled yellowish membrane much as a serpent might leave in moulting, or the chrysalis of certain rare moths, not entirely recognizable as the skin of Snurd turned inside-out. The sextons did not pause long to ponder the riddle.
The Drawings on the Desktops

BY JOHN SELLERS

Due to certain narrow-minded officials on the school board who have refused to heed my warnings and have already foolishly appointed another teacher for the Talasulga school district, I am forced to reveal what I have testified to these last few weeks, behind the locked doors before the State of Alabama's education and administrative action will undoubtedly arouse little emotion among the sceptical and apathetic majority; however, if, with full knowledge of the horrors I experienced as a result of my attempt to educate the offspring of the denizens of that accursed town, the school officials decided to place another instructor's life in jeopardy, then whatever harm befalls that unfortunate person will rest on their consciences - not mine.

To establish firmly my moral fibre and soundness of mind, so that you will not imagine me, as do the members of the school board, some eccentric occultist who discerns a myriad of nonexistent supernatural horrors in every dark corner or secluded house, I must rely solely on my strong Christian upbringing and sound education, in reputable institutions of higher learning. While my one surviving aunt may alone attest to my religious foundations, the enrollment records of such schools as Harvard, Boston College and Auburn University will substantiate my claim to a rewarding college career, by obtaining a well-earned master's degree in the expanding field of education.

It was with such impressive references that I secured a teaching position at the elementary level in the spring of 1953, and for five years thereafter I taught in the Georgia school system. While my memories of teaching in that fine state are pleasant and wholesome, it was my teaching philosophy at the time that an earnest instructor would not limit himself to one school district in order to avoid the mental stagnation which results from the monotony of a continuing environment. Being unmarried and therefore free from any retarding family ties, I was able to adhere to this maxim and applied for a transfer to the State of Alabama, home of my previous alma mater.

I had submitted my resume to the Alabama Board of Education hoping to obtain employment in one of the state's many beautiful and prosperous cities. Words cannot describe my supreme disappointment on discovering that I had been appointed a faculty member of a school in a segregated rural town, primarily inhabited by superstitious "hillbillies" who resented the education of their children. In fact, I use the term "faculty members satirically" was the entire teaching force. For, as ridiculously absurd as it seems in this day of such impressive educational complexes, Talasulga maintained only a one-room school building left over from the turn of the century.

However, I am getting ahead of myself. The first occasion that I set eyes on district school number five was on September 21st, two weeks before the impending semester was scheduled to begin. I was so immediately repelled on encountering the aura of desolation and unhealthiness which emanated from the dilapidated stores and houses that made up the town proper, that I could not bring myself to stop and continued driving past the decayed edifices and unkempt pedestrians who would turn and stare at my car with stone faces and unfriendly eyes. Finally, with the aid of the map, I found the antiquated school building lying off the main road on the outskirts of Talasulga. At first, I could not accept what I saw before me as reality. While the poverty previously witnessed connoted such backwardness, I had still not dismissed the possibility of a competent school.

Somewhat in a daze, I surveyed the massive, arch-topped structure; the originally white building, which rested under a thick grove of pine trees, was urgently in need of a new coating of whitewash - not only to rejuvenate the splintering original coat of paint, but to camouflage the abhorrent, obscene graffiti engraved in the decaying wood of the exterior walls. Regaining my composure, I ascended the flexible wooden steps and, inserting a key into the rusted lock of the weather-beaten portal, forced open the screeching door which had not been violated since the beginning of the summer. A malodorous atmosphere of peculiar and offensive odors greeted me but, as the foul air soon gave way to the inflow of fresh, I stepped over the threshold and into the classroom.

The musty interior had a gloomy aspect due to the thick layer of mould which engulfs the peaked windows and thus allowed only a minimum of sunlight to filter through the aged, yellow glass. The cobwebs which hung from the high beamed ceiling swayed listlessly in the current of evening breeze entering through the open door. Proceeding toward the teacher's rostrum through the maze of scattered student desks, I discerned the presence of lead pencil drawings beneath the thick coating of dust which enveloped the desktops. Using a handkerchief to sweep away the stratum, I exposed several devilishly detailed sketches the subject of which, as far as I could ascertain, was the former instructor. I was acquainted with the uncompromising caricatures that juveniles will render of their mentors, but never in all my teaching career had I ever encountered such incompetence for one instructor as was evidenced in those awful drawings. Comparing each desktop, I noticed that one ghastly theme was common to all the illustrations, each depicting a man being inhumanly tortured by some mockery of nature which seemingly had invaded the very classroom I was then in.

With a feeling of loathing, I turned my attention from the sketches and made my way to the desk of the former instructor. Disregarding the unclean appearance of which I have already made note, the desk appeared as if the teacher had not left it more than a few minutes before! There were various corrected assignments lying about, a vase of dead flow-
ers and an engraved nameplate designating the former teacher to have been Mr. Travers. I could not help but begin to wonder what would compel this Mr. Travers to vacate the premises, such was his complete disregard what he left behind. Indeed, the blackboard behind the desk, which was then a shade of grey due to age, was not completely erased of sensible equations probably used in an arithmetic lesson.

On inspection, the desk drawers yielded miscellaneous papers through which I rummaged for what must have been a still indubitably renowned school because of the insufficient light entering through the nearly opaque glass of the windows. The faint chirping of crickets in the night air was audible as I placed my hands on a thick blue cloth, to which I had walked down the aisle of student desks. Try as I might, I could not avoid looking at those horribly suggestive sketches of that ghastly anomaly of nature which, in some aspects, resembled a huge frog, though normal-size amphibians do not possess such keen talons and acute fangs as protruded from the creature's webbed feet and cavernous mouth. Surely, any further description would encourage the reader to question the veracity of my narrative so I will refrain from elaboration.

Closing the reluctant doors behind me and stepping out in the moonlight upon the steps, I sensed that the actual adventure could be some dark secret; however, I quickly dismissed such immature thoughts as childish and unbecoming to one as sensible as I. Once back in my automobile, I decided against returning to Talasulga, for my intentions for the night in that travesty of a town but, rather, to drive to the neighboring town of Beauville which, according to my map, was only a twenty minutes' journey from there. Apparently, only a handful of newer, I arrived in Beauville and, finding the quaint mixture of antebellum and modern architecture more inviting than the rotting structures of its sister city, I secured a hotel room there and spent most of the night attempting to rationalize the predicament I was in.

From the following morning, after returning to Talasulga to post announcements pertaining to the beginning of school and the penalties for tardiness (for I had resigned myself to teaching at least one semester until a suitable replacement could be found) to the first day of class, I suffered considerable abuse from the citizens of that town. After being observed posting the notices on the barren bulletin board in the dilapidated town hall, my occupation and objective were apparently simultaneously known among the populace as immediately became evident by the results. On the occasions that I would stroll along the arched, elevated wooden sidewalks of the main street, which consisted primarily of several general stores, two saloons and a few saloons and cafes which were always heavily patronized, some degenerate would inevitably approach and have the audacity to shower me with vulgar and degrading language, calling me an "outlander" and ordering me to "git". Even the young mocked me at every opportunity but that could at least be dismissed as the natural gap between teacher and student. Nevertheless, I refused to censure their ethics and offered no verbal retaliation, instead, motivated by an urge to avenge the indignities I had suffered, my sojourns to Talasulga were limited to the school building which I began to transform with a frenzied determination. These simple-minded people had defeated their purpose as the insults only aroused my desire to remain and educate the delinquents of these degenerates.

I scrubbed the windows, replacing the panes that were shattered, with faith, I drained, and cleaned the student desks free of those artistic efforts of the morbidly deranged. After rinsing the last desktop, I found the classroom relieved of some malevolent entity which had previously brooded within its decaying walls. As a result of a letter to the Alabama Board of Education, a new set of elementary readers, to replace the classroom set which had been treated with the same disrespect displayed toward the furni-

ure, arrived at the post office in Beauville, where I was renting a room. From my own pocket came the finances necessary to secure a crew of painters to repaint the exterior. It was not an easy task locating a crew that would make the trip to Beauville; indeed, most prospects had refused my applications for service. For some reason, I suspected that distance was not the prime motive behind their blatant refusals.

The main of the town was a sheer-frantic escape from that town of white trash - I have no quails about referring to the people of Talasulga as such - began in the third week of the semester. The previous week, work had been performed by the courteous and respectful façade which the students had maintained. The only subject which the class, as a whole, took an intense and peculiar interest in, as they shunned both arithmetic and grammar, was history, particularly the study of ancient civilizations and the religious cults prevalent in the youthful stages of mankind's development. Oddly enough, the pupils appeared to command already a good deal of knowledge concerning these cults, often volunteering information new to me, referring to obscure gods and forgotten tombs of eldritch lore. A few claimed they could speak as well as translate the Arabian language which they said was learned from "those good"; however, since I did not speak the language and knew little concerning those trivial religions, I could not verify all their wild claims and assumed they were reading too many of those vulgar periodicals popularly referred to as "pulpis."

The first link in this unholy succession of happenings was the reply to a letter written to the Board of Investigation inquiring after the whereabouts of Mr. Travers so that his forlorn papers might be forwarded. I had previously petitioned the class to help in my quest; however, when confronted with the question, they began to whisper among themselves and grin in a most disturbing fashion. The correspondence read:

Dear Mr. Cartright:

In reply to your inquiry concerning the address of Master Samuel Travers, I regret to inform you that this fine and loyal teacher died after the close of the previous semester.

While reports are vague, Talasulga authorities assure us that Mr. Traver's untimely demise was the result of a tragic fresh automobile accident. His death came after twenty-five years in the service of Alabama's educational system, though he was in his initial semester at Talasulga....

However, if we were to select one incident which was responsible for that night of October twenty-first which would be the corporal punishment I was forced to bestow upon Andrew Cunningham in reward for his disobedience. Every school teacher usually has one or two pupils who must be constantly admonished for their lack of decorum or disrespect for authority. Andrew Cunningham was, from the first week of class, a constant thorn in my side, ceaselessly talking during my lectures or paying no attention whatsoever to class-room activities. It was because of this inability to behave and conform to my standards that on October nineteenth I swatted Andrew five times across the knuckles with my yardstick. Having dealt out the punishment and Andrew had resumed his seat in the back of the room, the other students refused to respond to my teaching endeavors, preferring to stare silently at me with faces contorted in anger in order to symbolize allegiance for their comrade. Seeing that further efforts on my part would only bring continued negative response, I dismissed the class early.

After the class was dismissed, I sought out the Door, Dawes Palmer, who had remained seated, rose and walked toward my desk. Dawes was one of my few charges who appeared anxious to improve scholastically, while pretending to be disinterested as the treaty I detected that he would always manage to scribble down a few notes and usually did fairly well on the examinations.
"Yes, Dawes?" I inquired, not knowing exactly what to expect.

"Won't no car wreck that got Travers...twas what Wizard Cunningham called down from the sky, an' that, suh, is the gospel truth,' replied Dawes, as he pushed the wisp of black hair from his forehead which was now beaded with nervous perspiration.

"Why are you telling me this, Dawes?" I asked, not at all placing any credence in his tale.

"Well, suh, mistun Cawright, ya seem to care 'bout wheater we learn or not...fixing this place up an' all whe the state niver had a mind to," he said, blushing. "I best be goin' now, ain't no sense in stayin' longer than I have to. That's some that hold Andrew knows wut ya say tho' he weren't around when ya spoke it. One mo' thing, suh, beware of them drawin's.

With that ominous note, Dawes Palmer turned and departed - never to be seen by me again. I pray that he did not sacrifice his life for mine.

It appears as if I can no longer avoid writing about that accursed night. Though I have been beseeched that the memory of that eve be erased from my mind, I fear that even now the forces set in motion during those awful, black hours of my life. Somewhere, in the recesses of my subconscious, lingering still the horror I endured on that stormy night and it is that horror which periodically surfaces and re-energizes me to a gibbering mass of nerves and fright.

Since the punishment of Andrew's release, my relationship with the class (which lacked the Palmer boy) steadily deteriorated until, two days later, the school day was little more than a verbal duel between my students, with Andrew Cunningham as their ringleader, and myself. Therefore, when I discovered after class, as I was preparing to depart for Beaville, that all four tires on my automobile, which had been parked behind the school building, were maliciously slashed, my reaction was more of revulsion than of surprise. None of the juvenile delinquents was loitering about, which was to be expected under the circumstances, so I was forced to give up any hope of immediately apprehending the vandal who had done the deed. However, I was planning a serious talk with Andrew Cunningham and his fellows as soon as possible. Retiring to the classroom, I faced the alternative of attempting to walk or hitchhike along the infrequently traveled road or remaining in the relatively comfortable confines of the school. I chose the latter course of action, primarily in view of the impending inclement weather, and it is that decision which I regret today and, I fear, will regret the rest of my days upon this earth.

The first few hours of my confinement I occupied myself in correcting Mr. Week'sFSIZE2 plagiarism which were, despite attempts on my part to instill a basic knowledge of arithmetic fundamentals into the limited mental capacities of my charges, of poor and disheartening scholastic quality, though the problems were quite elementary. Becoming so engrossed in my work, it was some time later before I noticed that the promised raindrops were arriving, entering through a partially open window in the rear of the old schoolhouse. Looking out the water-stained pane as I sealed the aperture, I could see the pine trees beginning to sway back and forth as the storm grew.

It was approximately nine o'clock when I finally situated myself behind my desk and, with a spare blanket over me for warmth, fell asleep to the howling of the wind and the pounding of the rain as it cascaded down upon the aged roof above.

Some two hours later, I was abruptly jolted from my slumber, which had been plagued by dreams of the most disturbing variety, by the pungent smell of burning wood emanating from the front door. Believing it to be a waylaying traveller who had been caught in the downpour and, seeing my light from the main road, was now attempting to arouse me and, in order to obtain shelter, went to check from behind my desk and sleep-drugged proceeded in the direction of the door through the aisle of student desks. Though I shouted acknowledgment, the pounding continued to grow in volume and force.

I was but ten feet from the portal when, passing the last desk in the row, my attention was gripped by what I saw, out of the corner of my eye, on the desktop. For there was one blackest spot as the building's which only demented and perversive minds could have conjured into existence, uncannily similar to the type I had diligently erased prior to the beginning of the semester. A cdsrr!!!!... I had reared in nightmare was presented in the illustration - the only difference between this delineation and the previous sketches was that it was now me whom the creature was attacking in effigy. My nightmarish thessence through the twisted undergrowth to the main road plowing desperately through the foliage. Of my nightmarish thessence through the twisted undergrowth to the main road plowing desperately through the foliage. Some members of the school board scoffed at me when I related my experience before them, insinuating that I was deranged and in need of psychiatric care. However, they have admitted, rather reluctantly, after investigating the school building at Talisudge, that the new instructor will have to see that a new door is installed due to the fact that the former portal is now a mass of shattered wood and that the student desks are in need of a good cleaning.
Threshold to Doomsrack

BY ROBERT C. SUDOL

I waited in the dark shadows of the old graveyard for my notorious hireling. The hour was midnight, and a full moon dimly from behind sculpturally grey sky. It was the appointed hour. Footsteps sounded. I tensed. He had come.

"You've got it!" I gasped as I beheld the sinister tome clasped in his hands. The URUILLAR was its name, given in honour of one of the antient devil-gods by its mad author, Sartorius Morion, whose body had been found splattered about his study over half a century ago with this most damnable of hellish books opened to a blood-stained page.

As I took it from the infamous one's hands to examine its authenticity, I drew back with shock and revulsion.

"Your hands are bloodied!"

The sound reel did not reply but stared back coldly.

I checked the rich binding. No less than human flesh. I opened the volume and leafed through unholy chapters. Its centre was stained with dried blood. I shuddered at the thought of what sorcerous words were hid beneath. Satisfied, I smiled. A purée of gold changed hands and we each went our unhallowed way.

My studies of the outre had made known to me the existence of gateways to infinity created by an eldritch race that once lived upon a star so far removed from this sphere that no eye of man has yet marked its light. With the powerful aid of the book, I would summon the Ghouls-Kings and, with almighty words to bind them, force them to do my bidding. I would command them to bring me one of the antient thresholds to infinity.

With grim purpose I entered my study and bolted the door. I opened the frightful volume with trembling hands. My eyes were almost blinded with the Ultimate Obscenity.

With hoarse voice I mouthed the horrendous blasphemies. There was booming thunder and brilliant lightning in the heavens. A daemonic wind shrieked in the Cosmos above, though not a tree-branch stirred outside. I grew fearful, but I continued - for I could not stop. I was possessed! My voice rose to a crescendo of horror as I shrieked the most awesome of Ultra-Cosmic Commands. The ritual was ended. With a blast of hellish light the Ghouls-Kings appeared. They were bound to obey me. With Saxon pride I met their frightful gaze, but my flesh turned white, my blood chilled.

"The doors to Infinity - bring me one!"

From the aether it coalesced and formed. A mirror the size of a man that reflected jet blackness upon its face was one of the elder thresholds; the glass was clasped in a frame of unwondrously metal bearing runes of dark magic and forgotten meaning. I felt its most smooth face with hungry hands; it was unyielding and bitter cold.

The keys to the realm of the Keep of the Duergar were held in the mirror's face in a cold blue mist. Taloned fingers pointed at the Primal Sign. I understood. The symbol vanished.

Sending the vile fiends back to the unspeakable hell they crawled from, I laid the book upon my desk and with my finger made the Sign upon the mirror. What mighty necromancy! I pushed and fell through the door. I was beyond the Threshold.

I was hurtling into an uncharted space that was colder than the snows of a wind-swept arctic wasteland and more silent than a tomb. I was bare of even that apparel that wraps a naked man - my mortal coil was gone; I was but a formless shadow of a man.

I did not see through mortal eyes but rather perceived with a sense far exceeding vision in its clarity. I did not feel as man feels but I felt. Above me beckoned a billion stars but only one sang my swarthy humanity over the world below. Barren and lifeless landscapes spread out before me. Over these I streaked; over titanic mountains and abyssmal gulfs I flew till presently I reached a whirlpool the size of a thousand earthly oceans. On the distant shore of this dark sea a darker citadel of lunatic architecture brooded.

Through a gaping great hole in its colossal roof I soared down into its misty labyrinths that were devoid of light. The edifice was like the titanic tomb of a god. Its odour was of decayed life and biological corruption.

Many wondrous yet frightful marvels I discovered in the castle's strongholds and at every turn my imagination was staggered with thoughts of what lay beyond a dark corridor's mysterious bend.

Presently came upon a hall so spacious that Neither Earth without displace nor might dwell within. I was hopelessly overawed by the marvel and majesty of it all. I was a god of the Ultra-Cosmos, and this was my heaven, my Valhalla - Eden itself.

An untouched treasure hoard far exceeding human ken was my prize. A trillion lives beckoned to
me. Not a jewel had a remote counterpart on Earth.
Colours of mortal resplendence. The facets no elven stone-cutter could have wrought! Brilliance surpassing a thousand radiant suns were their gifts! The unworldly metals and their forms were no less splendid! In utter bewilderment I pondered. Did I wear my true face here and only my mask the mortal world? All the known Universe was but a shadow to the least of these riches, and here I was a shade.

Grasping a cluster of the choicest jewels with ethereal fingers I find from I know not what, like a thief in the night. But surely no thief on Earth ever stole a treasure the likes of mine. Through night-ed corridors, out of the gaping roof and into the dark sky I dived. This was something unholy and blasphemous about this citadell of priceless riches and infinite wonder that terrorized and revolted me. I swore never to return.

Refracting the light of the sanguine sun, the gems looked like a falling crimson star or a bloody comet streaking across the heavens. They must have been the alarum that gave away my shadowy presence. I sensed It's vast intellect reaching out to probe my mind and life most dammed lunacies in reason's place. It was a horrendous monstrosity spawned in the nethermost pit of Hell! It was a tentacled mass of gibbering scum that planted the fruits of madness in my poor, naked mind. From the dim edges of infancy It came - It pursued me at speeds far greater than that of light. It seemed a hopeless effort to flee. But on I swept, screaming through Ultra-Cosmic space. If It ever caught me and from my dissevered thoughts learned the key to the Threshold, the Universe would be doomed! The fato of Man rested upon my shade. I would not desert my kind. The strongest instinct in all Nature's creatures, the instinct of self-preservation, was in me multiplied infinitely for all the noble race of Man.

The Crack of Doom! I had ventured into the Crack of Doom! "What a hellish piece of sorcery would thou bring me here, Threshold to Doommcrack?" As I regained the Threshold, the thing had lessened the distance between us. I made the Sign upon the black door with a shade of a finger and left that evil world. My last glimpse was of the Blasphemy's tentacles reaching out across the incomprehensible span of space to engulf me.

I found myself lying prone in my study at the foot of the Threshold. I was clothed in both body and robe, and unharmed. Clutched in my hand were the unearthly jewels that I stole from the Monster's lair.

Dropping the gems, I looked at my pocket watch. No time had elapsed since I had entered the portal, not a moment...yet it had felt like eternity. Yes, surely Time is relative. Someday we may find the day we are living exists but in our imagination.

I regarded the Door and knew what deed had to be done. No one from this Side must ever again enter the door, lest the Beast learn its secret and destroy the Universe we know.

I hefted a heavy chair and beat it upon the mirror. The chair splintered asunder but not a scratch marred the mirror's ugly grinning face.

I looked at the DRUILARC upon my desk. I grasped it and once again conjured the royal fiends of Hell. They appeared and destroy all the mirrors ever wrought on that nameless world under that unspeakable star. I know not whether they did or not, but the accursed glass vanished before me in a fiery blaze. Most damnable threshold gone, I cast the monstrous hierarchy back into their infernal abode, and into the fire I cast the dread DRUILARC. How it burned! How gaily, how mockingly, it burned!

I looked to the floor. The jewels lay where I had dropped them. I lifted them and wept. The contemplation of perfect symmetry and beheld their unworlly beauty. They were worth far more than all the riches of our Universe.

Tinseled poison and baneful bauble. Ha! So was beauty - marvellous to behold yet the bane of Man. It was nearly mine. I laughed! How hard and long I laughed.

(The foregoing was a transcript of the statement of Mr. Richard Rheinhart, a mental patient at Gilledge Medical Centre, given under an hypnotic trance.

Although his lunacy in plain, it is most disturb-ing that the tale correlates remarkably well with certain facts.

A Sartorius Horton did indeed exist and died a most gory and mysterious death about 60 years ago.

Unfortunately, his memory is rendered confusingly. However, Mr. Rheinhart's statement has been confirmed by his account of events which he witnessed as a young man in the small fishing village of Christford, Nasa, in the early 1900s. Mr. Rheinhart had been discovered living in a cottage near the fishing village. When approached, Mr. Rheinhart revealed that he had witnessed the murder of a man and had been pursued by a strange creature.

Mr. Rheinhart's account was corroborated by witnesses who had seen a strange creature near the fishing village.

Around the structure's luminous walls, where the hopeless dreamer in nightmare crawls, lies a sucking quagmire made of chalky clay.

Composed of death and abominable decay, where many a dreamer's hopes are laid.

To the brink of this unholy quicksand I came alone, immaterial, to stand.

To my dream-quest I had wandered.

I was alone where so many had blundered.

But in mystical volumes I'd been reared.

So, well versed to challenge outer-spheres, and armed with necromantic incantations, I strove forward to gain my destination.

Overcoming all nefarious limitations.

I traversed the moat by an ancient runc.

Leaving behind death and the jeering moon.

In a limitless hall I found myself, aware of the slimer columns and noxious air.

I proceeded forward with instinctive care.

Ahead, I espied the curiously carven altar.

To which I proceeded, daring not to falter.

There squatted the god who'd decide my fate. A mass of size and form indeterminate, before whose presence I dropped, prostrate.

Help in my homeward trek I petitioned.

For I longed to be in my former condition, but hearing his reply I could only moan.

For his instructions no one could condone:

After doing his deeds, I couldn't come home.

The shapeless deity appeared amused.

That I, a mere mortal, would refuse, I turned and descended back to Za'n, where lies a peak, seldom conquered by man, where I shall remain forevermore...darned.

- John P. Sellers III
Planetsfall on Yuggoth

By James Wade

By the time the Pluto landing was scheduled, people were tired of planetsfall stories. The first human on the moon may have taken a giant step for mankind, as he claimed, but in the half-century following, each succeeding stage in the exploration of the solar system became more boring than the last. The technology was foolproof, the risks minimal, and most of the discoveries - while epoch-making for all the sciences - were too complex and recondite to be dramatized for the man in the street, or in front of his Tri-V screen.

They even stopped giving the various expeditions fancy names, like that first Project Apollo to the moon, or Operation Ares, the Mars landing. They actually let one of the crewman of the space craft - a radio operator named Carnovsky - name the Pluto jaunt, and he called it "Operation Yuggoth," frivolously enough, after the name for the planet used in pulp fiction by some obscure author of the last century.

Of course, the media dutifully carried the same stale old textbook research about how Pluto, the last planet to be discovered and the last to experience human visitation, was merely a tiny chunk of frozen gunk over three and a half billion miles from Earth that took 248 earth years to circle the sun, and how if the sun was the size of a pumpkin (which it is not, so it was hard to see the sense of the comparison) Pluto would be a pea about two miles away, and how it was probably once a moon of Neptune that broke away into a very irregular orbit and thus possibly didn't qualify as a real planet at all.

The whole upshot seemed to be that here was another airless, lifeless, frozen world like all the others not on our sunward side - in which latter case they were airless, lifeless, sizzling worlds.

After the invention of the long-predicted nuclear fission drive, even such vast distances were minimized; the trip would have taken only two weeks from Earth, and from the deep space station beyond Mars it wouldn't last that long.

No one except scientists expressed any disappointment that remoteness did forbid live Tri-V transmission, and they'd just have to wait for the films. The fact that a brief on-the-scene radio report was scheduled to be relayed via several earthside beams even drew complaints from a few music buffs.

We had all seen pictures of the ship before (or ones just like it): a pair of huge metal globes connected by a narrow passage, never destined to touch the surface of any world - the little chemical-fuel scouts did all the real exploring.

Altogether, it was shaping up as a megabore.

The broadcast promised to be even more tedious than the build-up. Arrived in orbit over Pluto, the space craft reported no glimpse of the planet's topography, due to a cloud of frozen mist - which, however, analyzed as not too dense for the scouts to penetrate. There was a lot of delay while the first scout was prepared and launched, carrying the radioman Carnovsky who had dreamed up the Operation Yuggoth tag and five other crewmen.

Carnovsky gave a running account as the small rocket approached the surface and grounded. First he spoke of milky, churning mists hovering over the vast icefields, half-discerned under their high-power searchlights. Then, with mounting excitement, the crackling interplanetary transmission reported a lifting and clearing of the fog. Next came a gasp of awe and that incoherent babbling which was traced in part later to garbled, half-remembered quotations from the pulp writer who had fantasized so long ago about dark Yuggoth.

Had Carnovsky gone mad? Did he somehow kill his fellow crewmen on the scout, after planting a time-bomb on the spaceship before they left it? In any event, no further transmission was ever received from either vessel after the hysterical voice from the scout abruptly broke off.

This is how the broadcast ended: "Mists are clearing - something big towering up dead ahead - is it a mountain range? No, the shapes are too regular. My God! It can't be! It's a city!
Great tiers of terraced towers built of black stone - rivers of pitch that flow under cyclopean bridges, a dark world of fungoid gardens and windowless cities - an unknown world of fungous life - forbidden Yuggoth!

"Is that something moving over the ice? How is it possible in this cold? But there are many of them, heading this way. The Outer Ones! Living fungi, like great clumsy crabs with membranous wings and squirming knots of tentacles for heads!

"They're coming. They're getting close! I -"

That was all; except that those few on Earth - those who were not watching the variety shows on their Tri-V's, but who were outside for some reason and looking at that sector of the sky where Pluto is located - experienced the startling sight of a bursting pinpoint of light as, over three and a half billion miles away, the atomic fuel of the spacecraft bloomed into an apocalyptic nova, writing finis to the ill-fated expedition, and to Operation Yuggoth.

But scientists don't discourage easily. They admit that Pluto may hold some unsurmised danger - though certainly not connected with Carnovsky's hallucinations - and it may be best to stay away while unmanned probes gather more data.

Now, though, they're all excited about the plan to send a manned ship to a newly-discovered, unimaginably remote tenth planet that hasn't even been named yet.

The new project, for some reason, has been dubbed "Operation Shaggai."

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Your publishers announce the planned publication of a book of the favorite recipes of H. P. Lovecraft, to be titled THE SKULLER IN THE SCULLERY.

The volume will be divided into five sections: Cheese, Beans, Chocolate, Ice Cream and Coffee. There will also be a Lovecraft Diet which is designed to assist anyone who follows it to fade away to nothing on 15 cents a day.

A special appendix will be devoted to Sea Food, including such time-tested culinary delights as Oysters Innsmouth, Flounder a la Obed Marsh and Filet of Deep One.

The book is tentatively scheduled for late 1987 or 1988, by which time it will cost at least three times as much as any plausible price that might be announced at this time.

"This is something else." - Julia Child

"I provided the foreword" - James Wade
PREDATOR

BY WALTER C. DEBILL, JR.

AMERICAN BULLETIN OF PALEONTOLOGY, Jan. 3, 1968: ...most remarkable Eocene fossil of the early mammalian order Creodonta, clearly related to the modern skunk, found in Mongolia in 1925. The mode of locomotion of this creature remains utterly mysterious; the limbs are atrophied almost as completely as in whales, yet it unquestionably lived on land. The eyes had also atrophied, so it is the exact opposite of a gigantic mole. The teeth indicate that it was carnivorous.

Diary of Harold Trilling, February 4, 1971: ...Sylvia has really picked the most marvelous place for her "Abbey of Yidhra" - two stories, foot-thick native stone walls, small-paned casement windows - and the location is ideal, in the rocky hills north of town. We're in a little canyon off the main road, surrounded by ancient oaks. The nearest neighbor is a half mile away so we shouldn't get any complaints about the ceremonies. Yidhra doesn't go in for noisy ceremonies anyway. I keep telling Sylvia that the term "Abbey" is inappropriate, signifying a monastery or monastery rather than the sort of cult center and temple she's established, but she says Southern California is so full of "monasteries" we couldn't get anyone to look twice at another one.

I wish I could really believe in Yidhra the way Sylvia does. The beautiful, awesome and terrible earth-mother is a magnificent image all right - but I'm afraid having to operate the hidden projectors and slip the hashish into the sacramental wine for so long has permanently dulled my capacity for spiritual belief. I do find the ceremonies very moving, but it's not Yidhra I believe in, it's Sylvia. When she throws back her hood in the torchlight, her hair is shimmering gold and her voice is a silver trumpet far away - the robe softens the angularity of her figure and every gesture is pure, eternal femininity. Yet in daylight she often seems quite plain and her voice is almost brassy - I think the only time she's really alive is when the torches burn and Yidhra calls. Sometimes when she talks about her mystical experiences in New Mexico and Laos I think she's a bit mad, but it's a beautiful madness. May Yidhra grant that she always has someone like me to handle the practical side of things!

The cellar will be perfect for ceremonies, though we'll have to heat it for our pampered middle-aged clientele. Sylvia wants me to break through the wall behind the altar to make an Inner Sanctuary, from which to make her dramatic entrances, which will be an ungodly amount of work if there's solid rock behind it. I thought I saw some cracks in the mortar there, though, maybe some of the stones are loose...

Mrs. Herbert Wilkerson, August 12, 1971: ...meet the Priestess in the Inner Chapel? How thrilling! You must have great confidence in my spiritual development, Mr. Trilling...

AM. BULL. PALEONT., May 8, 1968: ...further excavation has only deepened the mystery of the enormous limbless Creodonta. The site of the find proves to have been deep, narrow cave at the time the creature lived, and the original cave floor was littered with the bones of smaller animals. All were marked by the teeth of the Creodonta; the majority show some teeth marks of smaller predators, but not to the extent one would expect if the thing were purely a scavenger. And even a scavenger needs some form of locomotion to get to its food...

Harold's Diary, April 4, 1971: ...I don't know about her new policy of staying in the Inner Chapel behind the altar all the time, appearing only at the climax of the ceremony. It's certainly dramatic enough and sets up the impressive special visits with her for especially well-heeled devotees, but it throws the entire burden of salesmanship and stage-managing on me. She couldn't at least come out and help before the worshippers arrive. I'd have been better off if we hadn't found that cave behind the wall. The special visits are really effective though, with the heavy wooden door opening behind the heart-shaped altar and toadstool throne. All that downhill, and of course the advanced worshipper stoned out of her mind. And her seclusion and "meditation" have put Sylvia in fine form for the ceremonies, pale face and shining eyes, almost literally glowing. And the Mother of Darkness shall reign, bringing endless life to her servants, the Lurkers in the desert, Xothra the Devourer in the earth, the great-winged Y'ath in the sky...

But I wish she wouldn't come out sometimes. I feel I hardly know her these days - she's become a distant, dreamlike figure to me...

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS, original version, ca. 1240 A.D.: ...Bodoncar-munqaq chased Dorben with laughter because the arrow struck the stag in the flank, and the two followed the blood (trail) of the stag on horseback. After a while they saw that a wolf was following and started to prepare to shoot at the wolf. But Bodoncar-munqaq, seeing that the wolf was behaving strangely, said, "See you that the wolf does not slay the stag but drives it as the coursing dog drives the "sheep" and the foxes, watch." And Bodoncar-munqaq and Dorben followed at a distance and saw the wolf drive the stag into a narrow canyon (which they had) not seen before. Dismaying, they followed quietly up the canyon, and then the wolf dragged the stag alive into a small cave. Shortly the wolf came out of the cave with a still lean (empty) belly.

Mrs. Wilkerson, August 12, 1971: ...down there? I hadn't thought the passage went down so far - it's a natural cave, isn't it? I don't know if I...

Harold's Diary, June 15, 1971: ...tired all the time, I sleep practically all of the time that I'm not working on cult affairs or taking care of Sylvia. She hasn't come out for weeks now. I think she's getting rather morbid, but she's still charming. I took Mrs. Arbogast down to see her last night and Sylvia had her laughing and cooing banalities in no time. Sylvia didn't tell me how much she donated after I left them alone but she was too stoned to care about money anyway.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS: ...Afterwards Bodoncar-munqaq and Dorben returned many times to watch the wolf carry animals into the cave and come out without having eaten any of them, but each time they feared to enter and search the cave. Bodoncar-munqaq saying that he felt a presence as of evil gods.

Finally one day when Dorben had drunk much araqi (fermented mare's milk) he pushed Bodoncar-munqaq aside and entered, saying that a beautiful goddess lived in the cave and sang to him sweetly and promised him many things if he would enter and make obeisance. When after many hours Dorben did not come out, Bodoncar-munqaq returned to the camp and summoned many armed warriors, insisting that none who had drunk araqi that day should come. It was thus that Bodoncar-munqaq and the others entered the cave and found the...
Harold's Diary, August 12, 1971: ...the policeman who came last night about Mrs. Arbogast was really hostile until Sylvia got hold of him and turned on the charm. It seems Mrs. A disappeared the night of her visit with Sylvia. I really didn't want to take him down there but I was full of hashish and the whole thing threw me into such a panic that I couldn't think of anything to do but let Sylvia handle him. I had a little trouble getting him to go down the stairs behind the altar, something about the atmosphere of the place really bothered him and he acted completely paranoid, but once Sylvia went to work on him he relaxed and didn't give us any trouble at all. In fact, I remember at one point she had him shrieking with laughter, though I can't remember what about. I was so spaced out I could only stand there and giggle.

Tonight I'm taking Mrs. Wilkerson down to see her. Mrs. W's a Boston politician's widow and seems a bit touchy and sceptical. I wouldn't pick her for a special visit if she weren't positively dripping with cash. Sylvia will have to be exceptionally impressive because I can't slip the old bag any hash - I think she suspects that the sacramental wine is doped.

THE LOST BOOK OF HERODOTUS, ca. 445 B.C.: ...and Wanderers in this region of the desert are warned to beware of the place which is called Othra; for it is said that ragged beggars appear in the desert and offer the traveller alkhasar weed to chew upon, which if taken lulls the mind with pleasant sensations and fancies; hence upon these beggars invite the traveller to visit certain places in the hills where there are beautiful women or jewelled palaces or some other desirable thing. But of those who have taken the weed and gone into the hills, none has ever returned; some travellers have declined the weed and gone, and of these it is said that one returned; but his tale is not of fair women or of jewelled palaces but of a thing which chilled the blood of those who heard the tale.

Mrs. Wilkerson, August 12, 1971: ...What an awful odor! Are you sure there isn't something dead down there?

Private correspondence of Dr. Richard Marbridge, Aug. ust 3, 1971: ...think I may have hit on the only possible explanation. It was a predator; it could not go to its prey; therefore, its prey came to it. How could this happen? Not by chance, that would have been too inefficient for survival. Attraction by odor? Think of an animal living most of its life in mobile iron-narrow caves, the accumulated stench would almost surely drive off any other creature. The only explanation is telepathic control.

Now, what form could this control take? It seems clear that the thing not only lured food directly but induced other predators to bring food to it. It is most unlikely that it evolved such a complex ability merely to devour both the gift and the giver at one sitting; it must have actually enslaved other predators, sending them out time and again to fetch prey. But this required letting the slaves roam about freely, possibly at great distances, using their own hunting ability to the fullest extent. I think this required a very subtle form of control, probably some sort of hallucinatory experience acting as an incentive to carry out the thing's wishes. I wonder what sort of hallucination would induce a wolf to bring home the bacon? A nest of warm, cuddly, ravenous little pups? Or perhaps...

Mrs. Wilkerson: ...Sylvia? LET GO OF ME, YOU MANIAC! Oh my GOD that THING!!!...

Harold's Diary, September 2, 1971: ...looks like Mrs. Harris isn't going to show up tonight. Sylvia will be absolutely furious - no "special visits" (or large donations) since Mrs. Wilkerson last month. I'm almost afraid to go down there and tell her...

Classified Ad, House for Rent, September 22, 1971: 2 story 3 rm native stone, near town on...
He was as surprised upon seeing me as I was upon seeing him. After all he had lost contact with me during the war. Of course, after civilities I immediately questioned him about what had happened to him after his “disappearance.” Mantell gave me the oddest look, almost as if the remembrance gave him grave displeasure. Then in embarrassment at his visible distaste he told me in capsule what had transpired. He explained how his ship had been torpedoed and he and his crew had escaped in separate lifeboats. However, he was separated from his companions by a fierce storm and an ordeal of survival followed in the open lifeboat. He won out against death and was rescued fourteen days later. I pressed him for more details of his adventure, politely of course, but again he showed that discouraging expression and excused himself saying that he didn’t like to recall it.

I ordered us both Scotch and soda and, after we refreshed ourselves, I changed the subject to New England and asked him about his home-state of Maine. He talked much about his old home and the current prosperity of the sea-coast state, but he was rather vague about his reasons for leaving, muttering, “It’s best to have one’s foot on really dry land.” This I thought odd.

He talked of his new home in Kansas City and the substantial income he had inherited from his father, a wealthy shipping-line owner. As he talked on I noticed for the first time how much Mantell had changed both in looks and personality since the war. I am well over sixty years old and yet here Mantell was only forty-five and looked my own age, with grey hair and furrowed face. Mantell, once a rambunctious, wild young fellow who would spit in the devil’s own eye, was now nervous and visibly dray in spirits. He seemed oddly fearful of the past and could only talk of “now,” avoiding as much as he could references to the sea and the coast. Yet he seemed his old self when I talked of the past, particularly the part I played in the war in the Pacific.

When he got ready to leave he knew a considerable amount about me, yet I had but a smattering of his history. I asked him to visit Florence and me, and see too. He gladly accepted my invitation, proposing to do so.

Mantell did indeed visit probably sooner than he had planned. For when I returned home from the club that day Florence had been talking with neighbors who had played host to Mantell’s destroyer which had been torpedoed and sunk in the North Atlantic. As time passed and survivors were rescued it was apparent that Mantell was not among them, and, presumably, he was “lost at sea.” I was unable to see the final result of this search as I was commissioned to the Seventh Fleet in the Pacific War Theatre.

After the war, Florence, my wife, and I returned to Kansas City after my stay in San Diego. We resettled in our old, familiar part of town on the Kansas-Missouri line where quaint old houses of distinguished history still stand. handsome tributes to the early founding of a respectable society in Kansas City. I am a retired admiral and still retain a prestige among the elite of society here and the fond and admiring respect of those who remember my campaigns of the Pacific naval battles. Away from the deafening horrors of war my life became one of pleasant, prosaic calmness, colored by social elegance and my intriguing oceanographic studies. I had done much of the latter during my stay in the Pacific and now had quite an extensive collection of specimens and was involved in many research projects in conjunction with universities.

In the summer of 1955 Jeffrey Mantell appeared at my social club, one of several country clubs in this select centre of city life. Mantell’s appearance was a surprise in many ways. For one thing, there was my belief that he had been “lost at sea” during the war. Also, I was surprised that he had made an apparently permanent move to Kansas City, since he was a staunch New Englander of an old Yankee line from Maine. Why he forsok the sea and the coast was beyond me, as he had had a deep affection for them. Moreover, there was the surprising fact that he was able to join this rich, private, and select group of individuals I was a member of.

Mantell, it seems, had been living here long enough to make the appropriate contacts and had a good appearance and family background that appealed to those of worth in Kansas City, and so he was accepted into the club and social circle.

Page 106
Of course, this bizarre reaction made it look bad for the flustered Mantell from there on. I certainly understand that some people don’t like seafood, but Mantell was highly agitated, falling into a coughing, sniggering spell. I urged him from the room and he stiffened himself with several vodkas.

"It’s my new reformation..." he chokingly said. "I’ve taken a new religious attitude on my life, you know. I can’t eat any fish, the uncle, you know... especially seafood."

"His eyes shone strangely..." and then what with that bad experience during the war..."

I understood and informed our guests of Mantell’s embarrassment and his reasons. Mantell excused himself and left with it’s eyes still apogee to Mrs. Coriall. Her husband, Vern, corrected me later and joked over drinks.

"For an old ‘sea-legs’ he doesn’t take to fish, now does he?" I laughed heartlessly, feeling pretty distressed. The war and things during the war was seemingly a neurotic now. I made up my mind to help Mantell with his problems. I wish to God now that I’d never made that vow.

II

I saw little of Mantell in the days that followed the dinner-party. But after a week or two of this, he returned to the table and the conversation, nods and whispers in his direction, but for the most part the others understood Mantell’s odd behaviour. Mantell seemed to steadily lose his nervousness and I suggested some pastimes, hoping these activities would be of therapeutic value to his disorders. We took to playing golf regularly and I began praising Jeffrey for a serious study of the arts. These hobbies brought out that old spirit of his. I’d been so familiar with during the war, and I thought that surely he was becoming his former self.

These were the best times of our friendship. Mantell even attended parties again, and his new behaviour caused his critics to reassess their former attitude towards him. He was a different one altogether, however, particularly that was on one of our junkets to the Nelson Art Gallery. There Mantell came across some relics in an Oceanic exhibit in the Ethnic art displays. He ordered one particular thing; a huge face, and that through some transformation that had manifested itself in his features that night in my den came over him again. He visibly shook himself, clearing away whatever dark thought dimmed his mind, and moved out.

But after a couple of months Mantell began manifesting deterioration. He looked haggard most of the time, wearily drawn out, his eyes darkened.

"Not getting enough sleep..." he’d mutter in reference to his harrased appearance. He also began smoking heavily at any time, and rape drinking and constant gambling soon brought a new barrage of whispers upon him. Finally, in the end, it culminated in a threat of removal from the club.

Prior to this time Mantell had been reticent, refraining from talk of the sea and what had occurred after his ship sank. Now between his drunken lethargy and outbursts of incomprehensible anger, he would blurt out incoherent references, spiced with nods at apparently malignant reminiscences and shudders. I told him to try to forget the ordeal he had gone through for the sake of his nerves, yet he tenaciously clung to those old dark memories.

I felt sorry now for my early wish to learn of his experiences, for they were merely tiring to judge from the present conduct of Mantell.

Mantell continued to get deeper into these awful memories as time went on. He mentioned things which seemed pure fantasy of a sinister bent, and his mutterings ran in incoherent ramblings... about the “Slime Stalkers of the Sea Floor”, the “Wrigglers of the Deep Warm Muds”; hints about something called the “Palace of Phosphorescent Splendour”, and another place called the “Abode of Cerebral Remnants” of the sunken ship. He’d turn to talk of seemingly real things, such as... "Roderick, the babbling old fool! Why’d he hide certain things from me? Curse him!... THEY come in Maine to Indian on moonless nights, especially at Rooksmoor... What connection have THEY with the furtive hill-things that flutter among the round rains at nightfall in Vermont, eh?... Thought that THEY wouldn’t come in, you know me as far inland as Kansas!"

My associates began to voice disparaging views on Mantell, especially Barwell, a close friend of mine and also a psychiatrist of note. Barwell found Mantell’s actions and personality most disturbing, being impressed with Jeffrey’s rapid disintegration. He therefore told me, as Mantell’s close friend, to try to find out what was the trouble and help him get a hold on himself. But that was easier said than done, for after some aside to me about his mysterious workings, Mantell saw through my actions. Jeffrey never liked pity and he Violently expressed himself in that belief now. He exploded with a barrage of curses at me and stumbled drunkenly out of the club. Barwell started to say something to me, but I was up from my seat and after Jeffrey he was leaping across the green to the parking lot and I was up to him within moments. I started to speak, but he rushed around and looked at me sadly with those weighted eyes. "I’m sorry, Austin... for back there in the..." he got to quit drinking so much and get more sleep..." he drew in a deep breath of the cool breeze blowing across the lawn and said, "Thank God, there’s no salt in the breeze! How I hate New England now!"

III

I did not see or hear from Mantell the rest of the week until Saturday night. I received a call along about 10 o’clock, and he was terribly upset. He had to talk to me immediately. Soon he knocked at the door and staggered in. I noticed that he had an odd limp; his leg seemed hurt. He collapsed into an outer chair and gazed at me with unnerving penetration, a gaze that was filled with some terror deep within his soul and sorrow that I couldn’t understand that terror.

"Care for a whiskey?" I asked, hoping that it would calm him. He muttered an affirmative and opened his dry, cracked mouth: ‘I’ve got to tell you, Austin... it’ll drive me crazy if I don’t... can’t keep it to myself... about when I was lost at sea... after the ship was torpedoed...’

I handed him his drink, “All right.” I said, “Go ahead...”

“I have to tell you,” he seemed to apologize, “I can’t sleep at nights...”

“Dreams?”

“Nightmares is the best word!” he answered. “Nightmares... they keep me awake, for fear of having another of them... awful...”

“You had one tonight?” I asked.

“Yes...” He gulped down his whiskey and accepted another. “But I must tell you what happened. Maybe then you’ll see why I hate the sea and anything to do with it. It’s hard for me to believe in, though I wouldn’t blame you in the least if you doubted it.

"It was in December that our ship was torpedoed in the North Atlantic, as you recall. It was bitterly, frozen time of the year, a time of fierce storms. The Nazis blew us through in midsections and it was all up. She sank quickly and it was a mad scurry for the lifeboats. I got into one and was waiting for the others in it if we were to reach me when the upper deck blew. The explosion threw part of my boat crew into the sea and shookled the others, nobody lived. Of course, I rowed like mad, pulling myself far from the drying vessel. I soon found other boats floating around me and recognized our old companions Strand and Coorbin in one vessel. However, a rising wind forced me farther from the others and though I pulled against the blast I couldn’t make headway. Then the storm burst full upon me with torrential, frigid rains and I had to secure the tarpaulin over the boat. In this way I rode out the storm in darkness, afraid of capsizing at any moment.

"When the storm finally spent its fury, I had no idea how many hours or days had passed. My watch had stopped. On I rode in the wind-raked sea and skidded uncomfortably. Troubled by evil dreams of peculiar strangeness. Later, I awoke and pulled back the tarp and peered out. I perceived a glimmer in the distance. As I drew closer I saw that it was a twinkling light that shone after. Closer. It was a lighthouse, and that light was the only one that I could see. But I was bored straight to the thing, almost as if the sea wanted me to arrive at this destination.

"I secured the boat on the rocky shore and ran up to the bleak tower. The light winked oddly down at me as I stood staring. It seemed as if withering forms were flicked.” I cast glances toward the lighthouse’s base, running over the slimy shelf to where the tower stood and I learned against it for support, gasping for breath. Immediately I drew back from its stinking, foul surface, a dark basaltic surface covered with nasty, uncouth hieroglyphics that extended from its base to its top. I searched for the door. I couldn’t find one. Nowhere in that cylinder of noises, histrionic designs could I find an opening... and God help me, Austin... I swear that I once ran around the tower and it was a huge cube; again I ran around it and it was a pyramid; again and it was one more a cylinder. The elements and the mad geometry of the place got to me and I began running my hands over those designs. Suddenly, as I pressed several glyphs at once I perceived a crack that ran from out of the muffled wall. The crack grew, the apparent door shifted to a side to side movement and dissolved into nothing.

"A nasty blast of foul air rushed out to meet the sea winds - a stink, of indescribably, long-dead sea-things. The noxious vapor overwhelmed me, weakened as I was, and I collapsed in a heap on the rugged reef. The last thing I saw before I was swallowed up by unconsciousness was a peculiar, dark figure moving toward me... a man with a queer hat, as if he limped."

PAGE 109
When I came to I was in a strange, odd-angled room that seemed to glow, as if the room were phosphorescence, be chained to its walls, and I gave up my outstretched hands. My dear God, I’ve seen degenerate enough people, but this fellow... I don’t even see how interbreeding could have produced such a monstrous and hideous appellation. I shuddered to think of this in the words of Christ in Bosch’s “Ecce Homo.” He looked like a toad so he was infernally ugly, with his fat potting lips and bulging eyes, and a nasty tangle of beard that looked like wet seaweed hanging from his all-too-corporeal face. In that phosphorescence I dreamed I covered with scales, but I wasn’t sure. I’d come to he pulled back the cup of awful tasting liquor that he had administered to me.

He held up a bottle that looked incredibly old. ‘It still be good!’ he chuckled in a thick voice that sounded nauseous, as if mucous clogged his pale, puffy throat. ‘Tis an old philtre to return those from the cold clutches of Dreams’.

He grinned and showed a mouthful of tiny sharp-pointed teeth. ‘Ye be from a ship that uz lost, eh? The others?’... Perhaps there uz more ay’e a’comin’ in the storm? Uz it uz blowin’ hard... ‘Him Who is Not to be Named’ in his bed across the hemisphere.

‘I was separated from them,’ I muttered. ‘Maybe they’ll see your beacon and come here.’

I was cackled with a nasty gurgling that made me think of a fish on dry land, gasping its last breath. ‘No others come - only one uz brought here... only one. Ye be that one! He seen fit ta bring ye ’ere - un He’s done that. Come, let us see ye the Place!’ I protested feebly against walking.

I was beheaded with a nasty gurgling that made me think of a fish on dry land, gasping its last breath. ‘No others come - only one uz brought here... only one. Ye be that one! He seen fit ta bring ye ’ere - un He’s done that. Come, let us see ye the Place!’ I protested feebly against walking.

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beyond the window; nights later it was at the window, then closer still within the wall on following nights. It was making its slimy way slowly toward me each night. I knew I would be detained even longer if I spoke of the nightmares again, therefore I kept quiet. Believe me it wasn’t easy! Thank God, they missed me before the Thing reached my bed!

"After my discharge I hurried back to my home in Maine and discovered that my father had left me a sizeable inheritance when he died. This set me up quite well and for some time I was comfortable as the Thing couldn’t seem to find me again. But it didn’t last long. For though my dreams it seemed to sense me and the nightmares came again. The Thing was beyond my seacoast home out in the vastness of the Atlantic and getting closer each night."

"Finally, the nightmares became too much and I had to tell an old friend, a confidante who was incredibly old and possessed a deep knowledge of curious lore and legends of the sea. He was particularly interested in my narrative of the undenea city and the horrible presence there. He told me to write an old friend named Roderik who lived in Nova Scotia and who knew of certain unhallowed dark secrets of the northern hills and seas."

"I wrote the reclus and fully explained my story and subsequent dreams. Roderik replied that I had not imagined it all, nor was it hallucination. He proceeded to tell me many fiendish anecdotes of a repulsive folklore and repeatedly told of the eternal monstrosities of the sea. Just look at Frazer’s GOLDEN BOUGH!” he said. “The Egyptian priests, those delvers in arcane darkness, knew things - loathsome things . . . and they rightly feared the sea!”

"He told me of hideous old books and texts that support this curious folklore and study of ancient myths and legends. Books that speak of ancient horrors on pre-human earth and of some hideous race older than mankind that once ruled this planet and, secretly, still exists. In particular, he spoke of my situation, saying that I had defiled the sanctity of these beings and had killed one of their servants. I was being hounded thus in retribution, but he shunned speaking of what that final retribution might be. To point up the truth of the situation he quoted from a danmable ancient French text by the medievalist, Jan Puc Suet concerning guardians of certain treasures held by these beings. The HORDES OF GHOULES was another abomination related to treasure-seekers and guardians. WONDERS OF THE SEA FLOOR by Bascolm gave some ghastly revelations concerning my plight."

"Roderik wrote that on certain moonless things came ashore from the sea in Maine, Massachusetts and Nova Scotia. He told of hidden quilted men deep in Maine’s dark forests. To aid me Roderik consulted Aickel’s TRUE GRIMORE to find . . . help me, Austin - a magic spell to free me from this malignant curse. But nothing could be found. Finally in vague communication he told me to take the treasure and get rid of it. Dump it into the sea, off the coast of Ipswich, Massachusetts. Well, I tried but somehow I felt strangely compelled to keep the gold and jewels and I couldn’t bring myself to do it."

"At this time I began to feel the Presence more strongly: the Thing began coming so close to the house in my dreams that I fled from Maine to Pennsylvania. I kept up my correspondence with Roderik in hopes of an answer to the hellish situation. But soon the Thing had found me again and so I moved on to Wisconsin, but in vain. I told Roderik that I had finally decided to move far inland from the sea to Kansas. There the Thing would never find me. Roderik again told me to get rid of that infernal gold and I tried again, but in vain. I would not be safe in Kansas and he quoted from Thuston’s MYTH PATTERNS OF THE SONGS about horrors that lurked in the Plains States. You’d shiver, Austin, if you knew what things lurked in certain mounds in Kansas and Oklahoma.”

He paused, and I asked, “So that’s why you moved here?”

He nodded and concluded his narrative: “Yes, I moved here and was left in peace for some time - the longest time I was ever free of that Horror. But, as you can guess, It’s found me again. It’s been getting closer each night. It’s some spectral avenger come to claim retribution on me . . . and I can’t get rid of that thing! I’ve tried but I can’t - I’m somehow linked in unholy union with it.

He slumped back into the chair and sat with his eyes closed for some time. Finally, he opened them and asked me the inevitable question: ‘That’s my tale, Austin. Do you believe any of the whole outrageous thing?’

I sadly confessed that I did not, and politely told him that it was all some mental trouble brought on by his ordeal in the war. I explained each situation of his story in an analytical manner and gave a possible answer as to what had really happened. And his dreams were just that . . . dreams.

Mantell became nervously agitated at my deductions. ‘Maybe this will change your mind!’ he said and pulled at his pants cuff. ‘You see It has come to me tonight and clung to my leg . . . I saw that it was the same leg that he had limped on when he came in. He pulled up the cuff and exposed the bruised and purple flesh beneath, as if his leg had been caught in a terrible vice-like grip.

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IV

The worst was yet to come. The final all-engulfing horror that took Jeffrey Mantell and shattered my life forever. It is a strain to even write of it, but that night I thought the exposure and brutal treatment Mantell had suffered at the hands of the elements had caused a terrible derangement in the woman’s mind. I told him we could discuss his story further in the morning and that he’d better return home and get a good night’s sleep. At this Mantell started and paled. "I can’t. I’m not now - I can’t sleep! It will come to me again!” He intended to stay awake for what little time was left of the night. Seeing his unyielding state of mind, I told him to spend the night here at my home as he really needed the rest to get a grip on himself. He hesitated and then blurted out that perhaps the “Thing” would not sense his presence in my home - at least for a while. So Mantell spent the night at my home. I woke early the next morning and went to the guest room. Mantell had left a note on the outside saying that he had gone - that he would search through the old manuscripts and books and give me literary evidence of the horrors of the sea. I shrugged my shoulders, intending to visit Mantell later that day . . . with Barwell, the psychiatrist.

At about six o’clock in the evening Mantell called. That is when the horror started. It’s hard . . . extremely hard to make oneself recall a terrible event or accident. It’s harder still to remember a frightening nightmare. But I must. I must now - for my own good and sanity - have this out in writing. Others must know the truth of what happened to Mantell and what may happen again.

Mantell rang and rang, as I was detained in my study, having discovered a new fascination in my oceanographic collection after the seaman’s outrageous tale.

“Thank God!” I blurted out a sobbing cry. “Hello - anyone - Austin!!! Ugh! - God help me. Austin! It’s come again!!!”

PAGE 111
"What!" asked

"Yes! What with not being able to sleep these nights... I was afraid... it was too much strain and I dozed off a couple of hours ago. Uh! God! It got me. Ain't it got me!"

"Stay calm, Mantell!" I tried to say it reassuringly. "I'm coming right over! I'll bring help!"

"All right..." Mantell sobbed, heard the receiver click.

A pelting rain was spattering the driveway of Mantell's home as Dr. Barwell was picked up. It was greeted by a shocking caricature of poor Mantell; a deplorable wretch, haggard, pale, and a mad light shining in his eyes. As we stepped out into the rain I noticed how surprisingly damp it was inside.

We tried to calm Jeffrey but he kept jabbering how awful "'It was... how indescribably hideous it was. Then he pulled up his shirt sleeves and showed up some shocking wounds... how they sickened me!" He had swelling, purplish blisters; round wounds all over his arms... already blotted and festering as from some malignant poison. Barwell, upon seeing these wounds, addressed me in a shaky but confident voice, "Hold him!" and immediately took action. Barwell removed a hypodermic needle from his supplies and filled it with a tranquilizer. Mantell saw our intentions and put up quite a fight.

"No - don't you understand - you idiots! NO! I can't sleep again! You don't understand!" He was screaming now. "God! - No! Keep off!" I heard him. - Read the books, Austin - it's proof - the books! - It's Their treasure - confound you - stay back - Not the needle - No! - I can't sleep - I'm not mad!!" He was frothing at the mouth, rolling and kicking to escape our grasp.

Somewhere Barwell succeeded in administering the tranquilizer and we helped Mantell up to his bedroom where he rapidly succumbed to the drug's influence.

The storm was fully unleashed as we made our way downstairs and decided to stick the night out in Mantell's home. I asked Barwell if it had been necessary to use a tranquillizer Jeffrey and he replied that he had done so because those ugly wounds on Mantell's arms. Barwell asserted that the wounds were self-inflicted.

We sat in the living room talking and Barwell picked up some of the books scattered on the floor around the divan Mantell had slept on in the afternoon. These books were the "literary evidence" he wanted me to read. They were hoary old tomes and no doubt were worth a fortune. I thought of all the horror Roden

I recognized Fraser's GOLDEN BOUGH and found a passage underlined by Mantell:

"The Egyptian priests loathed the sea, and called it the foam of Typhon they were forbidden to set salt on their table and they would not speak to pilots because they got their living by the sea; hence they too would not eat fish, and the hieroglyphic symbol for hatred was a fish."

I picked up another volume, a crumbling edition of Jean-Paul Sartre's YE GNARERS BENEATH AND OTHER MARVELLES OF YE ELDER WORLDE. Heavily outlined in a shaky line by Mantell was a paragraph with the most hideous connotations when applied to what Mantell had spoken of. The French translation was from the original Latin and read something like this:

One must ever be cautious against injuring or harming those under the Protection of Their; moreover, also the defiling of Their treasures, for acts against both servants and babiles are of Great and Awful censure by Them and Retribution is swift, and nothing may forestall its inevitable execution, though the guilty one hide beyond the ends of the earth.

Barwell saw my surprised look upon reading these entries and said, "You ought to read what he's underlined in here!" He held up Grotzianzas's PRIMEVAL SECRETS, Barwell grinned. "God, what awful madness this author has here... just read what it says!"

He handed me the volume but I had not time to read as a cry came from Mantell's bedroom. It was a hideous wail, a sound we could scarcely separate from the howling wind amid the raging storm outside. We both sat stunned for a moment by the unearthly cry, then I moved to the stairs. It was Mantell, moaning and groaning in some awful, inexplicable agony. I stepped up to the stairs, placed my hand on the railing, and, almost simultaneously, jerked it away. The bannister was covered with a dew-a cold wet sensation of horror filled my face, I felt the tattles rise on the back of my neck. Now Barwell was with me and he too sensed the strange watery presence in the air. Then there was a tremendous crash of thunder, the thermal explosion of a lightning bolt and the electricity failed.

Suddenly a maddening wailing cry arose in the time with the roar of the wind, and as the storm rose in crescendo so did the wall. Then there was an awkward stumbling and a deafening crash of glass and wood. We rushed upstairs and I pulling in the thick darkness, falling against wet, sponge carpeting. I reached the bedroom first and as I grabbed the doorknob I felt its surface cold and slimy. I threw open the door and in we rushed.

We both sat stunned a moment by the scene that greets us to his recent "illness":

Mr. Wesley is worse now, having reached an unfortunate state of psychotic behaviour. We found him this morning with several round wounds on his arms. Apparently self-inflicted.

Best,
Justen

P.S. I hope that you and Susan can make it to the dinner-party Saturday.

V

The police came and questioned us for what seemed like hours - I felt all wrong and before it was all over Barwell had to give us a tranquilizer. But it was so damning now... everything that Jeffrey had told me fit... and we had doomed the poor wretch!

The police and Barwell call it suicide, and yet they fearfully recognize that no fall could have so mutilated Jeffrey's body. Much less, how could Mantell have run across the room and flung himself through the window under such deep sedation? Suicide is merely a label to cover the real horror beneath, and I know what that horror is! I know that "Something" killed Jeffrey Mantell.

Those hideous wounds - ugh! I shudder to recall those sickening, malignant scars - round scars - round wounds like those made by giant squids on whales in titanic struggles in the deep seas... and the gaping hole where Mantell's heart had been... his chest ripped open as by a parrot-like beak... and now I recollect the tale of the lighthouse and I shudder.

Now I realize how true it all was: that Mantell did fight and kill the old lighthouse keeper; that Mantell did flee the nameless mad reef with some of the golden treasure. I know that it is true. For found the treasure in Mantell's home; it is glittering gold and jewels fashioned in cold, evil, obscene shapes. An octopus motif of curious design is repeated on most of it, and it repels me. But no more, for I have thrown it all into the river and tried to forget Jeffrey Mantell and his scarcely "imaginary" story. Yet I felt strangely like keeping one of the relics on an impulse. It is a beautiful ring of gold with a stone of nautilus shell that fascinates me, and I stare at it for hours. I must forget Mantell... I must.

* * * * *

It is later. Yet now I am worried for I haven't been able to sleep well of late, and more recently now have come the nightmares. Sometimes comes in them. Each night it gets closer and is more vivid. Something on the seafloor... slime, flowing, writhing... I am afraid of these old dreams.

POST SCRIPT
Dr. Justen Skellman
Yorks Institute
Kansas City, Missouri
June 26, 1956

Note to Dr. Shiff:

I'm sending you this diary. Mrs. Wesley found it among Mr. Wesley's papers in his study. She gave it to us feeling that it might give us a clue to his recent "illness":

Mr. Wesley is worse now, having reached an unfortunate state of psychotic behaviour. We found him this morning with several round wounds on his arms. Apparently self-inflicted.

Best,
Justen
A Madness from the Vaults
by J Ramsey Campbell

Beneath the city of Derd on the planet of Tond lies a labyrinth of vaults, whose origins remain obscure. The yarkdao who built the city could not give an explanation for their presence, nor were they encouraged to explore the fragmentary legends of well-nigh endless passages, linked in a manner that defied mapping. The yarkdao assumed that the vaults had served some hermetic function in the lives of the unknown citizens of that ruined primitivity on whose foundations Derd was to be built and neglected further thought. In the heyday of Derd, some yarkdao elected to be entombed in the vaults rather than suffer abandonment on the peak of Lota above the city, but such rebels were uncommon. The openings from the vaults which occasionally gaped on the streets of Derd were avoided by the multitude, deterred by the legend that on certain nights the corpses preserved below would stalk forth from their alcoves and emerging, their faces turned to the dead and ashen sun of Buzbul, would parade through the streets.

At the end of its life, Derd lay beneath the tyranny of its last governor, Opojollac, whose law for any crime required the culprit to be cast into the vaults. The poorer quarters of the city were laden with the corpses of those whose taxes had enriched its robes with shimmering black charms, while the richer yarkdao could only weep as their mansions crumbled beneath the encircling crystal serpents with which Opojollac's palace was spired. In Derd the names of the caravans were no longer known save a day-long chanting ritual but were subject to the whim of Opojollac, who thus ensured that none could boast a name so sonorous as his and by that token hold sway over his city. Certain words, phrases, and syntactical modes were the property of Opojollac alone, for other tongues were few. There were rumors even that he might order a temple built to himself, and none dared meditate on the eventual use of those virgins who were summoned to his palace; although some said that it was true, the crystal serpents would rise to snake the green sun, and some, indeed, that they would preen their scales lethargically.

So Opojollac ruled through myth, and decadence simmered in Derd with lips painted with the blood of torture; and with decadence came apathy. Nonetheless, at the rising of a day, as Opojollac dined beneath the translucent roof formed of a shell found in the desert, aervisor fought free of the curtains of a mausoleum, entered the dimly-lit hall and presented himself, bowing backward towards Opojollac through his legs.

"O omnipotent and benevolent Opojollac," he moaned. "O omnipotent..."

"Your praises, however fulsome and gratifying," pronounced Opojollac, "represent an interruption of my meal. Cease, and justify your presence. But first show me your tongue—yes, it appears tender, and if it cannot provide a satisfactory explanation I may well transfer it to my plate.""[1] Amen, O gracious Opojollac," responded the aervisor, shuddering. "A yarkdao waits outside, saying that he must speak to you immediately of some danger to your glorious self."

"I imagined I heard a participle," mused Opojollac in a voice hoarse with wearisome laughter. "Guard your syntax. Let the yarkdao enter, reminding him the while that he may not behold me otherwise than inverted. As to your tongue—perhaps I may benefit from a closer look at it."

Almost immediately, a yarkdao in tattered robes appeared, bowing once without grace. "O governor," he said, "there is a yarkdao dead in the Streets of Pleasure..."

But Opojollac laughed without humor. "I am alive," he cried, and it follows that such deaths cannot affect me. Since the pleasure-givers do not trouble me, their methods of extracting payment are no concern of mine. Servitor, have this intruder shorn of all but the last syllable of his name and cast him to the vaults."

The aervisor, skilled in the ways of Opojollac's palace, managed while yet bowing to capture the miscreant, and Opojollac returned to his meal. But coincidence dictated that Beav Lanpbeav, Opojollac's chief administrator, should that day be collecting taxes in the Streets of Pleasure; and presently, while Opojollac was trifling with his collection of musical instruments, Beav Lanpbeav craved audience. "Play to me," Opojollac commanded, "and tell me your tale."

The administrator took up a lute tuned in quarter-tones, shuddering at the stains which marked its frame and remembering how Opojollac had acquired the instrument. But it was the governor's favourite toy, and Beav Lanpbeav had so ingratiated himself with Opojollac by his art that he was not required to bow; so, while the dissonances of the lute touched the pitted trees which were the pillars of the hall, he spoke.

"O beneficence. I had made my way through the Streets of Pleasure and was about to quit them by the northward egress, when in my path I encountered a crowd of the tenants of the street. I called upon them in your name to move aside, which, of course, was done with dispatch; yet I observed that they hesitated into the hives on that side of the thoroughfare where from there was an entrance to the vaults. Beneath the green rays of Yi'ren that entrance seemed intense with movement of a kind I could not distinguish. When I approached, I saw a crowd of nature unknown to me, filled with something that, when I attempted to match a number of limbs had emerged from, and returned to, the vault. I turned then to that which lay in the street, but for a space could make little of it. It appeared to be a black and pitted mass trampled into the earth, more than the height of a yarkdao in span, and strewed with insects. What droppings is this? I shouted in your name. 'Who has befouléd the street?' But from beyond one of the barred doors, a voice cried that the mass in the street had but recently been the husband of one of them."

"Doubless a sorcerer's revenge," Opojollac mused, but he frowned. "Nevertheless, I and no other hold power in Derd. Go now, send forth spies and be quick to bring me any further tales such."

Days passed, and Opojollac kept to the hall of music, where he tried to coax from his instruments the tunes which the embalmed songsters suspended among the trees had sung in life. But always he failed, and each day brought new tales of the unknown peril that stalked the city. At last Beav Lanpbeav took up the lute once more and told Opojollac of his findings.

"O kindly tyrant, it seems clear that a forgotten monster has come forth from the vaults. Many have spoken of a shape which rears forth from the entrances and leaps on its prey from the shadows. You must know that those entrances from which it preys draw ever nearer to your palace and that there is an entrance situated near your portico. There is but one course to take: to ask counsel of the protectors of our world, the Globes of Hakktho."

"For once your wisdom is equal to my own," Opojollac said. "'Go then and seek counsel.'"

It troubled Opojollac that his dealings with the city of Derd might find little favour with the implacable Globes; yet he admitted grudgingly that his administrator might prove less equal to the task. So he made ready, donning a robe like a skin of mirrors for the desert, and took his leave. Glancing back, he saw Beav Lanpbeav running among the black branches and pale silents songsters within the hall.

Slowly Opojollac passed among the low mansions which were dazzled by his face, and between the brown hives of the poorer quarter. Few yarkdao were to be seen nor were caravans of traders to be heard; and everywhere, it seemed, gaped the entrances to the vaults. At last, close to the rim of the city, Opojollac approached one of the entrances. Within, the dark rough walls stretched away beyond his sight and heads of moisture gleamed from the shadows. At the edge of total darkness Opojollac saw an image set in an alcove; he distinguished a limbless torso surmounted by a pitted, malformed head; flat, like a serpent's whose wide mouth and deep-set eyes were frozen in a stupid smile. Vague memories stirred of tales told at the birth of Derd, but Opojollac shrugged quickly and hurried out into the desert.

Already, as the dazzling white sand, he could see the broken totem-pillars which marked the tip of the path to Hakktho. He gained this path, which was formed of cracked and treacherous fused sand, and, as he hurried on, the blinding desert coated his eyes. Soon he found it difficult to distinguish his surroundings or to reassure himself of the reality of what he saw. Once he imagined that from a shattered amber dome on the horizon, thin tattered figures pranced forth and beckoned hungrily to him, and some immeasurable time later that he glimpsed a huge, toothed leg struggling to raise his body from the sand.

At last the path began to dip and he knew that he was approaching Hakktho. He paused to brush the paste of dust and sweat from his face, and the mirrors flashed intolerably on his arm. While a while he made out, in the omnipresent whiteness a gigantic cloud of dust which puffed up incessantly from a howling of the desert. Opojollac drew all the power of his language to him and hastened down the unsteady track to stand at the lip of the hollow.
Within the restless cloud of sand, which looked more mightily than his palace, he thought that he perceived the rolling surfaces of indistinct forms he had not heard a low unceasing rumble, like the musings of a metal collosus. He threw himself down and, crying out the ritual invocation, began to address the Globes:

"O great Globes, who have moved since the beginning of Tond and who, before the birth of my poor world, were pleased to roll through the unimaginable depths of space, the greatest and wisest of planets, hear my supplication! Know that a monster has risen from the vaults beneath Derd and craves power on this world, which is thine alone!"

Minutes of silence passed so that Opojollac dared glance toward Hakkthu. Then he heard himself hissed again, for he had stumped contrary a gutted mouth yawning above him through the dust. For a moment only the dust whispered, then a voice like the grinding of ponderous gears boomed out above Opojollac:

"It was well done to bring this intelligence to Hakkthu. Listen well to our command. We, the Globes, had the labyrinth beneath the pyramids constructed to pen the avatar of Azathoth who lurks below. Yet we knew that he who festerers there must one day learn the labyrinth, though it were the work of aeons and emerge to bring chaos to Tond. Thus we caused a further protection to be constructed. Go now to the vaults, touching the walls at the span of your arm, and a light will guard you and protect you. Above the pit in the deepest vault, a lever stands from the wall which touched, contains once more the avatar of Azathoth. Go now, and fear not."

When Opojollac raised his head again, only the dust rolled; and so he made his way back across the dimning waste to Derd. The silence of the desert lay upon the city, and Opojollac encountered no citizen in the streets. The entrances of the hives and mansions stood unguarded, and Opojollac saw that his city had been abandoned.

As a wind from the desert sang thinly in the shells which roofed his palace, Opojollac cursed the traitorous citizens and thought to flee. Then a vision mocked him of his palace ruined and inhabited by the creatures of the surrounding waste. An entrance to the vaults gaped close by. Opojollac strode to it and stretching forth an unsteady hand, touched the wall within the entrance. As he did so, a line of light sprang forth beneath his fingers and sped along the wall into darkness. It was a warm light, like the glow of fires at midnight in the desert, and so Opojollac gave himself into its protection and passed into the vaults.

For hours, it seemed, he walked. The walls were packed like ancient flesh, grey, which black sweat rolled. At times the floor descended sharply, and he slid beyond the path of the light beneath the low looming roof of black stone. Often the passage broadened into a junction whose limits the light could not distinguish, where the shadows crowded and nodded toward him as the luminous pathbrushed. Once, far down a transverse passage, he saw a great flat stain amid which seemed to glimmer the face of a criminal he had consigned to the vaults. Sometimes the light threaded the eyes of cadavers standing like grim servitors in niches; sometimes it startled clusters of round pale shapes which withdrew hastily into the walls; sometimes it leapt across the mouths of other passages, faintly illuminating dank choked depths and Opojollac, panicking, fled in its wake.

Long after Opojollac had ceased to count the branching passages, he halted at a junction. But for the stumblings of his feet, there was silence in the vaults, yet for a moment he was sure that he had heard, filtering distorted down the corridors at whose rendezvous he stood, a long stertorous hollow inhalation. His whole body pumped like a stranded fish in fear. The sound was not repeated, however, and after a while he hurried in pursuit of the guiding tip of light.

Minutes later he heard the sound again: breathing down an unlighted corridor to his left. Now it was louder and Opojollac stared in terror into the indistinguishable depths, where condensation dripped unseen from the ceiling. Once again he hastened in the path of the light, which curved ever beyond his vision. At last, he spun within him; he felt that he was running into a spiral of claustrophobic stone, like the interior of a gigantic subterranean shell. He ran his head swimming, and all at once light burst intensified upon his eyes. He had reached the central chamber.

Beyond the termination of the corridor, the light had encircled a domed chamber. A mixture of dust and moisture coursed down the walls and dropped hung trembling beneath the dome. Within the loop of light lay a circular well, its rim cracked and encrusted with mud, and beyond the well, opposite the entrance in which stood Opojollac, a rusty lever protruded from the wall.

After hesitating, Opojollac entered the chamber. The path around the rim was more than wide enough to permit him to gain the lever, yet he could not bring himself to look down into the well. Indeed, his eyes half-closed protectively as he came within reach of the lever and dragged it down.

Shrieking, stumbling, falling against the walls, Opojollac fled the vaults. He emerged from the central spiral and blundered onward, drawn outward by the unwavering light. No sounds pursued him but in parallel corridors he glimpsed dim grey forms which seemed to match his pace.

Eventually he halted, choking. From the junction at which he stood, several passages plunged into subterranean blackness; but the thread of light was there to guide him. He leaned against a wall to allow himself to cohere and his mirrors rattled dully about him. Then, in the dim corridor opposite him, he saw a movement like the swift unfurling of a pale fungus. He turned to flee and in the passage from which he had recently emerged he saw the light extinguished and a grey scabbling hand reach forth for him. As he backed away, the hand traced the line of light into the junction and dosed it like slime. Opojollac's being was turned inside out, for he glimpsed the two hands groping through the junction with no body intervening, and their arms stretched back into darkness, but he cried out and fled.

At last he fell out into the city of Derd. For a moment he turned to his palace; then he began to run toward the desert through the twist green-tinged streets. But he perceived that some odd quality was shared by the light and by the silence; and, gazing upward, he saw the cause. The Globes of Hakkthu had not betrayed their trust. The action of the lever had indeed contained the avatar of Azathoth; for a great translucent dome covered the entire city of Derd.

Opojollac spat on the dome with his fists, crying out curses against his people, against the Globes of Hakkthu, against the abomination from the vaults. But the dome did not respond to his pleas; and while he yet threw his body against the translucent surface, two vast unequal shadows of hands rose up against the dome and descended toward him.

Such is the tale which the Globes of Hakkthu, to whom the protection of the planet Tond was entrusted, are wont to intone at the nadir of the night.
As usual, I was nervous when Joe called me into the office. I knew he had an assignment for me, and I was sure that this time it would be something real. MYSTIC SCIENCE QUARTERLY, which he edits and I write for, is what they call an 'alternative magazine'. This time, I was to specialize in strange happenings, be they real or imaginary, and in the case of a shortage of authentic ones, it is up to me to come up with something to fill pages. So I am constantly veelilly looking, looking for the eighth wonder of the world, or at least a facsimile thereof good enough to get 75c out of the prospective buyer.

I guess I shouldn't complain, considering how things are in the publishing business these days. After the TRIBUNE went under it was welfare newspaper clipping.

"Read it," he snapped in his best Humphrey Bogart voice. "That's your assignment."

The clipping was from a local newspaper of a small town in Ireland. Written in a semi-humoristic style, it told of the "little people" seen by several residents of one of the Outskirts. "They look like leprecauns, but they are not anything else. But leprecauns! Don't you think we ought to draw a line somewhere?"

"Do you want your paycheck next month?"

I nodded, acknowledging the offer.

"Well then, it's all settled!" he piped cheerfully. "Better go home now and pack your bags. I've made a reservation for you on the first plane tomorrow morning."

"And look for leprecauns?"

"Look, Fred, you don't have to get me a live specimen or anything. Just something to go on."

I was somewhat familiar. For Joe Wells "something to go on" means nothing in particular. A few pictures and whispered rumors, something to give in a tenacious basis for a partially stretched-out and partially fabricated story. Remember that flying saucer bit we ran a few issues back? He made that one up out of thin air. He simply told me to get a UFO in two days so we could have the deadline, and, since there weren't any Martians in the immediate neighborhood just that "ooh-photograph" these days. We also had a nice mud-crowder. This sort of looked like a glowing disc as it was, and when printed out of focus on cheap pulp paper it became the anti-gravity powered spacecraft in which two beings from Altair dropped it to deliver an important message to the gentleman in the local milkman. The contents of the communication were hushed up, of course, which why you never read about it in the bigtime magazines.

So when I was told to get "something to go on" I was rather relieved. Maybe I could make a vacation out of it.

"By the way," Joe announced as I turned to leave. "Bill Porter will meet you in Dublin and assist you on this little safari. Remember him? He's working for us again. Now we have three people on the staff of this magazine!"

I took the 6:30 AM plane to Dublin. Tourist rates, of course. Remember, MSQ is a low budget publication. I guess I should have been glad I didn't have to ride in the baggage compartment.

Porter met me at the airport as I checked out my luggage. We had lunch and discussed new and old things. He told me about his last assignment. Pretty routine, he had to admit. He'd been looking in on the excavation of Vlad Drakula's castle in Wallachia, and talking to a couple of local cronies with local imaginations, who claimed that Vlad was not an infant, but the castle inhabited by vampires. One went so far as to say that she had seen an Englishman, whose description pretty well fitted the one of Bram Stoker which Bill had supplied visit the place in the 1890's. This and a few pictures of gravesyards and castles was remarked back to Joe. We both got a good laugh when we thought of what he would undoubtedly do with it.

Hoping to get business out of the way as quickly as possible, we rented a car and drove out to the area mentioned in the clipping. It wasn't a very big place, just about thirty houses, a gas station and a couple of stores, surrounded by farms. Overlooking all this was a thousand foot peak, leveled off at the top, more like a granite推广应用 than a real mountain. In this was the opening to an abandoned coal mine, abandoned, we were told, because the amateur geologist who had started it found a few surface deposits and hoped to strike it rich, coal being so scarce in Ireland. Unfortunately, the surface deposits were nothing more than just that, and coal was indeed scarce inside the mine. The investigator bankrupt, the mine closed down. No one ever went there anymore, because it was undoubtedly unsafe now. At least's what they said.

I was all in favor of climbing up immediately and getting this thing over with, for it was a dreary, damp day and the town looked rather dull and I didn't want to waste any more time than necessary. But Bill pointed out that we should be consistent with the original reports and photograph the cave at night, since the leprecauns were only supposed to come out in the dark.

We found an old store, a sort of combination grocery, barber shop, hardware and newstand, to buy some flashlights and perhaps to pick up a few usable comments from the locals. At first, the owner gave us an attempt at an "are you serious?" type laugh, then he gave us a very unamused and solemn warning not to go near the place, especially at night. This, I thought, is better than I expected. But the guy wouldn't let us use his name in the story.

It was windy and cold when we arrived at the mine. The sun had long since dropped behind the horizon, and all the fog had cleared up, so we had a star-filled, moonless sky above us as we climbed the steep path.

At the entrance I turned on my flashlight, and as Porter did the same I noticed he had a pistol protruding from his coat-pocket.

"What's that for?"

"Haven't you got any sense of drama, Fred? I'd have thought you'd been with MSQ long enough to learn touches like that. We'll photograph each other diligently exploring the mine, complete with the pistol so that if it'll look more dangerous and exciting to the person browsing thru the magazine on the stands."

It was exceedingly damp inside, so much so that I was soon soaked to the skin by the water dripping down from above. The passage twisted crazily and was narrowed slightly as we progressed. Every so often we would snap a picture and the place would be filled with light. There was one disturbing thing I noticed during this. The mine was filled with coal. The walls of the tunnel were lined with it. It is the biggest such deposit in all Ireland. I'm sure they could have made a fortune off it.

I was thinking of how to integrate that fact into the story as we went along. When there were no more flashbulbs going I could see little but Bill's light ahead of me. Suddenly he stopped.

"Fred! Look at this!"

I pushed forward and looked. I must say I was somewhat unnerved by what I saw.

Carvings. Minute figures and letters engraved in the coal, so tiny and complex that I don't think any human hand could have made them. And all were within ten inches of the floor.

This suddenly ceased to be funny. It was no longer another routine hoax assignment. This was, to some extent at least, real! We must have used up a roll of film on the things, then we proceeded onward.

We found plenty of carvings but no trace of their makers. All this time the tunnel was going slowly lower, down into the heart of the mountain. I don't know how long we walked, but it seemed like hours. I remember trying to listen things up with some wirecrack to the effect that we surely were at least half way to Hell already.

We kept closer together after our first find, and when he stepped the second time I collided with him before I realized it.

"Will you get a loud of that...?" There was what I think was genuine awe in his voice.

We were standing in the opening of a large chamber, roughly rectangular, about twenty feet or so long and half that wide. It was just high enough for the average person to walk in without stooping. Its wet black walls were jagged with many cracks, and there was a large boulder in the far corner, and on its top...

"Bones! Human bones! I'm sure of it. They were strewn haphazardly about, and many of them were cracked open, the marrow removed! Most of the skulls were smashed.

Some of them were very old and brittle, but some seemed quite fresh. They seemed to have been gnawed on as if by an immense dog.

I began to feel sick.

Cautiously we entered the cave, taking care to avoid stepping on any of the grisly litter.

Behind us there was a shuffling sound. And chanting...

"Quaddu Azo San!" shouted thousands of faint, inhuman voices, coming from the direction of the mine entrance.

They were approaching rapidly, and rather than dash out of the chamber and down the darkened and steep tunnel at the other end, we hid behind the boulder.

Suddenly the passageway outside was lit by hundreds of tiny torches. And the beaters of those torches defied belief! Little run! Thousands of them, swarming over the cave floor in a ghastly procession, bearing a great burden of my stomach turned when I saw what they were carrying - human flesh! Severed and dripping hands and arms, legs, unidentified chunks of muscle and bone, and at the end of the swarm the head, its two sights eyes rolling about aimlessly...

We were an acid, stifling odor in the air. By the torchlight I could see that they were preparing little heaps of incense, lighting it and giving off tiny puffs of smoke.

They placed their burden in a pile in the center of the room, while several of them, draped gaudily in what must have been scraps torn from human clothing came forward and waved their arms over the bloody mass, chanting, chanting, chanting.-
My throat felt like parchment. I coughed.
And for a moment all motion seemed suspended... .We had been discovered.
I shouted to Porter and we burst forward from our hiding place, kicking and stomping as many of the horrid creatures as we could, making our way toward the exit.
I heard my companion cry out, and whirled and caught a volley of tiny arrows fired by the myna piranhas.
Cursing, Bill drew his gun and fired.
There was a loud report, and suddenly the whole mine seemed to tremble. Something—it seemed something was filled with black and rose with the running boulders. I remember running and running, desperately, as fast and as fast as I could go. I looked back once to see Porter staggering under the shower of stones before I was knocked senseless.
I awoke in total darkness, lying face down in a pulpit and spitting out mud.

Something prodded my stomach—from underneath. One of the things was in there with me! I felt Hull freighted and crushed it to a pulp. I kept squeezing and squeezing... .Its blood flowed out between my fingers.
I tried to sit up but hit my head on the ceiling, which was now about two feet from the floor. I fell around for my flashlight, but found only the pistol, its barrel bent weirdly out of shape.

"Bill! Are you there? Can you hear me?" I was answered by a weak gasp followed by a spurt of watery coughing. I crawled in the direction from which it had come, braving myself on the boulders as I did.

"Are there any—any of them here, he wheezed.

"One, but I killed it. How are you?" I tried to sound cheerful but made a pretty good show of it.

"I'm hurt bad. So bad I can't feel a thing." His words came slowly, "I—

I hardly breathe.

I felt his chest and my worst fears were confirmed. His ribcage was shattered and his left lung collapsed.

"Don't talk, I said. "Save your strength.

"It doesn't matter now. I'm done for. I can tell..." 

"Gentleman! Shut up!

"I've to tell you something," His voice was just a faint croak now. "Why do you think I was sent here, huh? Because I've heard of things like this before. An old legend, in different parts of the world. I suppose it was time to make the story sound good. But it's not like that now—it's so goddam real! I—!" He coughed up a mouthful of blood. "It's—" His whole body began to tremble violently. He seized my coat and pulled desperately with all his strength. Then he began to cough now.

"Bill! What about it? Bill! For God's Sake, answer me!"

Water dripped somewhere.

Totally sickened and weak beyond words I fell back and wept like a child. What had he been trying to tell me? Did he know the meaning of the horrible things we had seen? Was it a sacrifice of some kind? If so, then to what? Or to a real.

A sound came from somewhere far off. Somewhere beneath. Then another. Rocks tumbling, as if a heavy sack was being dragged along the tunnel on the opposite side of the room we had been in. It seemed that something was coming up a curved path, from the very heart of the Earth, passing under me, then coming up through that passageway on the other end of the chamber. It was coming into that room of horror, just a few scant yards from where I lay buried! It was there now! The thing that received the offerings, summoned up from god knows what depths by the chanting and the incense. A strange thought came to me. Perhaps the thing simply knew it was feeding time.

It was very close, ponderously and slowly moving about. It must have been huge. I heard a slurping and crunching sound as it began to feed.

Instantly I crawled over to the wall which separated me from it. It was close enough to touch it there hadn't been that barrier of debris there. Then, to my ultimate horror, it started eating.

It seemed to sense my presence!

There was a scraping sound, as it came over toward me. I was too petrified to do anything until he emitted a vast, and utterly blood-curdling, roar.

The air began to grow very hot. Acriflames made my eyes water. I gasped for breath. The numerous puddles of water began to boil. It was trying to get at me. It must have been quite a while since the last time it had tasted living human flesh...

The last thing I remember was the sound of small droplets of molten rock, striking the ground and hissing.


The sounds of boulders moving and men grunting under their weight. A shaft of cool air struck me on the face and rousted me.

Hands lifting.

"Are they all right?" someone asked stupidly.

It was the villagers. They'd come searching for us after they'd heard the mine cave in and unknowingly frightened away the horror that dwelt there.
The authorities were told only that William Porter was killed in an accident while exploring an old mine. They never would have believed the truth anyway. Besides, I didn't care to—I didn't dare to—attract the attention of the world to this place. Some things are better left unknown.

I never did return to New York, and I don't believe Wells at MSQ ever got his tale printed. I've been wandering about Europe ever since, working odd jobs, hiding my time, trying to forget...

I sometimes wonder what will happen when the monster, scaled in its mine, comes to be. For it is no longer being fed regularly and kept satisfied by the little people. It must be hungry by now. Starving, in fact. Inevitably, somehow, it will make its way to the surface.

Then there will be nothing anyone can do to stop it.
"I've thought about your account of the incident yesterday," Simeon says drawing up to the rail beside Talbot. "If I hadn't had those dreams myself, and if I hadn't seen that dwarfed native myself, I doubt that I'd be able to believe what you've told me. Now, though, I'm left with no choice but to believe.

There is a long silence during which both men just stare blankly into the darkness. Finally, "Do you believe there might be life out there, on one of those planets, Simeon asks.

"It's more than probable," Simeon answers.

There is another long silence, until Simeon says, "For what it's worth, Winslow apologizes.

"Talbot laughs a hideous laugh.

"Look, stop torturing yourself," Simeon says. "Yes, it's too bad Winslow lost his head, but then that's partially your fault. If you had told us when you knew that there was more to our dreams than we were aware of, Winslow might have been prepared for what happened. But why didn't you tell us?"

"I don't know," he says after a few minutes, "I guess I didn't really believe, myself. I could have been wrong - it was such a fantastic idea.

Simeon punctuates another lengthy silence, "There were no dreams again last night - I don't suppose there will be any more."

Simeon fingered the woodgrain of the rail reflectively for a while, and then he retreated to his cabin. Talbot remains staring into the darkness for over an hour before he pushes himself away from the rail.

False dawn is graying one end of the river, the Gulf of Mexico, as Talbot pulls himself up onto the stone spiral. Behind him the ship is almost entirely dark except for a dim light off the stern. He walks up the curved ramp entirely in the dark, running one hand along the rusted wall. At the top he looks idly at the horizon: nothing but black jungle for miles where once the countless lights of a boundless metropolis paled the stars. Now the only light is the stars. A true campfire of time.

Talbot walks to the center of the small plateau and stoops to his knees, feeling in the dark until he finds the Elder Sign. His long fingers run gently over it, feeling the coarse texture of the rock, of time, again. And he is aware of its enormous age, feeling distinctly the millions of years since it was robbed from the earth and moulded into what it is. And he feels, too, the intense purpose that it must possess, the absolute function that it has served these ages, if not actively then simply by its passivity. Waiting.

Incomprehensibly, Talbot moves his fingers into the crevices of the Sign, pushing along its sides, feeling the separate identity of the grain of the rock and the terrible purpose of the Sign itself. Closing his eyes, he allows his fingers to communicate to him the message that he received, that has probe down countless corridors from the first portals of the world.

And the rock moves.

Soundlessly the Sign stands up on its end, and a large hole, reaching into the spiral tower, is revealed. Instantly, as if a line of communication has been established, the sky opens up with sound; and for Talbot the stars become myriad pulses of energy showering down about him.

Like a crashing wave, its crest so long that it stretches beyond the horizons, it falls upon him, throwing him to his back with its impact, an enormous convergence of time and purpose. Talbot lies prone, staring up into the massive whirling of pulse, endless galaxies careening madly, vast explosions of space and gas, and beyond all of it, beyond all the chaos and all the confusion of being, lies the great nothing: the Abyss. And it is there that the red light of the Sign reaches out, and he is drawn towards a concave of time. As he feels it pulling him, Talbot is conscious of his body falling away, of the black jungle fading, of the young earth arcing past the sun, and of the majestic current sweeping him out through the cosmos, past the huge red sphere of Betelgeuse where ancient voices sing, traversing with him the Milky Way and out into the wide gulf which leads him past the island galaxies in an accelerating leap. The enormous continuum of the current sweeps him onward, and the great time-song until it is to him but a thin archaic voice, and he is swept beyond reason but willingly, down the widening arc of the stream of infinity.

Just after dawn Simeon climbs the spiral tower, seeking Talbot. He finds him stretched out before the raised Elder Sign, his face flaccid in death. The dawn wind is warm, promising another day of impulsive heat, and he opens two buttons on his shirt.

After a few minutes of staring at the body, Simeon picks it up, straining under the weight, and forces it down the hole created by the raised Sign. The body falls longer than Simeon thinks it should have before the sound of collision and its accompanying echoes are heard. There is silence as Simeon gazes down into the blackness, thinking, as he will do through the coming years, that unless Talbot and the archaeology of agglutinated cities dripping with ichor, where the geometries were never quite right.

The whole of this scene is empty, lulling shipdeck and distant stars. Along in the background, leaving heavily on the star track, is Talbot, his face a congregation of shadows. In the background, toward the bend of stairs which leads to the steering-cabin, approaches the smaller figure of Simeon. Accompanying him is a faint vapor of incense.
Dull Scavengers Wax Craftly
by William Scott Home

Trottering to balance both torches, Osarsif stumbled down the slick steps to the door. The instructions he had been nibbling at his breakfast was a desperate rat, so carefully memorised that he could hear his own footsteps echoing in the sinus upstairs from his palate, his way so certain in their fluorescent glare as to render the negliging pitchines superfluous. The light was narrow, close, and moist with depth. On one wall a scarf of hastily crude masonry disfigured the classical courses of stone which caged him; there, where tongues of mortar, squeezed out by suffocating stone, licked the beaded air, a dozen cat-striped fangs were wriggled with narrow perforations peeped the fresher shield of interdiction.

Osarsif strained to slip one torch into a bracket set high in the elder, settled opposite this seal. In its cat-striped light he bent over the new wall, scrutinising with ears pricked, blinking eyes sweat-stung; one of the perforated stones was unmounted and prouted a silver eye already gone black. Whereof a family of frames from the very feet of the steps into place beneath this stone and dropped the torch into it.

He took a silver hook from its peg and inserted its crook into the embedded eye. The fluted flame scrambled around it, and the grinding of the stone behind, as he tugged, dissolved in its cracking; with all his panting strength he could only angle it side to side until it began to crash visously out of the wall.

Pausing for breath with the stone halfway drawn, he realised that when it finally slid clear he would not be able to hold it. He had been allowed no assistance and granted no alternatives; the procedure had been dictated; the slightest deviation warned against. Two details flickered underscored in his mind, however, and - as nearly as he could determine anything - he determined to observe those.

He halted again; the gutting grew less painful, the movement grosser. Nearing the edge of the stone tilted downward until the whole flame of the torch burst around it. Nonplussed for two score heartbeats (a short time under the circumstances), he picked the other torch from its bracket and clasped it so close to his gravely chest that his hair hissed, then pulled again. His knees emptied as the stone slipped from its niche and tumbled. Faster than the youth he had never been, he plunged the flames into the orifice left while its porcupine deeper settled through green-sapped squeals and splinters to the floor, his ears telling him that time, galvanised, was already boning the house.

Clinging to the other flame's buoy he tried to prise up the heavy stone but could not manage the torch that still had never accomodated other than the herbs and anomalies the philosopher required in his studies, was going enthusiastically rank. Osarsif moved through the house checking the bars and seals of doors and windows, coming finally to the front door where the retainers and their skinny hounds bunched.

All of them were worn, wrinkled, dredged of strength - even her whose gathered lips were like a black rose; scarred from the inner combustion of sensuous fires, set in her anesthetic chain, which lethetically followed the herarial sweep by means of some hidden clatter, abnegating not only its blessing but much of its illumination upon the house.

This was the reward of service in the house of Titi Mi Hor Zer, doctor of the mantic sciences, even to those who had known nothing near the weight of forty inundations Osarsif carried. At his nod, without a word, they filed out the door. Only the last, Semsemu, although as empty as the rest, paused and turned. He was holding nothing at all.

"Is one decade here enough to strip a man of all his belongings?"
osarsif rattle.

"Except for the six needles embedded in my heart."

"Was it so many?" (said as if he were hearing of a melon harvest.)

"You didn't think it worthwhile to palpay anyone else's luggage."

"I have an idea that no one would carry from this house anything not his own."

"Not even that. The touch of the lattenware alone would not rot the flesh from any normal finger. I'm going to stand right there outside until I breathe every last cup of this barrow's musis out of my body." There was still a pigmy jet of fire in his throat. Semsemu had rarely slaved to the innkeeper's service; earlier, as a kitchener, he had fathered a strange monster on one of the maids; though both she and it had died at birth, Titi Mi Hor Zer had forcibly kept him in his service and busy with a succession of purchased girls hoping for another; but each year added perfectly ordinary and healthy children to the household, which the resigned master, before finally terminating his experiment, made eventual use of one way or another in the course of his work. But in the process Semsemu had been allowed the humanity of lust, hope, love, rage and sorrow. It had made a freak of him.

Where the rainbow mirror behind the other's eyes had worn away altogether so that they concentrated; absorbed, on the blank theatre within, his orbits were still stuffed with soft onions.

"Not long ago a goodbye on Hor Zer's threshold would have been unimaginable," Osarsif mused.

"Loving life followed on my last goodbye."

Semsemu's going sucked the last vibration from the house. Osarsif's one small sack was left forlorn. Shouldering it, he passed out, locked the door and turned off in his own, bare. He was wondering whether anyone in Mesurwo would even remember his name or his family, and, more practically, whether he would recognise the village itself or any of the landmarks on the way. Although it was only two days' journey, he had not been there for twenty inundations.

With his last obligation jangling at his belt it struck him suddenly that after sunset he would be able to wear his own life again, and he turned for a last look at the consumer of his labour.

It was a rambling, unremarkable house overshadowed by beetwood trees. The baked walls were knitted with vines which had never been seen bearing flowers but had curled crescents of dusty twigs from the streets. He recalled that, on his first coming, there had been many houses hemming their overlord's; now all were out of sight and ragged weeds had taken the lots. Though a village of some hundreds surrounded and supported the philosopher, no one was in sight. Had there been, the figure would have made a careful, silent circuit around his flowing personal plot.

Osarsif walked out under a gigantic and violent sky dry as a disc of mercury. The fields were baked, the wind, scrying their black dust grasses, could barely ripple his dust-weighted aba. Before twilight he came to the river's fork and turned at the inn, already battening for the night.

Seeing the innkeeper from the black sporrans as he went. "In the name of the master, on whom be peace, peace," he rasped. "At some time to come one Ulothhapal of Swafat, whom you know, will be passing through, and by order of the master you will give him—"

"Give him yourself," he answered. "He's inside."

Osarsif stared like a kicked pig. By instruction and repetition his path of action had been scored into his heart, and the eventuality of incompatability circumstances had been given him as the answer, an integral to a man who claimed to direct stars. Now violence was done to his susceptible substance.

Though the innkeeper was busy he gestured Osarsif to the vat and gave him a cup of water. Then he indicated a lamplit door and paddled back to his gate.

His pack heavier, Osarsif stumbled to the door. The windows were already barred and the lamps lighted; patches had been dropped into the oil, but the inn odour was territorial. Though the room was stark it was the establishment's best.

His domed head and chest bare, black skin luminous as rats' teeth in starlight, Osarsif sat behind the table, a massive image embroidering with blood, a man whose basal features and flint irises were rubbed with the confidence of strength. A ferocity sib to neither lust nor hunger had moulded his face.

Shocked to palsy, Osarsif hesitated.

"A mission of welcome so taken aback? I might almost think I was unexpected. Surprise is a luxury. Surplus is a luxury. Very few of our service could not afford for you to bring offerings of sudden fealty?"

Under the battering eyes Osarsif's brain felt like fresh almond-sugar being kneaded. Conventionalities were snuffed. "It is my painful - our lord is dead. In accord with his final command I bring you the keys."

As he passed the clanking sack over, a heavy hand swept out and flicked it to the tabletop without a blink.

"And was it your master's intention to wait for the happenance of my passing before I heard of my fortunate inheritance? Was he above sending word - indifferent to my ending my days in ignorance and ignominy?"

"I understood," Osarsif breathed weakly, "that word was already sent."

"Was it, indeed?" Ulothhapal came forward roaring. "Because I woke in the open one morning and found by the pool's lustre a moonspot in my forhead! But I knew, for if the black blood of water was the minor crime of smiting with the moon, he must have seized some article that was mine and recalled the theft of an old belt by the well in Sitkar sixty days before? With the cold black liquor of hate dripping on the doorstep day in and day out, was I to wait for redundant-scribbles or sugared salvations when I could hear death whetting its blade on dogte? Ha!" The special contempt of triumph heated his breath. "So tell me - how long had the creature been trying to get something of mine?"

"The master dispatched messengers and retrievers known only to himself. Who could say from where or to what end the oddments brought him came of?"

"You can, that's who, as much as I." Ulothhapal belched back. "You know whether some old leather belt was brought him which woke the sated contentment of accomplished malignity." The chatterbox eyes bored their way into Osarsif's drive's probing for the lock of truth secreted somewhere in his head. The coaching rodent was scarcely able to hold its own.

"Over the years," he mumbled, " - as the strange men who had word of his discovery came to speak with him - although he always refused to see
time as Oursif was rummaging in his own meagre pack for a sack of dry teff cakes and some smoked biche. As the mental settled to his crude fare dressed in the appetising aroma of his master's meal, Uothohaph, looking as though some bitter herb had been slipped him on the sly, growled, "Eat that garbage outside!"

Thwining out next morning from the sleep he had only wished for, Oursif creaked up off the doormat after his new master's urgent rousing and, dripping some lukewarm tea down his shirt, carried our bread. Uothohaph was too wise to travel in affluence. He was unimpressively dressed in a much-beaten mantle of coarse grey cotton and cheap linen headcloth with unadorned band; a heavy utilitarian belt with a preternatural dirk argued against interference. He swung a heavy staff and with it regularly tapped the rear of a rachitic youngster staggering along under his bundle. "Picked him up along the road just out of Trimarentk," he nodded. "Won't last much longer at the rate his knees knock.

Oursif wondered if he would himself. Retracing his path to encystment, his feet found slivers of pain on the same road which had sped them the day before. Uothohaph looked around broadly as they went and asked about the few changes visible but, since Oursif's mutters were ambivalent even when forthrinking, he launched into a reminiscence monologue which, for the first time since his much scrummer legs had made spokes down that same road, enlightened Oursif a little on the incident.

"Had his phenomenal discovery been all," Uothohaph boomed, "it would have been epical. But Hor Zer was a titan among the ambitious - and without pause to codify or embellish it he moved directly to exploit it, apply it, grasp at the diadem of the universe. If I baulked him in that, it was out of pure self-preservation and not jealousy, for I believe no created thing would have been immune to the force he would have evoked.

"We know, some of us, of a wisdom where the drumming sits; we spill it over awhale of skill for a tithe of its potential, but he would have unleashed it in consuming flood, passed from empathy to apothecies.

"Of course, it would not have been the first time, but when or where in time has it been to any man's benefit? The free flux of unimpeded will through the thinnest mind of anything once man, the capacity to flex matter into fresh figures unprocessed yet by the Ordinators themselves, is the genesis of holocaust on earth - and the revelation. I fancy, that the world is a mad-apple to the touch of the mighty. When a brain becomes the seat of a sun, throwing out auroras of impossible colour, the earth heaves to readjust its harmonics: stones hatch and lotus sing. For such dislocations in the only order we know we have just one mortal word: madness, beyond measure.

The relish with which he tasted the words before expelling them belied his oath of abhorrence. The madness of man is the majesty of mages; and for so difficult and dangerous a trophy Uothohaph clearly had never surrendered search. When they paused at the village's edge a few ragged children stared at them in uncharacteristic silence, backing off from Uothohaph's indiffrent glancing, willy-nilly out the phrastrotropy. Carry back everything stored there." He tosed them the keys.

"All the books and skulls!"

"Leave the skulls. Just the books and amulets."

"That will take several trips."

"Then don't delay the first one!" His unalled foot narrowly missed Oursif's hips.

Satisfaction did not hold Oursif (yet there he saw defined the penalty he earned, unlike the heart-sucking stare of his former master who, whenever he cered, wordlessly swathed him in the restless drowse of uncertainty) but bent under an empty sack and a carcass hefted back to the house, seeking as always words appropriate to curse fate without leaving himself open to retribution.

It was mid-afternoon. The vicinity of the house was, as usual, deserted. He clasped the rattle to the keys as he opened the door, a small chill ruffled his neck as he entered, and he gathered up his mantle from the clinging emptiness. He shuffled through the o-ring hall, across the courtyard to that isolated structure - a cone-shaped cube - where Hor Zer had lived and stacked his materia. It was long locked and sealed, and the key was not one that he had ever had charge of; but he found it at last and trepidantly forced the swollen black door inward.
There was an explosion in the back yard. Uothohalp reared. lifting his staff. It was only a roused cow chewing for quietude, but it was an arrow of revolution to Osarsif.

He unlocked the door again and stepped back for the master, who flatly gestured him in while his eyes ran like searchlights, posts, floor, walls, ceiling. But when Osarsif, shrugging, stepped inside, he followed. Reaching to the door Osarsif's shoulder was nearly dislocated by the master's staff. "Leave it open, you fool," the deuce-stuck boy staggered in and heaved its load down on the floor; again Uothohalp leapt.

This obsession tracked him into the garden, where he stepped electricity to each suitor asking to be let in. It was dark, but he felt his eyes finding everywhere. He turned with a start when he first tugged the phrontistery door handle, the stele of hands from his face. Pushing past to unlock it, Osarsif saw, indeed, the face of an uncertain man. He was more comfortable with more rows than to interpose. He was not that the power had ebbed; only Uothohalp could conceive what he faced.

They stepped into the noted silence. "You sure the old badger didn't die in here?" Uothohalp growled, showing himself brazenly back into existence. "This is a cow's load more dust here than forty days desertion could precipitate."

"The master spent little time here after that memorable day." He gave up his studies, then.

"I think father used his subject." The master did not look up.

"Timhi Hor Zer studied not skulls, you ichneumon, but destiny! No, he never changed the subject, but he must have lost sight of the means." Osarsif picked up the book and set it in the basket. "That analogy you have often heard comparing steam, water and ice to the prenatal, incarnate and dead persona is more illustrative than you think. When the prenatal first settles into the inside of its powers, it is this water, the matter even as the Flesh’s slumber like its strictures in the light. The writing of the fates, the Ordinators’ signatures upon men, the message that the prenatal carry in its first imprint; all this is left behind in the third, the world in... . in the careful suture lines of the bones; the bulging brain mounds. No man has ever doubted the significance of this script any more than he ever possessed the ability to read it. This was Hor Zer’s challenge then. That it was indeed the writing of the gods, through their anonymous manifestations, and far more relevant to man than, say, the abstract glyphs of the stars - which, for all we know, may have been intended for the byzantines of the sea rather than ourselves, Zer had worked to its own advantage, selling the book for.

"His skull’s sentences contain a man’s secret destiny, his personal words of power, the true document of his origin and means. It is useless to himself, being neither by the flesh nor the spirit where he is. But Hor Zer began by compiling a grammar of a sketch of men notably good or notoriously evil, whose lives’ configurations were not accelerated by time, if quite hushed of flesh. By predictable means he amassed this collection and confronted these arsmeical lesson-slates until his calified state, gorged on months, whittled away the patina of obscurity and evoked a tongue, not from the eroded jaws, but between the still sharp-toothed junction of frontal and paretial, temporal and occipital, until the ragged undulations waved into the semblance of captured speech as snarly as ink across puppies.

Though he had lived with his master’s fixation, Osarsif had never known its object. He remembered the hour in which a withered watapana blossom on the back of one hand had been matched in a gust of breeze by its twin a year junior which had just then fallen - that hour had been the end of the sight. Then Hor Zer had had to prepare Osarsif’s sight for.

"That diversion with the dancing intestines was to clarify to return by to the light a squeal subtracted from the half-crushed skull of a long dead ancestor, which could have been simply for the dying Hor Zer, but Hor Zer is your master and mine, rose up the first man issued of flesh to read the script the gods write over the brains of men. Where a soul less jugernautical - mine, for instance - would have felt his death an upheaval of his Being, he moved immediately to further his achievement - to unravel the hook and apprehensions of his own destiny while brain still ordered hand and to realise them in the flesh."

Osarsif remembered the long, tense preparations, during which this same human monolith had quivered and stuttered, the compounding and infusion of drugs, and assimilation practice in near-complete detachment on the philosopher’s part - since only passionate men can make a learning out of pain - the special inks mixed, the stylus, calipers, pottograph, an untouched phrenological globe dictating the lord’s own, all crafted under extreme direction. Then Uothohalp was set to the task of springing the integration from Hor Zer’s rigid head. Throughout the operation the old man sat soundlessly as his disciple’s awes shewed away the pushly care of skin and flesh. Osarsif stood by to sponge up the bursting blood, his gorge educated by many years’ familiarity with such performances, usually upon less constrained and persimil flesh.

Loved as much in Uothohalp’s rendered voice as in well-water, the bare white skull was wiped clean at last, and the master blinked eyes relieved with satisfaction. It was enlightening that he so readily presupposed honesty on the part of the gods. Uothohalp had settled down with calipers, pottograph and stylus to transcribe the suture-glyphs of his skull for Hor Zer’s self-pursual.

Osarsif did not wait for Uothohalp to continue, for here reminiscence ended. Himself adjured to leave as his utility was done, he had gone out with the tatters in his train. Nor was it until months later, when Uothohalp had burst out of the phrontistery, pupils careening against his brows, tore through the garden to the door. The fresh globe arched through the air behind him, cast with surprising accuracy by so feeble an arm, and splintered between his maximized feet at the doorstep. He had never returned.

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He was greeted by a ghost. A wraith of vetiver proceeded distinctly from the mussy darkness, tickled his nostrils and passed out to mystify the courtyard air. It was but the scent which had wafted by the master wherever he walked. Osarsif wanted to make sure no lavish flesh or razor were would follow.

He already understood Uothohalp’s play: if he returned alive, violating, as he would, the master’s explicit instructions check up, deliver keys, go home, never return, then whatever dissipation had been prepared lurked in no immediate or vigilant form. His worn flesh, which had met so few uses in its time, was but cast into the tempting obscurity.

He stepped a shutter to let in a trickle of dirty light: the room was naked of servility. It was small and crudely furnished. In neat rows on the walls of shelves the ornamental skulls of many years residence returned his stare, scintillating opals of eternity, each distinct as a going tone. Other shelves bore books, tablets, worn parchaments; there were a few models, bones, enigmatic machines, blank phrenological globes - poetical talismans, whose use, unknown to Osarsif, had been superseded by more Byzantine but less corporeal implements; Hor Zer had renounced paraphernalia and all its quirks, there were his padded chair, ink pots, brushes, calipers; the single table which held them was planted on a trapdoor through which he earlier crawled down to the farthing slime he communed with, though later he needed not leave his chair to do so.

Timhi Hor Zer had not studied his books, but his skulls. Skulls had been his tutors and confidantes, more lovingly contemplated then any whose soft upholstery was still fastened. A skull’s smile is a scribble of satiety, the cereolated snarl of fallibility shed, a snerk of absolventness which declares misery as ephemeral as man’s brain and name. Where a man’s eyes sank - and at times, as witness young girls, repugnate - light; skulls suck darkness through their cobweb lids and fountain it out into the day. On the shedding and assuming of one coat of dust after another body is forgotten, indistinguishable among so many layers, so that philosophy less than they iritate philosophy.

Breaking his gaze abruptly Osarsif realised how easily one fell under their fascination and how a man in such company dispensed with the hesitations of the flesh. For some reason it had been Hor Zer’s predilection to smash the cups of the orbits, so that in most the cranial grotto imbibed the viewer. Each had starred long into the husged’s phosphorescent eyes and now projected his evil into any brain of suitably hostile warmth in which to gestate. He swept the rubbish off the desk into his bag. Dried cobra eyes - numb clots of cuddled sleep - scattered over the sea otter’s violet-tinted bones, living pentagrams drogued from lightless abysses in the distant seas, now cold and crusted tan always Osarsif took great pains to avoid touching once; lightning bones and ambergris lungs, harlequin ovals and bloodstones, carved moon and polished obsidian, a single drah glosoptra, its green-black dullness incongruous against the silver of its opulent mount - Hor Zer had once muttered that it was a fragment of the soul-heavy moon itself. His fingers clinged from the surfaces propped by the corruption of his overlord’s claws.

He hurried to finnish a few of the thinner books filled the sack. A rustle outside startled him but seemed to be only the coupling of leaves on the courtyard flaggs; still, as he went out the door he was tossled a cometary glance by a flying rat.

Shivering, he locked the phrontistery door and trooped out, securing the street door again from habit.

Tapping his staff, Uothohalp sat waiting at the village line. The children were gone, sound chuckled away.

"It will take three trips at least to bring the books," Osarsif said as Osarsif ran disinterested fingers through the wrack of Hor Zer’s voracity. "Never will I go to the trouble. This tells me enough. We’ll go in together."

He rose and swung along easily: Osarsif, stunned, was slower to follow. At least Uothohalp could not be charged with subtlety, though how this might not in the end. sake him Osarsif could not picture. He did notice that his new lord’s hands gripped the staff so tightly that the nails blanched and that he turned with some unnecessary violence to his boy. Evidently the road had jogged all he had to say out of him.
Oarsif did not have to be told that this callow nephew, anxious for some weapon against the relentless mage, had mistrepresented the lines in such a way as to frustrate Timi Hor Zer's chief aim, probably without doing himself any benefit. He could not have tricked the doctor; this man, who had impelled himself wholly into the essence of the superhuman language, would have recognized the first wrong stroke as it was penned before him.

Emboldened by this recollection Oarsif mumbled, "And did you never succeed in making skulls talk?"

"There is no such simple criterion of capacity," Uothohap for once too weak to show irritation. "And what he may achieve who mimics stone for a year is obviously impossible for acquaintances of the winds. Nevertheless, the elements of that superior wisdom which is granary are no less my possession than your cars."

The skulls were whispering. As the knitting of night leaves swirled the at half a dozen of them rocked with a rustling, gliding pulse; peering into the faces of the pack, Oarsif found the black recess breasted with postholes of red murder. Uothohap froze with arm outstretched as rats flowed out of the unsealed sockets and foramina or bobbed up through a pair of malchoked jaws - though the sullenness of their appearance did not bind the men to cataloging the means - and, skulls somersaulting in their wake, pounced from the shelves onto them. It was a viciously purposeful, chillingly sentient, hypnotically silent attack. With no hesitation the desheveled animals' teeth began lacing long ribbons of flesh from the men's legs, grasping for holds in their cotton chimeres, tripping up their sandalstraps.

Uothohap leapt through the door and with a heavy vaulted to the shoulders of the knock-kneed boy who was thoughtlessly facing the other way. Bringing with his heavy staff, he was able not only to keep the dazed boy from falling but even to begin boating him toward the outer door while one contingent ran to mince his strings ankles.

Uothohap's howl of affright woke Oarsif less than the sudden instance of the rats' sewer-honed fangs. Marvelling at the tonic a mere siege of teeth supplied to fried old muscles, he made a cessation rush out toward the 'unc-door' where the bandy and charged him, not half way across the courtyard.

For the second marvel of the morning he took a plunge into the air and accepted the lower branch of a well-pleased sycamore, dangling just above the leaping, snapping rats. One had retained a hold on his robe as he swung over the rest, but it seemed unable to claw upward, until he began moving hand over hand along the branch toward a neighbouring, and much less promising, leaf-blow tree.

The pack below him scattered toward each of the trees he had some prospect of reaching until only two or three remained below, puppetstrung. A gap were combed determinedly out his own airborne clutch and the others scaling every arboreal prospect, while the yammering crooked body of Uothohap's servant - who had collapsed under his master just before they reached the door - came skating across the floor and into the midst of the floor-wardens, while his bowler straightened and bounded out the door. Oarsif dropped to the flags and with legs unlinear charged for the blind patch. The mis rated heavily from the trunks and their tiny teeth, cracking like stickbones, were wearing through his feet as he shot through the door and stated for the road. Uothohap's flailing red hammered stars into his skull and buffeted him toward the river without quibble, despite their quadrupetal advantages the observers seemed unable to scout the hot brilliance and shot off tangential and indecisive.

By the time they reached the riverfront the pursuers had fallen off, just as the few other persons visible had disappeared rapidly into their shelters. Wading into the water Oarsif pulled himself into a small coracle, to be tumbled out bodily as Uothohap followed with vigour. Soaked through, he hoisted himself aboard again and crouched.

Sopping up the wounds on his forearms and shoulders as well as his copiously bleeding ankles, he turned perplexed to his master. "Why didn't you salt these spells?"

"You damned idiot! You still don't know what a wizard works with!" He brought his little toe level with the base of Oarsif's skull, and, without a kick this time, broke a spark and a wave of pain through Oarsif's writing body.

"Now tell me at once - is Timi Hor Zer unquestionably dead?"

"There is no chance of doubt," Oarsif mumbled.

"Then to what do we owe this antipathy of those lowly scavengers? Even if they could not ascertain whether or not that jerk of yours still sliced, your sprint surely afforded judgment. They were never generated from skulls which saw too long fleshless, unless from clots of dust - at least I would more readily expect the rotting meat in your own steaming cavern to brew one, and dare it to gnaw out through your nose."

"It seems they did settle on you rather than me? They scarcely heeded the boy beneath me when they could have brought us down. They could have pinched out my neckstraws at the first leap; the only saving grace seemed that each had just one objective, pursued its course ignoring more easily attained breaches - until they abandoned it all to hound you. Why? Why? Why?"

Each interrogation was prodiced into his ribs.

"I know nothing of the motivations of rats. They have never been absent from the house; but this is the first instance of their taking umbrage to anyone's coming into it." Comparatively mildly bitten, Oarsif considered their company preferable to the present.

"Foot spirit mounds foot fish. You are the key, Oarsif! '"Uothohap glowered through his unleft wounds, '" and I will turn you until the lock yields, or you snap. Now get us to the other bank."

"Scarcely able to nod his head and stipulated that the would-be master did not even realise he had answered his own question. Oarsif struggled with the belching mud for the pole to put the boat to better use than its grubby owner could have found. The river was at mid-spread, the opposite shore a heavy blank of greenery, unaltered. A faint scent of his part - Uothohap sat, mouth in hand, involved with the dwindling village - they reached the far shore, reached the coracle and set up a shelter of sorts. The light of a small fire dance unswervingly that Oarsif's face was bleeding ill at ease. The flies syphoned off his blood in unheeded clouds, but the faintest of the crew of rustlings thronging a riverbank woke him to notice. Did he, too, envision an armada of tree fern bank launched by gruity rodents piloting by the the Dead Star?"

Timi Hor Zer had had a lustful passion for knowledge, and its delicate disfigure he applied as often, and as avidly, as was suited to his needs. But Uothohap had never learned good - and like any knowledgeable and powerful man Hor Zer had never explained - that power was in fact the oil squeezed out of understanding. Impatiently he attempted to extract the essence without gathering the blossom and, only since the scalding rebound of his hot drink attempt to gain the upper hand, had he turned his incunctious energies to such gleaning. Oarsif, watching, suspected that he still harboured attempted doubts about the inextricable unity of knowledge and power but had learned, if not everything, at least care and the assay of pretence.

Despite his stomach's growling Oarsif sank to sleep. Almost the next moment Uothohap rapped him with a fist, and he unrolled slowly, his bones cracking, to find that sky's white corolla turning up over the river. He understood why phlgmatic terrapins in the damp mud had grown shells - converted to rock among stones.

"Take off your mists we stood!"

He blinked, drew it off. Uothohap folded it and packed the coracle off into the filling mists the sun was flushing up from the water.

A broad, red-brown shivering in the morning chill, Oarsif began moving to get warm. Shuttles of sunlight marked the boundary of a parklike zone; an ani's croak grated the fibrous air; bows of metallic green butterflies laced the graceful trunks together; sharp red fruits hung from the canopy like petrified flowers. These teeteree of light and sound in their unfamiliar newness and harmony burst upon him like jewels. Childlike he scampered through the meadow, pouring over individual leaves whose three pigments fermented delicately in deep grasses, the aromatic flag the orris root waved, the dewdrop ribbon of fag's song. Pulling urgently at memories of his forgotten childhood, he was able to recognise the wild waterleaf and orch, fireweed shoots, asparages, and toothworts, stuffing himself with them. That hideous prospect the fiend had sketched more scarily like the toothworts - of his hapless return to his own village - was as meaningless as the mist. A new world of silkiness, the provision of kindly gods whose existence had been withheld from him was waiting for him. Freedom to wander without obligation to go or cease, to take up a thread from among the thousand intricate webs and follow it to his necrity of content.

By mid-afternoon he had woven, as well as his gnarled hands could muster, an osier fish-her of sorts and had roasted several binnee. His stomach appeared, his brain quieted, his tremours vanquished, he settled back in a cocoon of sunlight.

But as the sun began to sink he heard the whispering coracle pumping carefully back across the rising waters, its attendant haze now a cloud of mosquitoes.

Outhohap climbed out and limped painfully to the shelter. Fresh blood smeared ankles, where the previous days' wounds gawked at him still, and up the hem of his muddied zba. His face was motbled but the eyes betrayed nothing. His sighing, gestureless, to the vegetable scraps, the sputter-bled to the vegetable scraps, to the vegetable scraps, but Uothohap dismissed them. Such denial nourished a lean hope that he might be about to undertake the endura. Oarsif retrieved his clothing from the other's hand - crumpled and dusty, but unharmed - and wrapped up against the flies and darkness.

Page 123
As soon as Uothohahp kicked him into waking the next morning, he realised his brief glimpse of paradise had been faked.

"What is the occupation of that creaking contraption in the courtyard?"

"I don’t know how it runs. It countermands the sun,"

"So I deduce. Therefore if it were put out of commission, the ability of certain events to transpire during daylight would be altogether abrogated."

Oarsif considered this a telling philosophical point. "Well, then, get up and go do it!"

Oarsif swallowed stones. Just as they stepped into the boat, Uothohahp stripped off his own mantle. "Put this on and give me yours."

He slumped. "Why don’t you just leave me here and be done with it?"

"Because your blood is more marketable warm than cold and I can’t manage two things at once. You demonstrate once again the wisdom of fate in apportioning to serfdom only whose minds indifferent to all logic and observation. Who was it that the rats chose to the virtual ignoring of myself? Which smell are they sensitised towards? - since rats, like dogs, rely exclusively on the olfactory capacity. This is a temporary means of averting your difficulties. A more permanent is to get at that machine and wreck it while daylight lasts, Remember how they scattered in the light? After that, they’ll be at our mercy.

He heart entangled in his bowels, Oarsif shuddered, heaved mildly and submitted. The fresh blood still oozed from yesterday’s wounds on Uothohahp’s ankles, but if he affected to notice he would earn another reprimand with the cudgel. He did not doubt that he was dispatched to a monstrous death merely to give occupancy of the house back to its rightful owner but doubted he could build another house just to compensate for it. As the morning chill crept, they again put behind them the river’s current of safety.

Except for a handful of mongrels baring cornish-coloured teeth, the village was still inanimate. It was no longer coincidental that no one was in sight. Its destruction was unparalleled. The lands and produce belonged to Tími Hor Zer, and it was much more desirable that his heir should surprise them labouring than lazing and that the spectacle they were offering should draw attention on account of its sheer prodigalness. But his people possessed the harsh learning of experience. Passing through the cluttered hovels Oarsif felt shreds of slatted staves flying at him from every chink. The village was a carapace of bones.

They wound through weeds toward the master’s house; the door was partly open. The rats might then leap from any quarter.

"You sit here and watch the door. Watch also the shadow of this tree. When its top reaches the stone at your feet, walk in at once to the brass wheel and knock. The horn loose and do as much damage as you can to the mechanism with those stones. Do it with expedition and do not fail the appointed time. Do you hear me?"

"And if I am not able to reach it?"

"You have no worries. The entire situation is in my hands. Follow orders as I give them and victory is ours." With this brotherly annexation he stared Oarsif full face; it was as though a thumb pressed each eyeball. He recovered to see Uothohahp walking off through the beewoods, his mantle - Oarsif’s mantle - flapping around his heaving ankles.

He made a numb effort to enjoy the mellifluous sunlight which, he felt, would be the last ever to warm him. When the shadow struck he rose automatically and proceeded to the front door, pushed it wide and padded briskly across the floor. The future was gone; the gawky clanging machine stood athwart that butterfly-empty path like a tombstone. For a moment - seeing no skeleton which might have propped a twisted bow - he wondered if one victim at least might sit here and watch the door. Watch also the shadow of the square block where the steps of his days would end restored his balance.

He had never before approached it closely and did not know who (if indeed anything material) maintained it nor anything of its structure; so he had no particular design in mind beyond clutching it from various angles with the stones dangling in his fists.

The fiercely decaying mat of vines hung lower over the gazed garden: a new abundance of gloom consorted around the catalethic horn. Seeing how formidable indeed the bony helix was, he stood wondering where in the weft of that sturdy craftsmanship he should find his finest avenue but when filaments of spore sprouted up under his face’s skin, bottling his eyes.

Still, when he spun, to find the rats which had crept from the crevices mustered in stations along his fuzziest short ears, throat, wrists, and ankles, they stood as in orderly array, whiskers ticking, and scarlet venom ballooning from their eyes, a sarraband of sucking shadows.

Their restraint refined the watertop torture. Oarsif’s overwrought nerves broke and he bolted stones. Before the first shriek of his blunted life could split his lips, a barrel of laughter coopered him and someone opened the spigot of the night. The day went out.

He was wrapped in a darkness of thick stuff constricted to the volume of his body - and theirs. The rats, undamaged but terrorised to frenzy, bristled into a scinting mane. Over unprotected face, chest, arms, groin, legs, as he rolled, crushed beneath him and rippling in return, freed briefly above and manipulating jaws in random, opportune mutilation, swarming his eye, furrowing his flesh & the carbonado, he and his assassins were rolled into a tight helpless bale in which finally none of them could breathe or struggle further.

He felt their mouths relax, their teeth retract, as his own lungs glazed before bursting into flame. The midnight in which he was buried with the vermin was as red as his eyes. With a bronchial tone of gods. His heart paused, a frozen pendulum; he was caught up in a whirlwind - for the final translation? He hoped it would be quick; his pain was undimmed and every liquid fugal with the running of its quantity.

Then dim light broke above - except it was below - him; the darkness fell away with concussion, his head striking a lattice of bones. The rainbow whorts bubbling in his eyes might have been proof of paradise had it not been for the ember muzzle of brimstone all over his skin. He still could not breathe but into his lungs now poured desert sand but dense white fumes etching their parched walls. He struggled considering why a life blameless of sins or crimes, if for lack of corners - even the opportunity to want them - had to end in an agony of punishment.

He woke no wiser. The smoke, though stubborn in his nose and throat, was slowly dissipating; choking he restored some life to his chest. His wounds had coagulated; all the blood which had met the air lay blauckening on his skin. clothes and flagstones. One of his eyes, tattooed by tooth and claw, would never see sunlight again and had he not long ago been reduced to a clot of impotence would have lamented the loss of that erotic conversion.

Uothohahp, dislodged, stood a little distance off, clumsy wooden cage and heavy black sack tossed aside, the fire of green wood and straw gutting our its smoldering impregnable through the chasm hole in the mud, vines which evidenced the enthusiasm with which he had broken through to conclude his design.

Bringing two crustous brazier-stands was a long skewer on which tour- teen grey rats, alive and writhing, were impaled by the bellies.

Uothohahp was reading calmly from a book, the beak restored to his eyes. Oarsif glanced at the herald said as an excuse. But sight of the square block where the steps of his days would end restored his balance.

"Seizing Oarsif’s collar he pulled him upright and snarled, "Where is his tomb?"

Shaking groggily, Oarsif could not resist the avalanche. He was hurled along on feet still stilled with nails, the thighs that drove him inside Uothohahp’s throat and eyes; somehow he was drawn to the vaults, which Uothohahp scarcely remembered. Hustling down the steps Oarsif had thought never to touch again; they found the torch long since extinguished across the cellar floor. Uothohahp thrust his lamp into the aperture. The smell was too much. Oarsif gave way. But afterward Uothohahp brought his face up to the hole to plumb the crypt lit with its timbrel flame.

The mangled thing inside was coated with rat droppings as was the floor of the crypt and the much-nibbled leather strap. Only a thin crib of carbonised skin over bones and frayed bows of grateful at the joints remained. With a creaking, the whole leaf grated and brought the easy detaillat work; the viscous of features only partly eradicated. Perhaps nothing yet transpired as monstrous as the trace of calm on the vestige of its face.
A convulsive ran over the brainpan and ran up his arm before he could knock it off. On the floor it waited, gumming its mud-drop eyes on him, as he brought his foot down ever more slowly with an inquisitor’s deliberation.

"This tells me much. When did he die?"

Oarfs’s tongue was accustomed now to being jerked by gutstrings from the pitch-glossed eyes.

"As I said, we sealed him." "I didn’t ask when you buried him – I asked when he died."

"We interred at such time as his orders dictated. I could see no breath and he had ceased moving many days. None dared touch him. Who could say he was not dead?"

"A blind mute. Go on."

"We laid him on the stones as he specified, bricked up the vault until only the one was left." Running hands over it, Uothohahp nodded. "Nevertheless you did put it in place – but without mortar."

"Yes." "When was it removed?"

"By me – just before abandoning the house."

"The gleam prodded him on. "And in between?"

"... Ask the rat who served the time."

"What character remarked it?"

"None that I know. It was a gravid female from a wild colony he had trapped only a few moons earlier."

"Where?"

"In the necropolis."

"Ah, indeed. An undescribed but most individual breed... So you sealed into a ventilated tomb a breathing man, however debilitate... interred him alive with the glutony of a dozen rats?"

Oarfs closed his eyes. "Such was his will."

"Brilliant. I underestimated him, of course. Even when I realised he overshadowed me in your brain. At first, I admit, I thought perhaps he had trained a corps of rats, as some do dogs or meercats, to watch over his house, but when on my solitary foray I watched them accost and then – as if schooled – turn over, explore and finally dismiss your mantle, I realised there was more than insidious craft. There was an inherent, perhaps primatogone, insistence, a conscious directive. Yet only the brainless believe that rats sprout out of crevices: worms, yes, but not rats. I thought accident had let them to forge in his tomb."

"Yes, expecting childish murmblings over printed images of those only countable reflexes of a magnetised corpse, I find instead his vengeful intent written, fragmented but still mobile, homicidal, his power, wisdom and emotions intact. So here I have his skull, and upstairs – his brain! Both the script and the reading, which could not be his, are mine!"

That touch which unflinching watched me crush him was a hapless vagrant soured on a mere shred of the same fodder – a morose of hatred, no doubt. But the rats – born of a mother nourished on the accumulated spirit piece by piece – weaned and fattened on the oil tinctured with venom, vindication andואו capacily what ultimate atrocity was to put a finial to his majesty, executed by a concert of scarring fangs? Not that it matters now."

Skull in hand he charged back up the steps, leaving Oarfs to struggle out of the odoriferous pit himself. By the time he reached the top, Uothohahp was apologisting the rats, which lacked comprehension.

"No lack of ingenuity on your part, my lord, I grant, but you have overfused yourself with a vengeance! – to undergo such hideous and unnecessary pain in order to animate your petty spit still further, to pass your inscribed primacy postmortal – for here you find yourself at my mercy which, assuredly, you never should nor could be in your body, even dead."

"Although he kept waving the magic skull before them, he exposed only the tooth-fringed face and kept the braincase concealed by a flap of skin.

"Even now some concatenation of memories might raise the ability to focus your power through those lines if I revealed them; your technique to forces to me before I too read, and reading, understand – and understanding – command, metamorphose and transmute!" He belted gigantic, with fervour, the polydac- tyl shadowshrank from him.

Hopeful of sneaking past him and out of the house for ever, Oarfs was limping carefully around the garden’s sash when Uothohahp saw him and flung him a torch.

"Here, Night settles. Light the flammable and set up an altar."

For a moment his eyes rested freely on Uothohahp’s, which gleamed indifferently. With much searching he was able to find a modicum of gleaming stones, pitch-glossed gums and crests of silver. As the foot, that thing of his master (whose eyes picked him each time he passed the skewered rats) and his contempt for the conjurer’s paraphernalia: he who sat alone, shrouded in shade in converse with lips ofcrete shadow, and moved fire in the sky or tides beneath the earth, had in all his days passed only one piece of advice to the outer world – that those in the bosom of exalted wisdom would be known by their precept: power is production.

And this man had made a fool of death. He could sympathise with the rats - obedient scavengers made by thoughtful kitchens to cleanse the earth of the abomination of decay - whose purpose was to regenerate all things like him purifying leaves of roses. Though their own incisions still smarred in his body, these were nothing more than the grading of one tool upon another. Their stratagem had been as vain as any eye’s extinction.

Uothohahp gave no more orders but Oarfs, with long unaccompanied hands, prepared him for the process. He smeared hieroglyphics over his torso with silver-glace and through the long grovels of gargling languages he struck the somber plates and then bent askew leavings and turns on the floor recalling a series of similar operations each indistinguishable from the other, not one of which had failed to bade some gross rupture of the sun’s sweetness out of the blackness behind time. In the hushed susurrus of the final vocable he automatically raised his head to view the visitation.

Though only one brazier burned, the entire floor split the reflection of red fire. The figures were multiplied as, through his eyes were viewed on raindrops, black particles like elfs flickering in stagnant water circulating through the air. All of this, he knew, was the aura of intent. But the inner earthquake he had never failed to experience when his silent master, sitting immobile and unattended in the dark, made some slight adjustment, the dithen did not rock him. He opened his eyes wide and peered through the wildliness.

Uothohahp lifted the skewer off its stands and passed it through the hovenia’s cackling flame. Sloughed off words he unthreaded the first rat and hit away its head, chewed it steadily, the splintering of its bones picking at the walls. He ate through the body like a meg unserving devoured each rat in turn, bones, hair, teeth and tail. Each, extended, faced the guillotine of his mouth with rigor fascinatus, flexing only when the midspine was severed in one last grasp for positivity.

Bite by bite they joined him, became blood of his blood and flesh of his flesh, until the last was swallowed, and Uothohahp began wofling down the minuscules of Hor Zer’s skull. Oarfs put his head down and folded up his consciousness.

He woke to a thornworm, realised that potency was manifest. The massive creature emerging from stupification as a rogue crocodile rises from the slime had a face Oarfs might have seen before only had he lifted his head in the open some starless night and found it looking down with minute eyes under wrinkles of lightning, smoking with swallowed distance. His ears pounded, the cracking walls bulged.

Oarfs’s skin shifted alive on his body. He meant to squawk “I call your lordship to account – ” but was inaudible to those graven ears. He was alone like a loose on a piece of the hinder universe.

Slowly the face rose to look at him. His eyes dropped first; memory disarmed an antidote. A volcano of will was trembling premonial to an outburst of cosmic crime.

He was lost. The laugh that came battering out of those cyclonic lips flattened him against the wall and swept him upward; stuck like a wall and swept him upward; stuck like a wall and swept him upward; stuck like a wall and swept him upward; nailed by shards of buttressed sound, he hung in helpless vertigo while the punioning laughter rose to incandescent heights, until it rattled back and forth through his head like needles, a strident scream.

It was a scream, the virtue boiled out of it. It stretched like a flabby band from one corner of the nervous walls to another. Oarfs felt himself slipping, clenched his jaw, slummed suddenly to the floor.

Uothohahp’s whole body had become alive with leeching, pinched coils of self-flattened. He writhed and twisted, contorting spine gelatinous, thews knotting beneath his skin in union, pulling themselves apart. With a single spasm of his limbs gnared out both eyeballs, ripped open his mouth from mouth to jaw-joint, while his teeth tore into his wrists. His veins tumesced lumpily; even as the blood spurting his mouth tore at his own tectic calves, his nail, the scarlet spear he wove, blazoned a ragged lemopscis across the floor. Reeling spasmodically to the corner where Oarfs sprawled stricken, the dupliicicide too collapsed, one bleeding hand slipping his servant’s sunken face and shielding it from the pitiless dwindling light.

PAGE 123
The Eater of the Dead

BY GEORGE T. WETZEL

"The face of the great god is both a riddle and the soul of con-burdened Egypt. Were its features, as we see them now, mutilated so by superstitious arabs and gnawed at by Tune, or had it been deliberately carved that way by the ancients, and why?"

"Only after I had looked at it often enough did I penetrate to the hideous truth: for the gnomesomely broken nose was the clue. It was the face of a mummified corpse."

"—Journal of Stephen Vicre"
judgment was understandable as Setekh, the strangest of all the ancient Egyptian gods, had the head of an animal puzzling and undetectable to modern zoologists.

Concentrating only on the most priceless of the smaller items and skipping anything taking up excessive knapsack space, our endeavor for this initial stage was over. We would return later. We began pulling down our tents.

I thought nothing of it when Dago asked two of the Bedouins into the tent to help him with something. Karpis and I were too busy packing the stolen treasures. When he reappeared, alone, and requested the remaining Bedouins to come also, I decided it was unusual - as did one of them who solemnly intoned the repeated mephitic vortices were gone - and I dropped my task and hurried down into the excavation. Halfway within the underground passage, I bumped into Dago and angrily demanded an explanation.

"Dead men tell no tales." He drew his finger across his throat, smiling. "It wasn't necessary! There was another way to handle them." I was angered at his arrogant presumption. "Even after we replace the surface sand, this area will now be too conspicuous by a horde of jackals drawn from miles around by the scent of fresh death. The desert Arabs will notice; then no more private treasure house."

On the way to the sea Dago deliberately kept attempting to disclose the unpleasant details of the four bedouins' deaths. Before I finally had to threaten him to make him shut up, he had got as far as revealing that each man died dissimilarly, boosting as a bully does that to use the same method in each case would have been lacking in professional finesse and imagination. I have seen this morbid "pride" in other Mafia killers in the Roaring 1920s, who also unfailingly talked of each "hit" being novel and inventive.

I got up, dressed and poked around in the deserted downstairs. The smell, even though faint, not only filled the atmosphere, it literally permeated the whole house. Presently Karpis and the tavern keeper were astir in their rooms; the odor began to dissipate with the rising of a sea breeze filtering through the just-opened window doors.

Dago had not yet come down to breakfast, so in view of his fever, we apprehensively went upstairs. In the hallway near his door lingered only a trace of that sickly-sweet, mephitic scent. Within his tightly closed room it was overpowering; and it became increasingly perplexing to me that Karpis and the tavern keeper did not remark about it. But Karpis was staring at our late partner whose eyes were fixed glassily on some unspeakable horror. "He died of the fever," opined Karpis; the tavern keeper nodded assent.

While they dug a grave, I contrived, unsuccessfully, to get into Dago's room - but it was locked now - to examine the dead man's chest and abdomen to nullify a disturbing idea I had.

That same day a millionaire's yacht anchored off the island; Karpis boarded her and exchanged outer plunder for money, without incident. As they steamed off, I pondered on what sort of return voyage they would have with that cargo. For I was thinking of another ship and another cargo years ago, of the strange shipwreck off the Spanish coast and how everything was lost, including Pharaoh Menkure's mummy box which they were carrying.

Karpis and I separated after that. I returned to Europe and he presumably back to that habitation of his on the Bosporus. Some months later I was surprised to receive a large envelope from that area. Inside was a brief note from a local coroner, informing me Karpis had committed suicide and had left a sealed letter with my name and address on it which the coroner had enclosed. I tore open the second envelope and read:-

I never told you the purpose for which I carried away channel clay from that Egyptian burial place. You suspected, rightly so, that I also dug earth from an Argan tomb the night Dago died. I have Dago died, but you never knew I have for years obtained grave earth from centuried sepulchres like Mita in Mexico, Celtic long burrows in Ireland - the list is long.

But I always sculptured my bogus ancient figurines from the very native earth their culture springs from, thus doubt outwriting the so-called art experts.

On returning here to the Bosporus I began modeling a copy of that Setekh image in that tomb and, acting on an aberrant impulse, began mixing with its channel clay other clays and earths from ancient graves all over the world.

The last few nights while I worked on the figure there would come into my mouth a soft whisper as of a zephyr; a whisper that swelled until it spoke like a multitude of dead voices in strange tongues... ghosts.

What does it mean - these haunting voices that flow nightly from the lips of that half-made shape? Their tone is accusatory.

I sit now with a gun for protection - against what I don't know... a judgment is coming... perhaps there is an escape...-

-Karpis

As I have often said I am coarse fibred where the so-called supernatural is concerned. But the slow accumulation of preternatural hints in this whole Egyptian venture reached a climax with Karpis' letter (which I reluctantly refrain from commenting upon) and caused such a reaction that I sought to hide in pursuits and thoughts of dull mediocrity and grey prosaicness, anything sternly imaginative or drearily humdrum. But it was no use.

In the beginning my nightmares were not of visions but of odors and foetors. Nightly I would sink into dreamless sleep but with a conscious awareness of a musty, ancient dust and hot dung; sometimes the nightmare was of a different odor - the putrescent stench of a channel house.

Imperceptibly, these nightmares were replaced by dreams of many dim-lit places and a compulsion to crawl worm-like ever upward, companied by a shadowy presence which instructed me in certain awesome deeds.

While some of these dreams were agonizingly recurrent, there were others that were episodic, mercifully never repeated. Like the one of the horror that found my dream-mind mirroring than I found it. Only a fragment comes to memory, of some greysly underground room with a gothic ribvault ceiling. In a wall niche squatted a stone, dwarf simulacrum, the wings on its shoulders hunched around and folded to conceal its head and face, as if in slumber. At some slight sound 1 made, its stony wings trembled into life, exposing a face not to be described. It flew off into the gloom uttering a weird, squeakery cry.

Disturbed as I was by these dreams, there was one worse matter. I began to find in the mornings, occasionally, dried mud upon my bedclothes and my pajamas and dirt under my fingernails. The suspicion I was sleepwalking during these nightmares insinuated itself. And some time that appalling terminal revelation, when dreaming of a subterranean range, I awoke in the dawn - not in my bed but crouching upward from a tunnelled grave.

Some blind members or ancient curse (it matters little which any more) has visited a terrible poetic justice or judgment upon me. These many years before I had been a modern ghoul, robbing graves for jewelry or medical specimens. A ghoul in the ancient sense I had become. Now: a necrophagous, an Eater of the Dead, and my mentor - Ammit, scavenger of Nilotic catacombs.
I would never have become a specialist in oriental languages (and thus
never had the strange experience to be related) if it had not been for certain
family heirlooms - souvenirs of my dad’s navy service in the China Seas
in 1905. These souvenirs up to twenty years ago reposed on the family
mantlepiece, where even as a small boy I never tired of minutely scrutinizing
them and wondering what stories were behind them.

On opposite sides of the mantel stood the two brown, age-stained vases,
each marked with intricate hollow bamboo-tridge Chinese figures
standing within a delicately carved, columned portico. My dad called
each a representation of the “Goddess of Evil” and a superstitious older
brother atoned, later, having received them as a legacy, declared them “bad
luck and passed them to me.

Sitting somewhere near one of the vases was a small Buddha of
tarnished brass which my dad often said would have cost him his life if a
Chinaman saw it. He told me story of a Buddhist temple he had
visited after climbing an enormous rock cut staircase; and I suspect now he had
stolen the idol from there. The third item was a blackened, brass Chinese pipe
with a large detachable mouth piece (for the owner) and two smaller ones (for
guests). It always reeked faintly of an old odor that in retrospect I feel was
due to opium. And one more was a fairly bright brassy bowl with Chinese
engravings on the outside circumference which served to hold dad’s pipe or
tobacco ashes.

All these objects now sit atop my bookcase, having been passed on to
me. But there is one more which I acquired myself recently: an album with
Tibetan-Sanskrit writing on it, which I keep locked away and don’t only keep
in the dark of the moon.

I was sitting one summer evening in my little study in Calcutta,
contemplating the entrance to these spaces, wrestling with a philosophic
problem, when there came a soft tapping on the glass of the opened balcony
door. As I glanced up a burr-rose-garbed man came in and, fearing a bandit, I
reached for the door for a weapon.

“May I see you? I have something to show you.” The voice
was apologetic and familiar, but the little of the face visible was that of a
stranger, an incredibly aged man, I recognized the voice as belonging to a vagabond, named Haldane, a
European whom I first saw about a year ago, who surprised me by his affecting
the garb of a nomadic Kirghiz: wearing a pointed cap bordered with lambkin,
looking sick despite the heat of the day and box. He made a precarious
living by wandering in the short summer months across the deserts and stops of
Central Asia looking for old Mongolian manuscripts in the ruins of
monasteries, or buying them from livestock breeders or former Buddhist
monks, for his re-sale to bibliophiles and scholars (like myself). Always he
required I translate some portion of what he offered for sale to see if I gave him
a fair price of its worth. This is what I thought his intentions were now.

As he entered, he hastily drew the curtain, arguing that it would block
circulation of the sultry atmosphere.

Again he apologized “I know. But I have an aversion to moonlight
which will soon be shining through this window.”

The dark shade of the lamp threw a cone of light upon the desk, leaving
the rest of the study in shadow. The visitor withdrew into this concealing
darkness and removed from around his neck what appeared to be a solid
coin with a golden chain running through a square hole in its center. I saw
a second time the shocking physical change in this man as a withered arm came
into the light with the coin. Was it leprosy or the premature aging from opium
addiction?

As the object was thrust into my palm I experienced a light but
unpleasant tingling as of an electric current flowing from it I winced and
dropped it hurriedly upon the desk. At the same time I noted a terrific pull of
my watch towards it, indicating it was of some paramagnetic alloy.

Despite the magnifying glass the carving on the coin seemed to shift in
focus as if in some infinitesimal motion. The brief words were in Tibetan-
Sanskrit. Because of the odd blurring, I did not make a complete translation, just
the sense: the amulet - for its inscription now proved it was not a coin
- reportedly drew some mystic influence from moonlight which it passed on to
the wearer; there was a warning restriction on when not to wear it - during the
time of the full and waning moon - and something else indecipherable. I laid it
down until my eyes might recover from the curious fatigue gazing at it had
induced.

“What does it say?”

“It would suggest that in Central Asia moon worship instead of fire
worship was the Mongol’s religion. Where did you get it?”

“The lost tomb of Genghis Khan.”

I was startled and unbelieving. “If I know no other name in Uighur-Mongolian, I do know that
every one - you have identified it for me on a number of manuscripts sold you I
was resting at a lamaist monastery when a caravanserain at dawn to wait as
do all Gobi travelers for the fiery sun to set before continuing. Among them
was Simet, the Chinghiz Mohommedan.

“At first his manner held that subtle arrogance most of his race have for
Occidentals: his face a typical, emotionless oriental mask, in which a nuance of
rancid breath, frightfully dry, suffocated his air. I turned him off guard with
a lighthearted insinuation, his aloofness vanished, to be replaced by another mask: an inscrutable smile and a
talkative sociability.

“I had just rolled up my sleeves to wash the desert dust from my face
and arms, exposing my tattooed right forearm.”

Haldane paused, and, rolling up the right sleeve of his burnoose,
displayed that terrible diagram of the morning of Bedouin black cat, skull
cross-bones and the numeral thirteen, all interwined in an arabesque
fashion; bordering it was an ugly knife wound, recently healed. Then
downing his sleeve, Haldane resumed his story.

He muttered luttishly and toodled and traced out with his forefinger
my tattoo. Then realizing his breach of etiquette, he bowed and meekly
bowed my pardon, and excusing himself profusely asked me to wait, as he
would be right back to show me something.

“From the bottom of a saddle bag he withdrew a number of odd
and ends, including a meat cleaver and a parcel wrapped within a piece of
soiled yellow paper. Unrappapring it, I saw the tops of the creation leather
covers of what he called his ‘picture book’, which he insisted on showing me.
The extremely thin pages were water-stained, a few charred and all
dirt-encrusted, and had the most peculiar feel to their texture. Red and blue were
the two colors used. The line was at times arcadian, at other times
delicately naturalistic (animals, birds, etc.), and some were obscurely reminiscent of a carnival. With
a shock of revulsion I realized was looking at pieces of tattooed human skin.

“He seemed interested in my affairs, asking me innumerable questions
and cautioning me not to continue to be a solitary traveler - with a broad hint
I accept him as a temporary companion for mutual protection. When I told him
that I might leave there in any direction on my search, he gave that inscrutable
smile and said there were possibilities in some ruins half a night’s journey away.
When I asked him for directions, he stated it would be impossible for me
to find us the way wound through an ancient gully with many branches, only one
leading to the ruins, the others meandering enough to lose the uninitiated. But
as a favor in return for my pardoning his recent breach of etiquette, he insisted
on guiding me there.”

“At sunset we left the monastery, riding across a chill, windy desert.
Shortly afterwards we entered the gully and found it as circuits and
confusing as he described, so that I was glad I had not tried it alone. From
time to time we plodded and stopped, for I suggested signs: finally, after
he pointed a passage out and we climbed up where we had a clear view of the
night sky, and after orienting himself by some stary configuration, he lead the
way. ‘Karakhota’, he smiled, pointing ahead.

“Looking up past the city is silhouette nebulous, for the moon had
ten rose; but at it closer its roofs shone pale with the reflected phosphorescent
fire of the Milky Way overhead; its graceful minarets and domes, filigreed mosques and curved-roof pagodas resembling a piece
of antique, Persian Chinese ivory inlay, somberly serene under the stars; and
I could not understand that Chinese Mohommedan had called so pictur-
esque a ruin as ‘Karakhota’.”

“Our horses became unmanageable, whining and shivering with fear
the closer we got; so that finally near a ruined building we tethered them
and finished our approach on foot. Sing Lee slippèd the meat cleaver into his
belt, and broadly grinning explained, ‘Mebbe louder there’.

“There were now unseen but familiar soft stirrings in the driftings
around us, that the lizards, insects and other desert life make when they awake at
nightfall; but these stirrings stopped at our approach and resumed after we passed.

“I browsed among the Islamic architecture which was of red sandstone
and beautiful veined marble, some outer walls being inlaid with colored stones
in Arabic letter patterns, and scanned the Chinese architecture with its
ubiquitous dragon motif. Despite these evidences of beauty there was a subtle
unwholesome feeling; it was a combination of the insolence that I resolved
irrationally not to view in daylight whatever the merciful night now hid. And
because of this, I decided to make a hurried search for loot, to be able to leave
down.

“In the center of that crumbling city, I found a mausoleum in the
Chinese pugoda style, its scaled portal bearing unexplainable scratch marks.
Over the lintel were inscriptions in Arabic, Chinese and Uighur-Mongolian, none of
which I could read, yet they gave me the name ‘Genghis Khan’. Had I stumbled by accident across his lost and eulogous tomb?”

“You know the story of his death and how as the funeral procession
moved northward to the Onon River, the escort slaughtered every living thing
countered, whether man or beast, bird or reptile, almost as if they desired
that no word of their line of march should be repeated; rather than conceal
their passage, this slaughter served to publicize it for hundreds of years.

“And because of this there were some who said the Onon River burial
place was but a final stratagem and wish of the Khan’s, so that even in death,
he could outwit his enemies who might wish to despoil his grave and commit
indignity upon his corpse. While I believe this, I do not think it preceded on its
way, another secretly carried his corpse deep into the Gobi desert.

“Some had mistakenly since looked for it in the Ords region in the
great bend of the Hwang Ho. But here it was in Karakhota, in an obscure
corner of the Gobi.”

“In nervous haste I scooped away with my hands the sand blocking
the lower part of the panel, and, using the cudgels I always carry for protection,
fought off the protectors excitedly. By now I had forgotten about my companion,
so intense were my emotions, and was never aware for some time of his
presence or absence.”

“The mausoleum was a shadowy, brooding place, completely bare,
except for a stone sarcophagus in the center of the floor and directly under
the domed roof through whose windows penetrated the ghostly light of the
Milky Way, the same picturesque view reminiscent of southern policy saravars, no
rich Munch tapestry, no hand-carved Persian chasenren, no colorful Azerbajian
icon, nothing, not even any of the Khan’s banners and battle-standards about
which the old chronicles related unbelievable hriumphic sacrifices.
"I strained and pushed the sarcophagus lid half-way off to see a mezzanine space, within which lay a glistening skeleton amid a litter of sand - the skull encrusted with sand upon it like a bonny fingernail."

"As I reached for the trinket, I froze. In life the Khan had been not just a cruel man but an evil man as well. Around many a nomad campfire in Central Asia there still were whispers of a dark pilgrim he made to the forbidden plateau in mountainous Tibet, of his aberrant behaviour during the time of a full moon, and of his dabbling in astrology's darker side."

"Anyhow at my superstitious lapse I roughly shook the golden chain of the amulet, the rattling column and skull of the Khan, then retrieved the jeweled scimitar."

"To our ears there came a renewed stirring in remote sandy streets, as of a multitude of wigwaming, slithering forms. In panic Sing Lee lapped into a Chinese dialect mostly unknown to me, so that all I could understand was that our noisy blunderings had irritated some inhabitants in the ruins which I thought I had somehow caused, as a vast snake does when it assumes a pantomime than words that we should climb to the safety of the roofs, where I suppose we would wait for the false dawn which would send the sand vipers scurrying back to their lairs ahead of the fiery sun. So up we went."

"Against the yellowish orb of the just-rising full moon was the silhouette of minarets and domes, mosques and pagodas, the mingled architecture of Islam and China - the cultural plunder of the Khan's 'Golden Horde'. A moving blob of darkness murred the sky-line, a distortion as if caused by temperature inversion. But there came another and another until the city's streets became insubstantial from this flux of movement."

"Straining my eyes I was aghast to see crawling and creeping and tumbling over the majolica-tiled roofs towards us a horde of gaunt, shrunken, wasted figures, attired in a variety of rags for garments and canon togs whose styles implied the wearers once were Turks, Tartars, Uighurs, Uzbeks, Mongols."

"They came without the howling or grunting of a predatory horde; whether man or animal, always make hunting the hunted; they came in utter silence. But it was their expressionless, obscenely yellowish Mongolian features and dull, jaundiced yellow eyes that caused me to shiver, for their ghastly pugmentation proclaimed them to be the grisly 'Golden Horde' that inhabited the caves and ruins of nocturnal Gobi, the necrophagous blight of the great stone desert whom I thought a myth. What I had taken for the stirrings of sand vipers had been the obscure gathering of these loathsome things for a 'feast'!"

"Muckah!" cursed the Chinaman, pointing.

"Over the cornice of our roof came first one hand, then the other, preparatory to hoisting their owner up. It was the long, curved, yellow fingernails that bent a suffusion down my spine."

"I kicked off one with the Khan's scimitar but no blood or ichor flowed in revulsion. I dropped the blade and fled. Once in our fretted dash across those ratted roofs, I slipped and lost my balance on the polished tiles and would have fallen into the street below, but the Chinaman grabbed me at a risk of falling with me - which should have made me wonder then."

"In fact he exercised the greatest solicitude for my welfare, even to the point of aiding me to mount, though his own life was equally in danger, and effusively rode behind me to act as a rearguard. Why one was needed where large goggly horrors in the rear were concerned, I don't know, for our horses proved many miles before he shouted to me to slow down.

"We rode at a trot, Sing Lee immersed in enigmatical silence and I nodding exhaustively from the strain. I must have fallen asleep with my eyes open because the borderline between droopy consciousness and grandiose dreams merged into one another imperceptibly. In my dreams I was lightened by an abnormally hyperacuity of all my senses and terrified that it masked some neurasthenic affliction. Following it came a tremendous increase in my powers of thought and logic and concentration as if my brain capacity had expanded a thousand-fold; questions that once vexed me were now effortless knowledge, encyclopedic vistas crossed my mental eye."

"I remember how during this mental peak my thought wandered to, among other things, the historical controversy of why Genghis Khan was so invincible. And in a flash I had the answer, simplicity itself, tactical mobility - the 'unarmed' Mongol Bowman versus the superstitious European Bowman. I suspected the amulet then, instinctively suspected it had something to do with Genghis Khan's military genius, and that it would also influence any possessor to heights of mental brilliance."

"Something, either another dream or extra-sensory perception, occurred now and I was in the Chinaman's mind and saw him watching me curiously and knew he was not a dilettante of the grotesque so much as he was a grim sort of collector! I awoke in a nightmare sweat."

"And under that wanng moon there came other phenomenal ideas but now in my conscious mind. I toyed with trivia like why the Chinese sometimes call the desert of Han-lai (the 'dry sea'), speculating alternately because of a rapid memory of a paleozoic inland sea and sometimes ascribing it to the wave-like furrows in the dunes made by the wind. And I caught myself gazing at the stippled sand patterns with the same kind of vacant fascination that an opium eater finds in staring narcotized at ordinary objects. Then for a while I sank into a dreamless sleep."

"I was aroused by a painful sensation as of cold fire, an icy consuming flame in my flesh where the moonlight bathed it; the skin tissue looked deteriorated. That fantastic insight I seemed cursed with seared from memory all lines written by the late Mr. John Drummond of Haesthagen's, all beneath the moon decays... and I shuddered, for I saw my body literally wasting away in magical sympathy with the wasting moon. There was a roaring of blood in my ears and this time I plunged into a final oblivion, watched by the shadows like Sing Lee."

"When I returned to my senses it was in the dark of the moon. A sympathetic Moslem was hasting my head with a wet cloth. At my feet Sing Lee lay dead. The Moslem had found us locked in a death struggle, one of my hands around the Chinaman's throat, the other gripping the one clutching the mcleaver. To the Moslem it looked like a case of robber and victim; I never told him what I thought."

Haldane's story seemed to me to be compounded of fantasy and paranoia. I simply blurted it out. "You certainly don't believe moonlight has a supernatural effect on you?"

"I do not. I am a materialist. What others call supernatural, to me is mechanistic. When the moon is full, there are some who go mad from its rays - have not electrophysiologists measured a coincidence: the heightened brain-waves of asylum inmates with the moon's increase? It is often said the line between genius and madness is hair-thin. If the moon brings lucidity, might it also bring genius? Yet whenever the moon brings, I fear it!"

He sat meditating on his own words for some minutes. Then with quiet finality, he said as he got up, "I must destroy that amulet - throw it into the Ganges!"

And he had picked up the amulet before I could reach it. I tried to bar his way but with the strength of madness he brushed me aside and stumbled fully into the moon's greenish beams as he lunged against the balcony door. He visibly aged decades in seconds: the bony hand that had pushed me aside was now a skeletal claw; his face the color of alpine slime; the skin around the teeth shrunken to a grin of death, and what was left of the desiccated horror collapsed under a wrinkled garment. Beyond the skeletal fingers lay the amulet, reflecting the moonlight. And echoing nightmarishly in my mind was the poetic fragment from Drummond, like some hideous epitaph.

"... all beneath the moon decays..."
I was returning by train from eight months' long field work among the Tsimshian Indians of northwest California. Extended fellowships from several foundations had allowed me to continue my anthropological studies of the religious norms of the Tsimshian. Almost all of my graduate students at the University of California at San Diego where I was a professor in anthropology and folklore.

Dr. Forrest: Stay in Porterville. Bringing important information for you personally. Details later.

- Linda Lightfoot

It was certainly a strange request. Linda was one of my erstwhile students and ardently supported my theories concerning migration of folk-belief. My present concern was for the exchange between the advanced Altkapasanspeaking peoples of upper California and their primitive tribes as the Yamnoshans of the Northwest. I was an Indian and had grown up on the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation, very near to my mountain home. Ever since she had come to the University, she had been particularly evasive about her tribal origin. I had assumed she was a Jicarilla Apache, since she lived with a Jicarilla tribe while on the reservation.

I was in no particular hurry to get home. As a matter of fact, a little rest would probably have been welcome at that particular time. Months of compiling notes and transcribing tapes in the heat of the summer didn't look very favorable after spending eight months with the Tsimshians, following them in their seasonal, shifting search for food and game. When I left my gear in my room in Porterville and went into the nearby reservation to visit the Tule River Indians, a day or so doing what I like best could hardly be considered work, so I spent a relaxing day on the reservation, discussing my theories with the resident ethnographer.

When I returned late that night I found Linda waiting in my room. How she managed to wheelie the key out of the young porter wasn't difficult to understand. She had all the wits of the American Indian and all the enthusiasm of someone just beginning a great adventure. When I first received her telegram I had considered her request strange because she was rather interested in field work. It wasn't hard to divine why, since she had spent most of her life on a reservation. But the details she had promised awaited me, and I had hardly walked in the door before I received them.

"Hello, Linda. How's the University treating you?" I took off my jacket as brushed dust off my pants before settling down in a chair across the room.

"I'm really glad you got my message, Dr. Forrest. I know I wasn't too specific but I was in a rush collecting equipment, and I didn't want you going home before I had a chance to tell you what I found out."

By now Linda was nervously bouncing her legs on the bed, and I couldn't help but look on with a trace of amusement. She had never been shy, but she had put what she called her "equipment" in a corner of the room and was wearing her oldest levis and a work shirt. Still, I had never seen Linda so nervous or excited. I decided to listen respectfully until her "important" information emerged out of her excited thoughts.

For the next hour I listened first with respect, then with curiosity, and finally with utter amazement at the series of events that followed. I had never known of such a thing before, until I read through some of Professor Kraeger's unfinished compilations of the tribal dialects of exterminated California tribes. And I found the page that puzzled me. In the Chiricahua language-related dialects of ancient tribes of California, I found the word listed in the final pages of Kraeger's ANCESTRAL DIALECTS.

Strangely, I was able to understand the words,

I remembered that the manuscript Professor Kraeger had been researching immediately before he died. We had retained it in the Library in case the work was ever adopted by another ethnographer, but most of my colleagues considered the work, in present form, almost worthless. We had not known that it was an Indian who had started the work, but his公开发表ed notes were as intriguing to me as she was to me.

"No, that's just it! It is the name of a band, a name that was supposedly exterminated by 1800 in smallpox and measles epidemics. But the name doesn't mean 'the people', it means 'the fool's blood'."

Never had a tribe or band named themselves so peculiarly. Names other than "the people" or "we, the chosen ones" were not common, but they existed. None to my knowledge, however, was so ambiguous, so elusive and curious.

"You know, Linda, that name is awfully reminiscent of several other tribal names - not to speak of the hundreds of band names we have never recorded. Maybe you know Kuksu, Kuskokwim, Kuksu, or even Kloua. They all sound practically alike to the untrained ear.

Linda was off the bed and pacing. "You really think I have an untrained ear? You must have been sleeping, because I've been listening to that name ever since I had studied anthropology continuously for almost five years. No! I think Kraeger was right. And I think, judging from those totemic ceremonies, every one of them has spoken to her relations for several tribes, that this tribe still exists. And I think Kraeger has shown me where to find it."

Her dark eyes flashed at me as she stopped at the tiny window and looked out. I had never seen her so triumphant or so dedicated toward a single project. She had always been a good student, and a friend as well. However, she had been secretive toward me as well as her classmates at times. I often suspected it had something to do with her birth. One of my colleagues had gone so far as to suggest that she was no Apache at all, that the absence of high cheekbones and her height suggested that she was almost completely white. I disagreed but had thought about it more often than I like to admit. She had dark eyes, a straight, attractive nose and very fair hair, but she had never shown me Agua Caliente as much as possible. When one of our research fellows wanted to do field work among the Jicarillas, she would answer none of his questions and he was finally forced to do the assignment without her assistance.

She shook her hair back and the moon lit up her eye as I studied her profile. I made the sudden decision to help her with whatever she was after. Perhaps she would draw out of her shell, and this would finally make her happy. But I knew if I offered to aid her too quickly she would be suspicious of my motives. She didn't want anyone exploiting her for her knowledge of Indian life; she wanted to make her own contribution to anthropology.

Matter-of-factly, I said, "O.K., where do you think this 'lost tribe' is?"

She jumped back onto the bed, folding her legs under her. A secret gleam appeared in her eyes, but Kraeger had the co-ordinates marked: 39 degrees north, 121 degrees west.

"Of course, that's just approximate," she hastened to add as I forced myself to look doubtful. "But I think they must have lived on the Feather River. My theory is that they were either cut off by some natural disaster, such as a flood, or they moved off to a tributary which is dry at its source but somehow still alive at the point of the Indians' camp."
Had I admitted that her theory was an impressive one. I had never been in the Feather River area and those coordinates included an awful lot of land, but a systematic search around the uninhabited Feather River area could turn up some surprising discoveries.

"All right, Linda, I'll go along with you. What do you want me to do?"

At that the gloom turned to a look of open happiness. "Well, I know you have to be back to compile your work and then to teach again. But can you authorize this trip? I'm taking as reasonable for my graduate work? Then I can up out of school without worrying about it. And - well, I know this is an awful lot to ask, Dr. Forrest - but can you give me lessons on something, beyond what I've learned in class, about actual field work? Give me some hints as to how to do it?"

"I'll do it on one condition. You have to promise to write me every week and tell me how you're doing. I'd be in pretty hot water if I let you wander out in the desert by yourself. In fact, the only reason I'm considering it is that you've been around Indians all your life - and because I'm going to make sure you don't make the trip alone."

Linda quickly agreed to my condition and we made plans to begin early the next morning.

The first thing I did was to go over her gear with her. I threw away most of the canned goods she had brought and gave her dehydrated food from my own surplus equipment. I gave her a pack frame and substituted a sleeping bag for her blankets. I stored most of her underwear and a lot of her clothes in my bags for her to pick up when she returned. I gave her propane cartridges with a lamp. And I gave her a gun.

For the next two days we intemittently discussed the realities of field work. I reviewed her working knowledge of Navaho, which wasn't very great. I hoped that would be compensated for by her knowledge of Apache tongues. We also discussed her theory. We scouted minute maps of the region she planned to enter and I gave her my suggestions. Finally, I wired ahead to Chico, near the Feather River, and arranged for an Indian guide to help her.

Four days after I had received her wire I had both stood her on the railroad platform waiting for trains traveling in opposite directions. Mine would carry me through to San Diego; hers stopped at Chico. If Linda was one thing, it was insatiable. Up she was the last minute before I heard her board was called off those in dialectical Navaho. She wouldn't take any money from me. I knew, but also knew even if she did stumble upon the "lost tribe" she would need no money for traveling than she had. I gave it to her the only way she'd take it.

"You know, Linda, most students who do field work get stipends or scholarships for semesters off," I said as off-handly as possible as she settled herself in the second-class car.

This day, the trip was to begin, she was cheerful. "I know, but usually give a little more notice, don't they?" she laughed.

"Well, this is a special case. I'm going to give you some money - pardon when you some money - and here's my address. Don't forget your promise," felt I left.

She watched me from the window of the coach until the train was far at sight across the flat, brown earth. I turned around and picked up my pack and headed for the hotel. I had lied to her: my train didn't leave until tomorrow.

II

True to form, Linda's first letter came about twelve days after I had turned home. It was very enthusiastic and helped greatly in allaying whatever latent fears I had felt about the venture.

April 26

Dear Dr. Forrest,

I certainly hope that this reaches you when it's required to. My guide, Sam, and I are resting tonight on the north bank of the Feather. I want to thank you for that equipment! If I had taken those cans of food I would never have even gotten this far from Chico. I guess you know Sam is part Cherokee. He's helped me a lot (including carrying this letter); we've had fresh meat brought down by his rifle almost every night. I've had no occasion to use the gun you gave me. Doctor, but there are cougars in the area and I'm glad I have it. especially when Sam is away from camp at night.

I've had no convincing evidence of the Tsak-iute being near, but Sam managed to get me into a nearby Mohave matrilineal band's camp, and I spoke pidgin Navaho with them, after following the traditional period of silence you advised me on. One old woman rambled on about a tribe of "toret-eating" (that's the only way I could translate the word) Indians who had recently come out of the hills; before I could adequately question her she was hustled away. The headwoman of the band said she was insane in old age, but I'm not so sure.

Tomorrow we continue upstream; we may cross the Feather to the northern side and look for signs of life. I'll report from there.

Peace,

Linda

Her letters continued to come about once a week, still enthusiastic, but with little news to report. I thought the time out in the country would be good for her in any case, and I knew Sam to be a good guide. Somehow he managed to get Linda's letters to me, no matter how far into the country they had traveled. As often as not, they were close to a cabin, or a ranch or someone who had contact with the outside. Then June 1st I received a hastily-scratched letter.

May 19

Dear Dr. Forrest,

I don't have much time to talk to you this time - much through I enjoy it. It's good to "talk" to someone besides Sam these days.

I think, we've found it! Sam picked up fresh spoors of a small tribe of Indians. I can tell by their tracks. The tracks headed upstream, but through the middle of the fork. We had avoided it, thinking the most arid area would harbuer the Tsak-iute. We're going up the fork now.

Till later,

Linda

I didn't hear a word for three weeks after that. To tell the truth, I was very busily ensconced in the correlation of my field work with that of the European aboriginal expert Professor Evans. My data on the Tsamishan was not important only in itself, but the implications of basic pursuits of religion and ritual throughout the world pointed to one primal model. It was my primary task to track down that model and its geographic origin, if any. But Linda's letters usually took my mind off such serious matters. I like to think she was experiencing some adventure in her first field work, particularly since it was among peoples and terrain she knew and liked.

Her letter of the 25th greatly amused me in the most serious considerations of man's origins and ancestors that I ever dared to imagine. No longer could I take her work lightly; compared to my own work, what she had found and was finding could have upset the entire field of science, had I allowed anyone else to see the letters. To this day I am glad I have kept them concealed.

June 25

Dear Dr. Forrest,

You won't believe it, but we've done it! We've contacted the Tsak-iute! We traveled until we lost the spoors, then continued upriver until the river gave out. Even Sam hadn't seen the country before. We traveled for weeks in the dusky bed of the river, noting occasional wet spots in the sand. We dug into several and came up with dirty but drinkable water twice. We crossed many banks as they narrowed and occasionally came across old footprints. We were low on water, digging water-tours when we could find them and crouching on them to conserve water.

Nine days ago I went ahead as Sam filled the waterbag from a hole we scooped up. I crossed the southern fork, passed through a black ravine the sun couldn't touch because of its precipitous sides, and stumbled into a desert arroyo. In front of me, not three hundred yards away, stood a village of mud hut- entirely empty. I ran forward, shouting for Sam, thinking he was close, but before I could reach the huts the arroyo came alive with people - men, women, a few children. There were perhaps forty naked Indians in all. Their appearance shocked me. If they were indeed Indians, I guessed at first, none of them could be full-bloods. They were tall, much unlike the desert Yumans who occupied almost identical terrain. Their cheek-bones were not high. Their eyes were black, as were their heads of hair. The hair rose on my head as I took them in; they seemed completely unsurprised by my entrance. And yet, Doctor, I'm sure they weren't trailling us. Sam would have guessed it. I walked forward slowly, speaking "Tsa-kiute" to the man who appeared to be the leader. I came face-to-face with him; he said nothing. After a moment he stepped aside, and an old woman came forward. She repeated "Tsak-iute," pointing to herself and her people. And then I collapsed from lack of water and excitement.

I must have been delirious for two days - don't worry, Doctor. I managed to get back to Sam found us a few hours later. Since Sam has been here, he has been very incooperative. He hardly speaks to me now. He sits in the hut we gave, clutching his rifle. He positively refuses to help with my work! I'm afraid he will scare these Indians from answering my questions. He may have done so with the men. None of them will talk to me. I took pidgin Navaho dialect and a little pidgin Chiricahua with the women.

These indians are nearer the starvation line than even the desert Yumans. They never complain of hunger or thirst, but they stolidly grub after all manner of insects and snakes. I've offered them some of my food, but the women refuse it smiling, saying it will "poison" them.

If I didn't know I could find them again, I'd send for you right away. But when my work is done - for this summer - maybe we can return together and do more work.
The women are calling me - today I am entitled to visit their "cave of ritual" - a half-underground (kiva-like) structure dug into the dark ravine's side. Only women are allowed in. I've tried to get a look inside since I came here.

Sam will get this letter out somehow. He only stays because of me, I know. I'll try to convince him to leave. The people are, after all, entirely harmless. They're so concerned with food-gathering they could hardly be dangerous.

I'll write as soon as I can. I've asked the women about their name, Tsa-kiute, but they only smile.

Linda

I didn't know then - as I sat reading her letter - what staggering implications Linda's find would have for me and - perhaps - for all mankind. I did know that I didn't like her tone or Sam's peculiar behavior. It was as though she had been somehow charmed by the women she found. And while I knew that Sam would not leave her, I wondered at what went on when Sam wandered out of the bush to send Linda's letters on. How they were transported, I will never know. I could never find anyone to whom Sam gave Linda's letters.

I constantly thought of chartering a plane and flying to Chico in an attempt to find Linda. I had the foreboding feeling that all was not as it should have been. An anthropological find of this magnitude should have buoyed my spirits; instead, Linda's description of peculiar events kept me on edge.

Her next letter came in July.

July 2

Dear Dr. Forrest,

My findings have been so marvelous but confusing. You would not believe what I have seen had you been here yourself. I cannot reveal all that I have seen or heard. The unknown elders say it is forbidden. The cave of ritual contains the totems, totems such as have never been described in anthropology before. The Tsa-kiute propitiate a half-sheep, half-woman totem. And it's nothing like the sheep totem of the White Mountain Apache. It is the first instance I've heard of a totem being invisible. The totems are huge: the central figure is almost six feet tall and intricately carved out of some chalky substance I have yet to identify. The smaller totems are carved in absolute detail, and they all differ in some small way. It is as though each one is characteristic of a unique entity. The women have told me of their yearly rites; they will commence in a little less than a month, if the correlation between their lunar calendar and our solar calendar is correct. Not only have they allowed me to observe the rites, but to take place as well! The Tsa-kiute are absolutely unique and -

They're coming for me to begin the initiatory rites.

LL

I was repulsed and struck with awe at the same time. A band of Indians who propitiated a half-human totem was unthinkable! It raised terrible doubts in my mind. I remembered some of the books I had read of "cults," not worshiped such creatures. The Michelle's SATANISM AND WITCHCRAFT filled me with horror. Furthermore, Linda was not acting herself at all. Her fingers wrote her words with the passion of one who has been swept up in a powerful and deadly fascination, with the practices and rites. Her mind clouded her sensations in educated language, but I knew she had to be out of there quickly or be entirely swept away by the Tsa-kiute's ceremonies.

I arranged for a charter flight to Chico and telephoned ahead for maps and camping equipment. I hurried through my final essay for the University's Ethnological Services Library and was ready to leave within four days. That was when I received Linda's last letter.

July 5

Dr. Forrest,

I haven't much time now before the rites of increase. I've learned that the women plan on bringing the totem and the woman into unity. The women have told me that the Tsa-kiute totem is the primal totem of all men, that it exists in seclusion in all the remote areas of the world. This totem, Doctor, is the key to Man's origin! The annual rite will be performed early and I must be ready. Wish me luck in the beginning of life is about to be dramatized for my eyes, and my eyes only. I participate in the rites -

The letter was cut off. Linda had neither finished her sentence nor signed it, even with so little as her initials. What she spoke of made me deadly afraid. The rites of increase are rare - they exist among the Australian aborigines - and are designed to instill the band's fertility. Once a year, the band eats the flesh of their own totem!

A day later I was in Chico. I set out toward the middle fork of the Feather River without a guide and with little equipment. I had a gun, gasoline lamp (propene being unavailable in Chico), sleeping bag, medicines, and provisions for a week. No one knew I had to be lucky but my success depended upon luck from the outset.

I traveled nights as much as I could. The river dried up and I found the tiny spring on an abandoned road near a woodpile or a clump of water-rooks. As I searched in the dark and in the blazing sun, I tried to control my thoughts. My imagination ran wild in speculation and in dread knowledge of terrible primal practices, but the horrors I conjured up were pale compared to what I found. I knew, however, that I remembered what Linda had said: that the Tsa-kiute totem ... exists in seclusion in all the remote areas of the world. Only then did I curse Man himself and all his hideous sciences; only then did the implications of what I found in that hidden arroyo get through to me. Only later was I sane enough to burn my books and notes and resign from the University, forever distracting myself, forever staring at the men and women around me with revulsion, lest some characteristic from our communal past rear up its horrible head.

For on the morning of the fifth day I found the black ravine. The sun passed over the earth, a moon was manifest, the floor of the dark cavern. I stumbled from the pit into the sunlight and was blinded, I staggered forward a few feet and tripped. As my tears washed the dirt out of my eyes, I looked behind me and saw:

He was sitting with his back against a boulder. It had been his out-thrust legs that I had tripped over. His rifle was wedged in his hands, and his eyes stared straight ahead with a look of incomprehension; a look almost of mute horror, before the eyes of the men and women around me with revulsion, lest some characteristic from our communal past rear up its horrible head.

The kiva could be reached only by descent by ladder. I stood in the cave for a few seconds, acclimating my eyes, and descending, trying to peer into the gloom while holding onto the ladder with one hand. My gun-hand swept the walls of the interior. As I dropped from the last rung onto the cool earth I swung around, but there was no sign of life. Instead there was a smoldering fire and dozens of tiny totems upon clay shelves against the wall. These were the totems Linda had mentioned. I looked them over, noting their individual etchings. I picked one up, noting the sheep's body with human torso. It was only when I fingered the hair on the totem that I shrank from it with revulsion. It consisted of strands of long, straight black hair. I dropped it and moved back. Then, with a curiosity born of science, I moved closer and peered through the light that had other figurine face etched in it, and each was affixed with human hair, mostly black, some almost brown. As I turned toward the fire, one caught the corner of my eye. It had the same color hair - and by god! the same face - of the dead girl outside. And in that same instant of horror I saw, or rather I saw that scrap of clothing being caught in the fire to smolder. I walked across that unholy kiva toward the fire, and as I walked closer and closer I saw what was burning. It was the remnants of an old pair of legs and a faded blue work shirt, still propped upon - yes, I dare say it the charred remains of the six-foot totem.

I dropped the gun, scrambled up the ladder and rushed into the blazing heat. I must have screamed her name for hours, or so it seemed. I sank to my knees, sobbing; then and only then did I notice the faint red trail leading toward a tiny clump of piñon trees on one side of the arroyo. I ran ahead, following the dry path, until I found the body in the shade of the trees.

And it was then that I fully understood the totems, the rites of increase, the name "Tsa-kiute," the reference to an attempt to bring totem and man into unity. The one terrible thought that impressed itself on me was, the man before I left was a rage, panic, and fear rise from my bowels to my lips; before I ran for my pack and emptied gasoline upon the kiva and the huts; before I ran from the flaming holocaust behind me through the ravine, the dry up the river of the river and into Chico; before I forced myself into hermitage deep within the San Bernardino Mountains, was etched into my mind in Linda Lightfoot's own handwriting: "... the Tsa-kiute totem is the primal totem of all men"

Linda's body lay face up. Mercifully for me, her eyes were closed in death. Her left breast had been punctured by a tiny hole, and as I turned the body to one side I saw that the flesh of her back had been exploded by a bullet. A small trickle of dried blood ran down her naked torso to her waist and there - by god, there! - her human form ended. Below her waist she had the body of a flayed female sheep.
Down to the Sea

BY BILL WALLACE

Somewhere close the water must be. I can hear waves breaking on a beach. What am I doing by the water? It’s so black. The party, Jack. It was so good. What is I doing here? He said. That’s why I’m here. It was good, but what he said, I can sit. Too much to drink, but it was so good. I’m alone. Someone help me.

Out in the dark water of the lagoon something heard her cry out and moved only up onto the sandy shore. She lay unconscious not a darenous from where the man broke. It dragged its bulk slowly along the sand until it stood over her. After it finished it crawled back into the sea. To wait.

Seascape 1. The muscles knot on his arms as he pulls the net, heavy with its living load, into the boat. It is a good catch. Shrimping is a good way for a man to make a living on the Gulf Coast. During the right seasons of the year one can make a fortune if luck is with him. Best of all it gives a man a chance to be done, just himself and the beautiful Gulf that stretches like some great aqueous desert as far as the eye can see.

Nathan Codwell seems very much at home on the water, for more than so in the company of the townpeople. He knows that the other citizens regard him with something between disgust and contempt. These feelings are not eased by the fact that he has incredible luck in his chosen profession. Even when the other inhabitants of Stoneville Pass bring up empty nets, Nat’s fortune holds.

Item: Stoneville Pass, on the lower Texas Gulf Coast, was a typical shrimping town. Most of the inhabitants lived by provision of the sea, but the sea could be a cruel provider, hurling huge storms without warning onto the coast. It was rare for the people of Stoneville Pass to have any men so fearlessly the coming of a hurricane. Unlike the larger ports of Galveston and Corpus Christi to the north, no ships sought haven in their harbors in times of storms. When a hurricane struck, many fishermen were accompanied by a great loss of life. But the village endured.

Even when its inhabitants did not. Henry Stewart leaned over the bar of The Basin well on his way to glorious intoxication. It wasn’t far. It can’t even worth get’t out anymore. Just more disappointments. A man couldn’t make enough to get by on. There was just enough for liquor.

Behind the bar, standing like some incredible sculpture of a classical New England seaman, was old Jenkins. Unmoving, as though he had been there in stone for centuries, the bartender stared and regarded Henry. In actuality he was an old New England seaman of indeterminate age, whose reasons for coming to the wild Texas Gulf were lost in years and wooden silence. Accustomed to his role as a standing board for the tales and troubles of the Stoneville Pass men, he wondered if Henry would ever notice if he spoke. His reflections were broken by Henry’s outlandish tones. “That fair. Damn Codwell catchin’ a full load while we starve. Damn sea a fish himself with those eyes, and I swear t’God he’s got wels between his fins.” Nodding in sympathy at Henry’s words, the bartender found his thoughts running into the past, into his own years on the sea. He thinks of a particular crewman named Marsh.

Seascape 2. The water droplets like jewels on the rough cords of his net. Codwell bends to his work willingly. His mouth is fixed in a tight grin, partly the result of his sweat against the glare of the sun, partly a result of pleasure in his work. Among the shrimp are many small fish. Most of the shrimp feed them to the gulls which circle constantly over the boats but Nat Codwell is careful to return each one to its native sea. He takes pleasure in watching the perch, the puffers, the tiny flounders, and even the transparent squid slide backward beneath the picturesque surface of their firmament. The sorting done the shrimp are consigned to the hold.

In Stoneville Doctor Sanderson dreams of the past.

At a ranch house near town a mad woman sits staring at the sea and thinking of her husband who has been gone for years.

In The Barnacle the men are gathering, having returned in early afternoon from a task which used to take them all day. There is no much point in staying out all day. There are no shrimp to be had. Henry, Codwell, does not seem enough to be standing on a chair preaching, is saying that somethin’ oughtta be done, by God. Codwell ain’t natural.

The year is 1899 and if any of them want to see the new century they’d better, by God, do something.

Jenkins is not behind the bar. He is in the back room drinking to drown bad memories.

It is late afternoon.

Seascape 3. Sculpture in sky with clouds, in the water with gently swirling waves. Eyes of ocean level watch young Nat Codwell as he drags his snare of rope from the sea for the first time. The sinking sun costs the boat’s shadow long, long and green, on the rolling waves. The eyes do not judge but were they to, they would find Nat Codwell a particularly unctuous specimen of man.

Were the owner of the eyes able to enquire of Nat it would learn of a boyhood spent in tearful fleeing from the jeers and cries of schoolmates, of life with a mother gone mad, and of years spent without a father. It would be aware the entire time of a soul which had somehow endured his ordained hell and made peace with a world he did not fit into, a soul which had sought the majestic loneliness of the sea for a companion. Unsympathetic, but not seeing. Uncaring, but not laughing. The sun sinks lower and Nathan Codwell steers his small boat for shore.

Three minds dwell in the past. Dr. Sanderson, awakened from his dream, thinks to its source and looks at the book of Indian lore he had been reading before his nap. Near town Melissa Codwell sits in the crumbling building which had belonged to her father and thinks of her husband Jack. In the back room of a waterfront bar, in his mad delusion, an old seaman named Jenkins thinks of a younger seaman named Jenkins and of a man named Marsh, whom he had killed fifty some years before.

Henry Stewart comes into the room on his way to the outhouse and finds the old man. "Well, Jenkins, tattin’ your own poison, huh?" The old seaman’s guise takes over and he draws himself up as he says, "Hank Stewart, if ye’d seen what I seen in my younger days on the ocean, ye’d have slit ye throat long ago."

"And just what is it ye seen that was so terrible, Mr. Jenkins?" Henry Stewart leaves with a full face of the old man’s words. He walks out of the bar, past the outhouse and down to the docks.

And what if I was fancy with words, the way Doctor Sanderson is. He knows too. He delivered the child. If I could talk like the doctor and tell you how it really was with Jeremiah Marsh, hell, if I could tell you even halfway how it felt known that you man were bunkin’ with weren’t human. Knowin’ that he prayed to slimy, crawlin’ things down under the sea. What did he call that idol he carried with him? Heathen devil. Claimed he was from New England but we all knew that he weren’t no legitimate son of Obed Marsh. He was a bastard son of the old Cap’n and some islander. We had a fella on the boat who’d seen him around the docks on Ponape. Said a lot of the islanders had the same look about ’em. ‘T’s a damn shame, Hank Stewart, that I can’t tell ye half of what I felt. I knew down deep, about Marsh. Was it any wonder that I pushed him overboard? I didn’t tell ye I killed ’im, did it? And I didn’t tell ye that every night for a month after that, anytime I’d stand night watch, that I’d hear him callin’ my name out off the port side. Dark nights, and cold water, and my name ringin’ out clear in the storm. I’d even swear that I seen his face starrin’ in at me with those fishy eyes. No, Hank Stewart, I ain’t told ye the half of it, and damn yer guts for makin’ me remember.

And another piece of a puzzle, Melissa Cadwell, walks from the door of the farm house down to the shore. She imagines that she sees her husband Jack walking from the green sea up onto the beach.

Henry Stewart walks into a shack built out on a pier at the docks.

I recollect the name of that idol now. Funny how I can’t forget things like that.

Many miles away and several years past Jack Cadwell dies of wounds received in a knife fight in Corpus Christi. He is found lying face down in Laguna Madre.

Item: Laguna Madre is a hundred mile long body of salt water stretching between Brownsville and Corpus Christi Bay. It lies between the mainland of Texas and the various islands in the Gulf. On these islands were founded Texas’ major ports as well as many small fishing towns. The lagoon itself is a focal point of many Indian legends.

Nat Codwell ties his boat to its mooring and walks into the shack owned by Joe Lyman, a bait wholesaler. For seven years Lyman has bought Nat’s catch and resold it in Galveston or Corpus Christi for a nice profit. Lately, with the poor shrimping yields, he has practically relied on Nat for his livelihood.

"I’m sorry, Nat. I can’t buy your shrimp anymore. "Why?" the young man swallows hard. "I mean, you’ve always bought ’em before."

"I got all I need. I’m real sorry."

Nat leaves the shack. Outside Henry Stewart is waiting for him. "What’s the matter, Fishy? Can’t sell your shrimp?"

Understanding grows in Nathan Cadwell. He looks at Henry with eyes that, although threatening, have the look in their place in the pecking order of the town. For one moment he thinks of lashing out at his tormentor, then shrugs and says, "Not this time, Hank."

Inside the shack Lyman looks out, a little ashamed of what he has done. But he has to live in this town, and Henry and the other shrimpers are his friends. And Nat doesn’t have any friends.

It is almost sundown.

Seascape 4. A shore scene. A woman lies thirty feet from a rotted farm house, face down. The salty waters of Laguna Madre have risen around her. She is dead, and the mother lagoon is just beginning to rock her gently back and forth.

Another figure comes into view. It is Nat Codwell. He bends down over the form of his mother, ascerts her death, and walks slowly toward the rotted farm house to change clothes so that he can carry her into town. There is no trace of sorrow on his face.

Dr. Sanderson sits at a table alone. The book of Indian legends lies open across the room. He feels the pressure of its words even at this distance. He guesses that he’s always known, but seeing the legend in print destroys much of his protective lay or doubt.

PAGE 133
I recall that its name was Dagon.

In The Barnacle Henry Stewart tells the other men of his victory over Nat Cadwell. He does not tell them the story that Jenkins told him. He can still feel the chill that the old man's words brought to his spine.

Prayin' to them damned slugs down under the sea.

Nathan Cadwell walks into town carrying the limp and salt-soaked body of his mother. He does not mind the slight weight. It is not far into town. He decides that Dr. Sanderson's house is the best place to take her.

I had to kill 'im. Hell, he'd had his way the damn things would've ruled the earth. But it keeps comin' to me. What if he ain't dead? What if he only went down to join them that he talked about as bein' down in the deeps? Through sunken cities and worshippin' that damned Dagon. If he ain't dead I fig'ure I'll hear from him before I die.

Dr. Sanderson rises from his meal to answer the door. He finds Nat Cadwell with a waterlogged corpse in his arms. The boy seems to be very calm.

At The Barnacle the men are drinking when Joe Lyman comes in. "Old Cadwell just came back into town. He was carryin' his mother's body. I guess she was dead."

"Where'd he take her?"

"Looked like he was headin' for Doc Sanderson's house."

In the back Jenkins hears the doctor's name and takes another drink.

"Come in. Nat. Come in." This is not what the doctor wants to say. He wants to close the door and say, no, you can't bring her in here. Nor her. But the concealment of his feelings for over twenty years stops him. That and something else; a knowledge that he has never shared with another soul.

The book of Indian lore lies open on the table.

At The Barnacle the men return to their bottles. It is a rare occasion for Jenkins to open the bar to them, and these are not the types of men who would turn down free liquor.

A word on a written page stands out as Nat Cadwell glances down at an open book. SOMETHING MOVES INSIDE OF HIM. After a moment the motion stops and he says, "I brought her to you, doctor, since you've taken care of her most of her life. Now that she gets the best treatment, yousay?" It was a strange word.

"Sure, Nat. I'll take care of her. What are you going to do now? That house out there is going to be lonely."

He stopped. Shut up, fool. It sounds almost like you are offering to let him stay here. Christ.

Nat smiles at the doctor's abrupt stop. Has he heard the thought? No, that's crazy. Not even him. I'll find a place to stay, Doctor. For right now the house'll do fine. Take care of her. I gotta go."

And he walked into the night.

The word was Kathab.

Seascope #5. Another shore scene. Nat Cadwell looks out over the block Gulf, watching the moonlight gather on the white, foamy crests of the breakers and spill like molten silver over their rolling surfaces. AND SOMETHING MOVES INSIDE OF HIM. Stranger and longer this time. It is almost as though, with the passing of the one tie between himself and Stoneville, the one tie to the land, he belongs wholly to the sea. The movement stops after a time and he turns with eyes grown dull to return to his empty house on the island's lagoon shore.

Damn near asleep. Wish that bunched wharf scum would shut up in there and let me. Wish I was drunk enough not to dream. I know I'll see that damn frog face again, like it looked just before I pushed 'im, like I've dreamed it a hundred times. First time I seen Cadwell up close I thought it was old Marsh come to get me for sure.

The Doctor is reading his book again, marking passages with a pencil this time. I thought I'd die when Cadwell looked at that book. Lord. The expression on his face. I wonder how much he knows. Open beside him is a book on legends of Massachusetts. It is careful in its misnomers, naming no people or places, but the dark hints he has gleaned from it have made him wish often that he lived away from the sea. His attempt to hone himself in his study of these legends is a failure. He is thinking of something else.

Back in the bar the men laugh about how they've, by God, fixed Nat Cadwell, and just let him tryin' sell his shrimp while everyone else is starvin'. Henry Stewart closes his eyes and sees pictures on the back of his eyelids. He sees a young Nathan Cadwell running along a beach, pursued by boys who throw shells at him and call stinging insults across the salt air. He sees that the face of the boy who leads the pack is his own. It's getting late, he thinks, and I've had a lot to drink today.

Sleep. God, I wish they'd shut up in there. Must be nearly nine o'clock. Did they say that Melissa Cadwell's dead? Strange to think that she's the same gal that old Jack got into trouble. No wonder he run off when he seen what he'd sired. Anybody would've. And then her half mad.

What was the name of that town Jeremiah Marsh said he come from? C'mon, memory. You ain't never failed me for the details. Think about him before.

Seascope #6. Viewed through the deteriorating window of a cabin the night-time sea makes on incredible sight. Its gentle sounds soothe the young man who stores at its dark, tranquil surface. The serenity of the lagoon is a sharp contrast to the pounding rhythms of the Gulf. None of the pull that he felt while facing the open sea is present here. All is peaceful and quiet, the gentle waves sounds of the lagoon rocking him to sleep.

Something comes out of the water.

'It's too incredible. I just cannot believe it. Even with the evidence of these books I won't accept it. We stand on the verge of the twentieth century and I'm giving credence to something that belongs to the savage past. I don't care what these books say, or what I thought twenty three years ago. Nat Cadwell is a man, not something born of the sea. Then he thinks of the wet corpse lying on a table in his office. In The Barnacle one man stands. "Good night, boys. It's been fun, but I gotta get home to the woman."

"She oughta be used to it by now, Tom."

"She is, but she raises holy Hell everytime I come in late."

"I know, Hank, he's got a point. I got a feelin' that we all get a good night's sleep tonight, get up early tomorrow, our luck's gonna change. I think I'll be headin' home too."

"You boys go on. I'll stay here and make sure that everything gets locked up. Jenkins' too drunk to do it himself."

"You don't fool us, Hank. You just want to take home some samples. They all laugh, but there is still a chill in Hank that wants to rid himself of.

I remember it was somethin' like Portsmouth, but it wasn't Portsmouth. Someplace I'd never heard of. Damn my memory, I'm either gettin' old or gettin' sleepy. Can't get just drunk. That ain't that much liquor. Henry's comin' back in. Come to think of it I can't hear that bunch anymore. Guess the party's over. Eyes closed.

"You awake, old man?"

I'm asleep. Go away. I don't wanna talk no more.

"Old fool's drunk himself to sleep."

SOMETHING BIG IS MOVING IN NAT CADWELL. Something that wants out. He walks out of the house and down towards the water. Something waits for him.

He had read books where death restored all the beauty of its prime to a body. He had read a lot of books. Not one of them had prepared him for this. He had not noticed the body when Nat had carried it in, taking care never to look directly at it. Melissa Cadwell lies, half covered, on the table in Dr. Sanderson's office. Her skin is the pale blue-white of a fish's belly and her eyelids do not quite cover the protruding orbs. The body is puffy and here and there are small tears in the flesh where sand crabs have done their grisly work. Except for these imperfections she looks more like her son than she ever has in life.

Strange to think that I almost married her. That was before she claimed it was Jack Cadwell who had gotten her in trouble. Jack claimed it wasn't his doing, but her pa would have no part of his story. After that night that she went off into the dunes with Jack, and was found unconscious on the beach, he was determined that they marry. A lot of good it did.

Tears worked their way down the doctor's face.

Old fool's gone to sleep. Think I'll take a ride out into the lagoon tonight and finish this bottle. I need to think. There ain't nothing like a quiet body of water and a good bottle to help a man think.

"You'll never be lonely again. Never. For twenty-four years we've been..."
waiting for you to join us. You have never been with your own kind. Come and
join us now."

How he understood the ghostly thing that stood before him he did not
know. Nor did he know why he regarded it as being anything but ghostly. That
word in Doctor Sanderson's book. He asked the question that he so needed the
answer to. "You are?"

"Your father. That is all you need to know."

Not Cadwell walked beside his father into the black waters of the mother
lagoon.

Sleep. Damn. First it was the noise keepin' me awake, now it's the quiet.
A man can hear too much when it's quiet. I remember what it was like hearin'
my name called out on the ocean.

In his boat on the lagoon Henry Stewart is very nearly asleep. Something breaks
wet to his starboard side. He stirs and leans forward. Jesus God. It's Cadwell,
swimmin' out here. But these other things.

A day's worth of whiskey empties into the lagoon. Henry Stewart hangs limply
over the side of his boat. The things have disappeared.

IT'S BEAUTIFUL JUST AS I KNEW IT HAD TO BE. IF I'D ONLY
KNOW THAT IT WAS SO SIMPLE FOR ME. I KNEW THAT I WASN'T A
PART OF THE LIFE I'VE BEEN LEADING. THAT'S WHY I NEVER CARED FOR
MY MOTHER. THIS IS MY TRUE MOTHER, AND EVEN THIS INCREDIBLE
CREATURE WHO IS MY FATHER PALES BESIDE HE WHO IS FATHER TO US
ALL.

Melissa. What did happen that night on the beach? How did I lose you? What
unt of thing crawled out of that cursed lagoon and found you senseless on the beach?

Sleep

Drowned monsters. Cadwell is a sea thing. I saw him and those. Sea slugs,
squirming things with toothless sucking mouths. At the docks. How? Gatta tell
someone. Shapeless, slimy things and things like fish with legs. Someone. The
twisters. No. Doc Sanderson's light is on. God help. Gatta tell the doctor. Cadwell
with these. Jelly and bubbles and. No.

IT'S ALL SO BEAUTIFUL

Who at the door? At this time of night? Wipe those tears away. You've kept
appearances for twenty years. Wouldn't do. "Hank, what brings you here this
time of night?"

"Doc, I gotta tell. God, what old Jenkins told me and what I seen. Help me,
Doc. Cadwell."

"Cadwell?"

"Not just Cadwell, Doc. It's the whole damn ocean. We never were meant . . ."

"Easy, Hank. This will help you relax.

Henry sleeps minutes after the doctor gives him an injection.

TOMORROW I'LL GO BACK TO TOWN ONE LAST TIME. DOCTOR SAN
DERSON WAS MY ONLY FRIEND. HE MUST HAVE KNOWN, BUT HE NEV
ER BETRAYED ME. THAT WORD IN THAT BOOK. I'LL PAY HIM FOR MOTH
ER'S FUNERAL.

Sleep. And night closed its black cotton arms around him.

"Wake up, Hank. It's morning."

"Morning? Jesus, my wife'll be worried sick."

"I went over and told her you were staying here. I told her you had a little too
much." Hank does not hear what Doctor Sanderson is saying. Memory of the night
before was retired.

"Doc, I gotta tell you."

"I got most of it last night, Hank." The doctor's voice is weary. If you only
knew how it was, Hank. Alone here with you and, and Melissa, listening to you
talk of things that have no right to exist. If you knew. "It hits very well with a lot
that I already knew."

"You know about Cadwell?"

Morning. Damn my old soul for yesterday. I gave away a fortune. Damn
them old memories. Damn Henry Stewart and damn Nathan Cadwell. And damn,
no. I don't have to damn old Jeremiah Marsh. He's damned already.

THE WORLD DOWN HERE IS SO BEAUTIFUL. I CAN'T WAIT TO TELL
DOCTOR SANDERSON.

"Have you ever heard of a thing called Kathob, Hank?"

"Sounds like something you'd find under a rotting stump."

"You may not he too far from wrong."

Least I can remember the name of that town now. It was Innsmouth.

SO BEAUTIFUL

He tells him of the legends. The Karankawas knew of them, the things that lived
in Laguna Madre, hiding under the tranquil waters. Things that were like men, but
like fish and frogs and seals too. Things that belonged on the shores of some planet
less sane than ours. The Karankawas were called dog lovers, but it was not dogs
that they loved. The sea things bred with certain members of the tribe and led
them on a downhill pathway into cannibalism and degeneracy. History records that
the Karankawas smelled like dead fish and attributes this to the peculiar mosquito
terrible that they used. In many cases this may have been the cause, but more than one
tribesman had cause to smell like a foul thing from the ocean.

I'VE GOT TO TELL HIM. TRY TO. IN SOME SMALL WAY, THANK HIM
FOR SHIELDING ME OVER THE YEARS UNTIL I COULD GROW INTO MY
DESTINY. IA, DAGAN.

Yep, it was Innsmouth. I recall him sayin' how his daddy, Obed Marsh,
neighbored the town and how he was gonna go home and claim his birthright
and live like a king. Reckon any kingin' old Jeremiah's gonna do will be done at
the side of Davy Jones.

"These things in the lagoon aren't the only ones either." And the doctor tells
the fisherman of the New England version of the Kathobs. He tells him of the
tales that there is a town in Massachusetts whose people have bred with the crea-
tures for nearly half of a century, that there are many people in this town who are
only half-human. He tells him that both legends record that the half-breeds look
very nearly human at first but, as they grow older, gradually take on the appearance
of their aquatic parent, until they too go live forever in the sea and worship a strange,
dark deity.

I'M ALMOST TO THE BEACH NOW. I WONDER IF THE DOCTOR WILL
BE PLEASED

"And Nat Cadwell is one of these half-humans, Hank. The first one in this part
of the world in at least a hundred years."

"But his daddy. My old man knew Jack Cadwell like his own brother."

"Jack Cadwell was not that boy's father. The town doctor learns a lot in a place
like this. I was young then. Nathan couldn't have been more than the fifteenth or
sixteenth child I'd delivered. I talked to Jack a lot. I had a sort of personal inter-

"There was a big party out at Melissa's dad's place one night. She'd had a lot
to drink and went out into the dunes with Jack. They had a fight and he went
back into town to get drunk. She stayed out in the dunes and made her way down to
the lagoon beach where she fell asleep. Whatever gave her that child crawled up out
of the lagoon like a stinking worm and . . ." The doctor's voice had risen steadily
in pitch and it broke as it reached the last word.

"Jesus, and we been lettin' somethin' like that live with us this long. I'm
gonna get out there together and see if we can fix that damned sea thing. Behind
the works is a fear, a fear of dark caves down under the ocean and of the nameless,
formless things that dwell in them. Of slimy things in old ship wrecks and of things
that it is madness to even look upon. Of the sea.
Doctor Sanderson wanted to sop Hank. He really did. That was why he stood silent as the fisherman stumped out of his office. That was why he watched as the man stopped anyone he could find on the streets and assembled a mob. That was why he walked into the office room next door and carefully measured out a fatal dosage of belladonna and killed himself beside the already deteriorating corpse of Melissa Catwell.

I'VE GOT TO TELL THE DOCTOR.

Behind his bar the incredible carved figurehead of Jenkins watches Hank gather his forces outside. He has already been into The Barnacle recruiting and Jenkins almost went with him, but the thoughts of another voice calling out over the waves, of another batrachian face haunting his sleep, stayed him. He merely watches as Hank gathers the men who have not gone shrimping or fishing, men who only needed a small excuse to destroy the man they all felt to be different, a man who is vaguely a menace. Hank is convincing with a conviction born of fear.

THIS HOUSE I'VE LIVED HERE MY WHOLE LIFE AND I'VE LOOKED OUT THAT WINDOW AT THE SEA. THE BEAUTIFUL SEA. THERE ARE NO REGRETS AT LEAVING THIS PLACE, THIS LAND. THE CORALS AND THE CARVED TOWERS, AND ALL OF MY BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE. OUR KING WITH HIS CROWN HELPS US. KING JEREMIAH.

"We'll kill that damned salamander."

When they hear that voice calling their names at night they'll regret.

"We'll burn his house, and we'll burn him."

SO BEAUTIFUL.

They met halfway between town and the house. His pleading did no good. His first night under the waves had changed him a great deal. Changes which would have taken years on land had only taken that one night in the sea. It made it much easier for the crowd to do their work. His last thoughts were a regret that he had not made it to the Doctor, and a deep longing for the green paradise of the lagoon. The townspeople left rather quickly after they had finished.

Underneath the sea there is movement. Things move and speak among themselves, and there is an agreement.

Along in his living room Hank Stewart sits quietly. He has not shrimped in almost a year. Ever since one night on the lagoon he cannot hear the idea of venturing out onto the sea. He thinks of nothing in particular, worries vaguely about a rumored storm, wishes he was very drunk, and does off to dream of caverns and shapeless monsters.

Seascape #7. The sea roils ominously and oilly. The men of Stoneville Posse have just returned from a very unsuccessful day's work. Almost a year has passed since Nathan Codwell's death and this has been the first poor yield of the season. Someone observes that there is a very bad storm coming. Someone agrees with him. The sea roils oily and ominously.

Joe Lyman worries about the weather. The way the sky and sea look he is worried about a drop in his bait sales. The men from the boats say hello to him as they go to their respective homes leaving him alone on the docks. He never hears the things that come out of the water.

Along in The Barnacle the carved wooden Jenkins blinks, polishes a glass, and wishes that someone would come in and buy a drink. He does not like the way the wind is beginning to bowl nor the way the sky is achen gray. He thinks that he hears footsteps outside coming from the direction of the docks. He thinks they sound familiar. He is right.

Item: The worst recorded disaster in the history of the United States took place in 1900 on the Texas Gulf Coast. Dubbed the Galveston Hurricane, this disaster took the form of a monstrous storm which leveled a good portion of the coastal habitations. Some 8,000 persons lost their lives in the Galveston area alone.

Lost amid the numerous tales of disaster and terror is the inexplicable destruction, down to its last man and woman, of the small town of Stoneville Pass, far to the south of the storm's center.

THE DREAMER'S KNELL

The dreamer's eyes are closed: about him press Vague visions of another world - a world Whose night-enshrouded towers are upward hurled To skies whose black unholy loveliness Reflects the mood of fate whose soft caress Lingers on his fevered brow and cheek. Pearled Shadows flit across those star-dimmed eyes. Curled Within those arms he knows life's emptiness.

The dreamer's dead: his soul, that mantic pearl Lit for an instant in time's depthless well, Soars through worlds where black abysses unfurl, Where there is no heaven, no flaming hell. And yet ere lost in blank eternity, He finds the clue to death's futility.

WHO IS GRANDPA THEOBOLD?

By Robert E. Howard

Cities brooding beneath the seas Yield their chalcedon and gold; Ruthless hands the treasures seize, Rending the ages' mysteries. But who is Grandpa Theobold?

Secret of the eternal Sphinx Is a story worn and old. Like a tale too often told; All the ancient unknown shrinks - But who is Grandpa Theobold?

Fingers turn the hidden Keys, Looting wealth from lair and hold; Cast what shapes in what dim mold? Question now the Eternities. But who is Grandpa Theobold?

Prince, before you snare the stars, Speak, before the sun grows cold, Scowling through the morning bars, Who is Grandpa Theobold?

NOTES: In an undated letter to Tevis Clyde Smith, Robert E. Howard wrote: "This morning I took out a big registered envelope (sic)...from a gentleman named Barlow...He enclosed a 115 page ms. which he said Lovecraft had instructed him to forward. It's theantarctic story which Farnsworth rejected, and which Lovecraft promised to let me read in the original. On the title page was written in pencil:

'Schedule of Circulation'
'Augustus Derleth to Donald Wandrei
Melmoth the Wanderer to Klarkash-ton
Klarkash-ton to 8'Bra-Dwi-yah'
Bernardus Diverius to Grandpa Theobold'

Which of course are August Derleth, Donald Wandrei,
Clark Ashton Smith, and Bernard Dyer; but who is Grandpa Theobold?"

Grandpa Theobold - actually Theobald, Howard having misread the "a" for an "o" - was, of course, Lovecraft, who often signed his letters as Grandpa Theobald, and had used the pen name Lewis Theobald, Jr. on some amateur press work. Howard put his queerly into verse form, as set forth above. - Glenn Lord
CONTRIBUTORS

Meade & Penny Frierson - Editors and Publishers - We thought of this book in 1970 in correspondence with Dave Cockrum, Robert Kline and other artists and two HPL fans - the creators of the new translations of HPL's stories and to make available some long out of print material concerning HPL. Nothing much was done until we wrote to Herb Arnold and Stu Schiff about June, 1970. The publishing of the first five months has borne fruit, we have no regrets, despite the many pains (in time and finances) of the labor.

Meade has written a magazine about science fiction on radio, articles on the sources of the Encyclopaedia HPLiana, two poems in THE ARKHAM COLLECCION (hereinafter "TAC") and numerous as-yet-unpublished stories and poems of sf and HPLish horror. In the dreamworld he masquerades as a corporate attorney in the second largest law firm in Alabama and president of a fledgling organization to keep southern sf and fantasy in contact - S.F.C. Penny reads voraciously, raises kids, and participates in the Southern Fandom Press Alliance, mimographing an amateur journal along with Meade's Huitloxocopel. We plan to attend several sf conventions this year, beef up our mimeographed output and contribute to any other enterprises involving HPL publishers whatever we can. HPL Cuit forever! (Oh yes, we support R.A. Lafferty for a Hugo.)

5. Herbert Arnold (1949 - ) - Associate Ed. - Art. Born in Kansas City, Kansas and raised there except for a stay in Colorado; B.A. in Fine Arts in 1971 from the Kansas Art Institute and School of Design. Arnold's artwork has appeared in FANTAGOR (published by his friend and neighbor Richard V. Corben) and ANONOMY as well as on dustjackets for Arkham House's DARK THINGS and THE CALLER OF THE BLACK. His favorite interests include photography, painting, poetry and mythology, art history, classical music, making amateur films and writing stories. He lists as favorites among the old masters Michaelangelo, Titian, Veronese, Courbet, Bonnard and Manet. His good friends include Marko Micic, Alf B. Farr, and John Unsworth. He has exhibited in K.C. and this year as "Arnold's technique of realism are handled quite well, although he needs more color work; he succeeds in conveying an image but speaks of reality and yet is unreal...however, his unusual tastes for ghosts and monsters for canvases is a dubious question of taste." Pfaff...we think that it is in perfect taste and needless to say, herb has made this publication with his superb collection of art work as well as a table of contents and help in contacting contributers such as Richard Corben and Gary Myers among others. His letters of encouragement have been invaluable spur in getting this publication done as well as we could.

4. Schiff - Associate Editor - Articles - "Now a Senior Art Editor at the University of Chicago Medical School, Stuart received his B.A. from Ivy League rival, Cornell. An Arkham House dealer in his spare time, the 24 hour day doesn't seem long enough for him to fit in his studies, parttime job, collecting dealing, fiancee, pussycat and volumous correspondence. His collecting does not stop with Lovecraftians though and other circles of the world of sf's feel his collection's grasp. He owns a complete set of Arkham House books and major collections of the works of Ray Bradbury, Robert Chambers, David Kester and Clark Ashton Smith. His art collection contains originals by Virgil Finlay, H. R. Giger, Frank Frazetta, Ed Cartier, Kelly Freas, Jeff Jones, Herb Arnold, Richard Powers and Lee Brown Coye. His current projects include learning to play bridge, speed reading, Chinese cooking, squash, photography and dedication to the present task of spreading HPL to the world is only fleetingly set back by his infamous ineptitude in decipherable handwriting that would make HPL drool. A believer in the sofa especially ice cream. He has even an ice cream eating contest held at Columbia." Needless to say, beyond his articles and loan of originals to Coye and Scott, his solicitation of contributions from Black, Scavenger's and others make him an invaluable part of the editorial team.

Alfred A. Attanasio - Al presently resides in Philadelphia, where he is writing weird and other fiction. He is co-editor of TAMLACHT (see p. 143) and we hope that he will continue his tales in the HPLish vein.

Robert Bloch - Hardly necessary to introduce this author of hundreds of stories and scores of books since he started at age 18: he was a correspondent of HPL, engaged in the famous 'battle' in WEIRD TALES with HPL where they killed each other off in successive tales. Teleplays, PLAYBOY pieces and an active output display his talent for mystery, humor and horror.

Joseph Payne Brennan - of New Haven, Conn., author of Slime (WT, March, 1953) and other stories in WT and elsewhere, latest being Monot in January, 1972 issue of ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE. A collection of stories is scheduled by Arkham House: STORIES OF DARKNESS AND DREAD. He publishes MACABRE magazine. His weird poetry has appeared in many places including TAC.

Roger Bryant - This HPL scholar is fairly new to the scene but nonetheless his fresh angles on the Necronomicon and other HPL associational subjects have provided interesting reading in TAMLACHT and NYCTALOPS. We trust that his contributions to divers aspects of the field of the macabre will continue.

J. Ramsey Campbell - A Liverpudlian who was early influenced by HPL, his first collection of stories, the INHABITANT OF THE LAKE & OTHERS (Arkham House 1964) was produced at the age of 17, and in the same year he completed the Severn Valley at Brichester for the Nythos. DEMONS BY DAYLIGHT is forthcoming from A.H. in the near future. He broadcasts as a film critic for the BBC (some of his tales are also broadcast) and has been published in Italian, Spanish, French and Dutch. His contribution to HPL, A Madness from the Vaults, was originally to have been reprinted from a fanzine, doubt, but Ramsey so revised it that it has but 40 words left of the original and an entirely new direction and concept. He is interested in joining with other Nythos writers to compile a memorial volume of tales to dedicate to Derleth.

Richard Corben - A late but welcome addition, Mr. Corben's graphics, both in animation and in underground comics as well as his own publication FANTAGOR (write your dealer today for one if you are at all interested in the graphic arts) place him among the best illustrators, but he is not a technician as competent: the social commentary in his underground press works may be easily and unreservedly predicted to be classics of our times. We regret being unable to reproduce the paintings which he sent but hope they will be displayed at some conventions for the benefit of Lovecraftians in attendance.

Lee Brown Coye - Mr. Coye's works appeared in pulps such as WEIRD TALES as well as Arkham House books, culminating in 3 TALES OF TERROR with interior as well as cover artwork. We are indebted to Stuart Schiff for his loan of the illustrations to accompany Dull Scavengers Wax Crafty, to which story they seemed most appropriate.

Wm. L. Crawford - as indicated by his article he is the publisher of numerous fantasy works and WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY. He co-sponsored the HPLish event of 1971, the WGS-Con in October, which we regret missing.

Walter DeBill - Born 1930, grad school drop out in organic chemistry, employed as clerk in U.S. Civil Service. Main hobby is astronomy because he writes too seriously to enjoy it. He has won an ice cream eating contest held at Columbia." Needless to say, beyond his articles and loan of originals by Coye and Scott, his solicitation of contributions from Black Scavenger's and others make him an invaluable part of the editorial team.

PAGE 135
Stephen E. Fabian - "I live and work in Vermont. I am by profession an electronics engineer employed by a somewhat 'small' company involved in the aerospace industry. I am usually busy with the design and manufacture of engine power measuring devices."

"Art and imaginative literature has been a source of fascination and enjoyment for me as long as I can remember. The artwork of Virgil Finlay, Hannes Bok, Lawrence and Cartier inspired me to try my hand at some fan art. I started working in this field in the summer of 1958."

"I was entirely on my own in the field of art and I became involved with fanzines, both of the 'small' and 'industry' variety, at the age of 15. By the age of 17 I had created a summer fantasy zine, backed up with line drawings, a pulp Aliens, a notebook containing 'rats and roosters' and a series of comic strips."

"I received my first pro assignment to draw the illustrations for a novel, Steven Pinfold's The Saucer From the South Pole, in 1971."

"I have been professionally drawing for the past 15 years for these and other publications: /

- Stephen E. Fabian, 37, has published a number of stories and articles in various science fiction and horror magazines, and has contributed illustrations to a number of other publications. He has also written and illustrated several short stories and novelettes, and is currently at work on a novel, "The Saucer From the South Pole.""
Jim Garrison - a "fan artist". Jim tried his hand for an on HPL poem called "Halloween in a Suburb." (p.80), with a result that has a definite flavor of MT.

Mark Golotte - Mark's a college freshman in Houston, majoring in commercial art. His work has appeared in the last 3 years in numerous fan publications - GRAN FALCON, GORE CREATURES, SPACE & TINE, TAMALCHT 12, ENERGUMEN, CITADEL with more due to be published. We trust that these endeavors will continue.

William Guy - Bill is an ardent HPL supporter from Mississippi, where he is active in the SfAM organization, STAR & SWORD. His wife, Debbie, at the college bookshop has been serving us as an unpaid HPL booster par excellence.

Ralph Wollstonecraft Hedge - is a pseudonym but not of Ron Goulart.

Richard Heffern - wrote to us from Berkeley with a poem which was initially blank verse but revised on request into rhyme. Generally folks were quite good about revisions to the editorial format, either working on it themselves or more often allowing us to tamper.

William Scott Home - "Born in Missouri, raised in Colorado, deglutinated in Minnesota, reconstituted in Alaska, educated in New Mexico, humanized in British Honduras, waterlogged in Dominica, petrified in the British Virgin Islands, resuscitated once again in British Honduras which has become my permanent home. Constant weird writer from act. 10; the writings are many, the publications few (for some reason). Numerous mishaps from Alaska to Peru, despite which continue reading, writing, learning, breathing and other futile pursuits. Biologist by vocation (i.e., a man who studies books about life), archaeologist and spelunker by inclination, lunatic by fate." Scott Home is a star about to go nova in the heavens of the magazine. We are totally captivated by his convoluted constrictor-like language which wraps around itself and the reader with highly pleasing results.

Robert E. Howard - Glenn Lord is Mr. Howard's literary executor and graciously responded to an early solicitation for aid.

John Jacob - born 1950 in Chicago and won his first poetry contest in 1966; since then his poetry has appeared in 50 national newspapers, magazines and anthologies. "I have edited or helped to edit a number of periodicals of the arts including the present magazine of poetry, MOJO NAVIGATOR(E). I also edit and publish books of poetry under the famed Cat's Pajamas Press imprint. I've had two poetry leaflets printed and my first book, RAZOR & CUT, is now being printed by Ghost Dance Press. Of the 5 Cthulhu Mythos-based stories I've written, 4 have been printed or accepted for publication in magazines ranging in scope from COMIC COURRIER to NYCTALOPS. I've also written numerous book reviews and essays...my plans for the future include a pilgrimage to Irem, the City of the Pillars."

Tim Kirk - This California artist is talented and prolific and has generously contributed to every fan undertaking I know about (thus topping Bill Rotsler who would not contribute to this undertaking). He has excellent work in the HPL vein in NYCTALOPS (#5 has a bacover portrait of August Derleth which is beautiful) and TAMALCHT 12.

Robert Kline - I interested Bob in HPL in 1969 while he was with the Service in Virginia and actively producing for numerous amateur graphics publications. When he moved to Calif., and was arrested in ANOMALY 3 as "out of fandom" while working for Disney, I assumed that we would not have any contribution I had heard he was working on - the cover offers attractive proof that I was wrong.

Edward S. Lauterbach - An Associate Prof of English at Purdue Univ., his work has appeared in THE BAKER STREET JOURNAL and THE PONTINE DOSSIER. He is a frequent contributor to THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE.

Fritz Leiber - see p. 18

Frank Belknap Long - In addition to the information developed in the interview, the following items are of interest: Mr. Long's short stories now number over 300; he lectures on topics of SF, ESP and HPL; forthcoming novels include gothic works as well as SF; his story, Guest In the House, was produced on TV while others have been dramatized on radio. For a fuller picture, don't miss the interview at pp.7-11.
Brian Lumley: "Date of Birth, December 2, 1937, just 9 months after HPL died - but don't worry about it, I have no faith in the supernat or reincarnation (I'll influence SP Society, prodded by Bill Wallace and myself, have held special meetings to commemorate HPL's birthday, where his stories were read in a proper setting. It is impossible, it is ruin with out wondering how it might figure in a Mythos story or what HPL would have done with it. I have lately been exploring areas of the Mythos and 138, the further I go in these blasphemous researches, the more I realize why they have been previously shunned."

John Adkins Richardson - Professor of Art & Design at the University of Southern Illinois, John finds himself in considerable demand in graphics fandom; of recent note are the cover of RBCC 86, The Hunting of the Wyat, the latter in untyped and published at $20 and $35 per page respectively - inquire c/o Faculty of Art & Design, So. Ills. Univ., Edwardsville, Ill. 62025. His Call of Cthulhu painting on page 67 is likewise for sale at the best offer over $125 made to him.

Jerry Saunders - "I have lived in Newton, N.C. almost all my life. 111 health has temporarily interrupted my art. I am now studying mostly English literature and writing at home. Dark Providence is my second published story, while attending Gardner-Webb College, a weird short story called "Talbott's Wife" was published in the literary magazine. I hope to become a professional writer." We share this hope and think it is likely.

Darrell Schweitzer - between 1968 and his 20th birthday (which is still in futuro) Darrell has had published or accepted for publication 62 stories, 30 poems, 53 book reviews and 40 articles. His latest story, "In the Bureaucrat's House", appeared in the 1971 issue of ACE. The new novel, "The Last Word", is with Ace. Darrell's book called PROcrastination going into its 10th issue with a Ray Bradbury article. His tales are Dunsanian rather than Lovecraftian and Don Keller's PHANTASMicom has published most of these; a special issue and 20 the same published in which he anticipated called HOWLE LOND. WEIRDBOOK and DBJ have carried his macabre poetry and WB will publish a story in its 6th issue. He expresses the hope of using Dunsany's technique of setting for something of his own rather than pastiches.

Mike Scott - (see also COLLECTOR'S BULLETIN on p.143) Mike has been a fan since 1969 and has contributed generously to fan projects. Several pieces are forthcoming in NYTALOPS.

John P. Sellers III - a senior at Auburn (Ala) high school where he moved from L.A. last year, John is active in the literary club and literary magazine. He is currently studying literature and plans to publish his first story this summer which will be about his experiences at old radio shows, books (mostly fantasy and horror) and various other forms of escape. His aspirations are to continue writing and return to California. We are pleased to present his first published story and poem.

J. Vernon Shea - He is one of the original members of the so-called Lovecraft Circle, corresponding with HPL from 1931 almost to his death in 1937, excerpts of this correspondence having already appeared in SELECTED LETTERS III (Arkham House 1971). She's father was a professional photographer and magician, number among his friends Harry Houdini. He contributed to occult magazines and introduced WEIRD TALES to his young son. Shea wrote his first fantasy story at 14, his first SF at 17. He is the editor of STRANGE DESIRES (Lion Books 1954) and STRANGE BARRIERS (Lion 1955), reprinted as IN BLACK AND WHITE, Pyramid 1970). His stories are in Arkham House's ON THE EDGE and TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS, as well as the late MAGAZINE OF HORROR and others. His article H.P. LOVECRAFT: THE HODGSON NOVELS (F&SF, May, 1966) should be read. Shea is currently employed as a lab tech in Cleveland, is an inveterate letter writer, amatuer writer and film, play and bridge buff."
Walter Shedlyfsky - "Initial publication occurred in HOWARD HOUSE'S PYRE AND SLEET AND CANDLELIGHT, which was followed by contributions to WORD WAYS, TAC, HOWARD COLLECTOR and others. Recently published, his THE FANTASTIC ACROS contains many of these and may be obtained by sending $2 to its author, P.O. Box 155, St. Louis, Mo. 63188. He also has been commended for his WINDS OF FREEDOM, a booklet containing a number of pieces dedicated to the spirit of freedom. Mr. Shedlofsky is married, has 4 children and one grandchild, is employed by the U.S. Army Aviation System Command, and is a Retired Reserve Warrant Officer."

Dave Studzinski - penned a drawing on the bottom of an order and we enjoyed it so we asked for more. He supplied a number which we liked but space requirements permitted only a few. We hope other fan publishers will seek him out for contributions.

Robert C. Sudol - Born of Polish lineage in 1954, Bob confesses an obsession with HPL but admits "though I shall try with inspired soul to follow in his noble footsteps, I know that in the art of weaving a tale of the macabre he will always be greater than I...If my aspirations are fulfilled, I shall bring his masterpieces to the most rich and dramatic medium of the cinema, as I shall hopefully attend U.S.C. this September and strive to my ultimate ability to perfect cinematic technique - so that as Lovecraft is the master of the outings in print, I shall be Horror's master on film. ... Until 2 years ago when I fatefully read my first HPL horror tale, The Horror at Red Hook, I never truly knew the supreme satisfaction of hellish delights - now the weird beauty and splendour of the Eldritch and the Unknown eternally haunt me while the sheer awe and ultra-cosmic wonder of the outing confirm me forever its loyal disciple." We present Bob's first published fiction.

John T. Swanson II - Born 1949; B.S. in Art Ed. from So. Conn. State College and presently works in G. Fox & Co. Art department. In Hartford, but an admirer of Magritte, Dalí and Beardsley in art and Bradbury, Dickens, Matheson, CAS, HPL and Derleth in lit. An accomplished college actor, he played Dracula in a community theatre group recently, writes songs, plays guitar and sings in a rock band called Ground.

Denis Tiani - one of the best fantasy fan illustrators around, Denis hails from Michigan and has been recently active in contributing to DBJ and NYCTALOPS. His illustrations of Dick Tierney's fungoid poem cycle in NYCTALOPS 6 is anxiously awaited.

Richard L. Tierney - "I first came across HPL in the Wise & Frazer anthology when I was in the sixth grade (20 years ago) but it wasn't until 2 years later when I read The Shadow Out of Time in Wollheim's NOVELS OF SCIENCE anthology that I really became hooked. After that, he rapidly became my favorite author. I had a scattering of poems in MACABRE, AMRA, NYCTALOPS, TAC and HOWARD COLLECTOR and should have a story coming in a future issue of WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY."

James Wade - Wade has published fantasy material in PAN BOOK OF HORROR #1, NEW WRITINGS IN THE SUPERNATURAL (Sphere), DARK THINGS (Arkham House), TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS (Arkham House and Beagle Books). TAC, FEARNOIRE Dossier, NEW WRITINGS OCCASIONAL, SHADOWS, WEIRDBOOK and his own books, published in Korea, ONE MAN'S KOREA and EARLY VOYAGERS: COLLECTED POEMS (U.S. distributor - Steve Leventhal's Haunted Bookshop). Born in Granite City, Ill., Jan. 5, 1930, he is a composer whose grand opera, THE MATURED, based on the novel by Richard E. Kim, has been published, premiered and commercially recorded in Seoul. He has lived for the past dozen years with his wife and family. His musical compositions for orchestra, chorus, chamber groups and voices have been performed in the U.S., Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. His many articles on general subjects have appeared in such periodicals as THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE, LONDON TIMES, VARIETY, NATIONAL REVIEW and many others. His wife's unfortunate illness brought him to the States at time of publication whence he is currently in transit back to Korea after a successful operation.

Bill Wallace - (see also MATHOM 6 on p.143) - Bill's in college in Houston and "perverted" the local sf club to a publication in honor of HPL. He is a devout fan and collector and, we think, an exciting writer (see pp. 131 et seq.).

Donald Walsh Jr. - He is a native New Orleanian, private investigator and professional photographer. His first sf story appeared in 1967 and his debut in the Mythos was as stated in his recent adaptation of the short story "RATTLE GALLERY," a film in process, classics from F&SF lies Vandy, Vandy and The Little Black Train. Mr. Wellman deserves to be the subject of a tribute magazine himself during his lifetime.

Manly Wade Wellman - another WEIRD TALES vet, Manly is known for his Arkham House book, WHO FEARS THE DEVIL? His recent adaptation of the short story "RATTLE GALLERY," a film in process, classics from F&SF lies Vandy, Vandy and The Little Black Train. Mr. Wellman deserves to be the subject of a tribute magazine himself during his lifetime.

George T. Wetzel - born in Baltimore, Md in 1921 Mr. Wetzel's interest in writing, particularly stories with interesting characters, blossomed at an early age and soon he was also engaged in literary sleuthing (e.g., HPL's amateur press association appearances) and real-life sleuthing (e.g., forgotten tunnels
Colin Wilson (see also page 22) - This writer's PHILOSOPHER'S STONE is a fascinating speculation on the Cthulhu Mythos and is a must for every HPL fan. His other recent books concerning murders and murderers of which the excerpted ORDER OF ASSASSINS is the latest are intellectually stimulating in the highest degree. Though opposed to reprints, your editors felt that this magazine/book could not be produced as a tribute to HPL without reflecting in some small way their interest in Mr. Wilson and his particular appeal, and value, to the HPL student.

Due to limitations of space this issue was not able to contain the following highly interesting and recommended material because if included the reader would have to pay too much for the issue and the artists and publishers would not be benefiting any more than at present (which is negative or at a maximum, zero) so in order not to unjustly enrich the typesetter and printer, you are referred elsewhere for:

Ken Faig - A grad student at Brown Univ., Mr. Faig has been a most prolific producer of Lovecraftian research in recent times. His work in VISIONS, DEJ, NYCTALOPS, TAMLACHT are all highly recommended to the HPL student. He preferred us a gigantic article on Lovecraft as a revisionist detailing the work done by Lovecraft for other writers of the genre and otherwise. It is a fascinating and revealing account which we hope to read soon in another journal.

John Pocsik - part of Kansas City's monopoly on talent (along with Herb Arnold, Rich Corben, and many more) John's work has appeared in Arkham House as well as fanzines and he favors Robert E. Howard and Tolkien above the rest. We have seen the first of a sword & sorcery (working title: WHEN THE JEWEL GOD RETURNS) and considered The Dark Hunt (or The Hunter in the Dark) for inclusion in the magazine but it was long and regretfully John had other plans for it. We hope that his fantasy writing will continue.

David Kraft - from blue-litten North Dakota Mr. Kraft submitted an excellent story, Hanna, involving a proposed Yaweh Mythos rather than that of Cthulhu. Its relation to HPL was tenuous but we trust the story will appear elsewhere in the near future for it was very well written and interesting.

E. Paul Berglund - The fiction editor of NYCTALOPS, an Army Sergeant in the Far East and compiler of the ultimate listing of Cthulhu Mythos tales (soon to be published, we understand), Paul's very long The Feaster from the Stars could not be included, although we urge him to publish it in the forthcoming volumes of fiction from Harry Morris' Silver Scarab Press.

Gahan Wilson - Mr. Wilson most courteously and with sincere regret declined to be included because of his long-standing firm policy against contributing to non-commercial press publications but admitted that his PLAYBOY cartoons are definitely HPL inspired and that he is one of HPL's greatest admirers.

Were this magazine/book double its actual length, in addition to the material above, we would have presented fiction by Dana Friese, a long story by James Wadsworth, a short story by the redoubtable Mr. Scott Home, art by Dave Cockrum, Jaxon, Steve Riley, and Dave Karbonik, articles by Bill Trennack, Howard Duerr, Emil Petaja, William Fulwiler, Ben Indick and numerous others who were too late or too long for this. But it was with the best interests of our readers in mind in keeping the cost down that we were forced to find a cut-off point which regretfully excluded the foregoing. Our deepest thanks to each and every one, included or not, for their time, effort and interest.
The Editors regret that a special advertisement concerning a new "underground" comic book illustrating HPL's tales such as Cool Air, The Hound and Pickman's Model did not arrive by press time. Rip Off Press in California will publish one or two issues, according to current plans. Copies should be available by the summer from the local dealers or the publishers. We fully support this effort to produce the works of Lovecraft in the various media.

Also the Editors are most anxious to obtain information concerning the suspense radio program circa 1945 starring Ronald Coleman which presented The Dunwich Horror (possibly under the title of "The Dunwich House"). We are interested in purchasing a copy of this show, on record or tape, and of the special repeat performance in the late fifties which some recall as being broadcast around Halloween.

This publication is a one-time-only tribute; however, as stated on page 1 there will be an "HPL Supplement", mimeographed approximately six months after publication which will contain letters of comment received by the Editors concerning the magazine and other items of interest concerning HPL, other projects, etc. This will be mailed to all contributors and persons who provide a letter of comment of substantial length or merit and it may also be purchased by any interested persons at 50¢ per copy.

HANNES BOK AND HPL
By Emil Petaja

(Received on the way to the printer and bumping my further fictional contribution to this effort was the Bok illustration of Pickman's Model presented above and the following notes from a correspondent of both Bok and HPL)

The great horror tales master died a couple of years before Hannes Bok's work began to appear in WEIRD TALES and elsewhere, but I believe that had HPL been able to see his work he would have enthusiastically approved. I do know that Hannes admired HPL very much, although (unlike myself) he was not a correspondent of Lovecraft's. Incidentally, in several letters to me Lovecraft mentioned his own choice for a favorite young artist of his time, whom he himself would most like to see illustrate his work: Howard Wandrei. While much of Wandrei's best work, I understand, has never been published, it ought to be for it is really fine.

Hannes wrote me of his enthusiasm in being chosen to illustrate The Shadow Over Innsmouth, Pungi from Yuggoth (WEIRD TALES) as well as The Outsider, Pickman's Model (FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES) and The Cats of Ulthar (FANTASTIC NOVELS). Hannes complained sometimes that some of the pulps he was commissioned to illustrate were so unimaginative and run-of-the-mill that they bored him and gave him nothing to sink his teeth into. Not so Lovecraft! It must be mentioned that Bok created some really striking horrors in the Lovecraft mode for other writers who borrowed the HPL style from time to time. Notable among these is The Sandwin Compact, by August Derleth (WEIRD TALES, November, 1940).

ARKHAM EPISODE

I saw the shape
which slithered from the reef
a grey abomination,
beyond my groping words,
beyond belief.

Terror took me;
down Arkham's ancient streets
I turned and ran -
and then I saw the shapes of grey
... on every hand!
- Joseph Payne Brennan
SURVEY OF CURRENT PUBLICATIONS IN THE FIELD OF THE MACABRE WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON H. P. LOVECRAFT

WEIRDBOOK (Ed/pub W. Paul Ganley, P.O. Box 601, Chambersburg, Pa. 17201). All issues are in print and available at $3 for the five to date. #5 is offset, 32 pages, 75 cents single copy. 10 pieces of short fiction including work by Gerry Page (WS & editor), David R. Bunch, Eddy C. Bertin and others; 9 poems; artwork by Denis Tiani, Dany Prodich, Frank Belknap Long and others. Highly recommended. Order back issues & clean out Paul's attic so he can move this summer. Mention this magazine, HPL, when ordering new subscriptions at the same rate, that is, #6-$10 are $3. The next issue #6 may be doubled up 6-7 but 6 will definitely contain two hitherto unpublished long short stories, one by H. Warner Munn and the other by Robert E. Howard, plus Scott Home, Darrell Schweitzer and much more.

WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY (Ed Gerald W. Page; pubbed by Fantasy Publishing Company, 1855 W. Main St., Alhambra, Calif 91801). 60 cents per copy - 6 issues for $3. Number 7 is the latest, 32 pp, excellent art by Wrightson, Jones, Fabian, Berry and others. Long fiction by editor, one short story, assorted features. Next issue will feature E.C. Tubb, Emil Petaja and E. Hoffman Price and unpublished cover art by the late Hannes Bosk. This is the only commercial publication in the field of supernatural horror and deserves the support of everyone.


SHADOW (Ed/pub David Sutton address next above). A regular publication of reviews and commentary on the fantasy literature and arts fields. $1 for 2; $2 for 4. Number 14 was 41 pp, mimeographed with art, article by James Wade, many reviews.

TAMLACHT 12 (Ed/pub Victor Boruta, 11 W. Linden Ave., Linden, N.J. 07036). 60 cents - regular subs are 4/$1. This special issue of a regular "occultzine" contains "Fungi", a Lovecraftian tale by co-editor Al Attanasio; The Lovecraftian works of Colin Wilson by Eddy C. Bertin; Notes on an Entity by Robert Bloch; Necronomicon by Roger Bryant; a "must-have" article on Lovecraft's Providence by Ken Faig, beautifully ill'd by Tim Kirk; The Commonplace Book by John Jacob, and a glossary by Unknown Radath by Harry Morris. Highly recommended - 32 pp.

MOONBROTH (Ed Dale C. Donaldson, pub: Malvern Enterprises, P.O. Box C, Bellevue, Wash 98009). Looseleaf, one-side only - may not have any back issues available. #4 was 24 pages - 4 weird tales, several full page illlos. Issues are $1 each, published irregularly - whenever there are enough subscriptions for the issue.

IS # 4 (Ed/pub Tom Collins, 4305 Balcones Drive, Austin, TX 78731) 82 pp, offset, for $3. Dedicated to August Derleth with articles by R. Bergier, Jacques Bergier, Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury, Lin Carter, Avram Davidson, Fritz Leiber, F.B. Long, Robert Lowdes, Roderic Meng, Larry Niven and a host of others. For another $6 you can "gamble" that this extremely capable editor will be able to continue to produce (when he returns from frigid Alaska) high quality material which is a credit to the world of fandom, by ordering the next four issues of the publication. The next issue is to feature Nobel-prizewinner Robert Lear, Chip Delaney, Ike Asimov, R.A. Lafferty and Brian Lumley so far. Not particularly for macabre fans like IS 4 is, but recommended for fans in general and students of amateur journalism.

MATHOM 6 (Ed Joe Pumilia and Bill Wallace - inquiries to Joe at Box KK, Brenham TX 77833) - due in October of 1971. It's had its problems but is worth waiting for because of Larry Niven, E. Hoffman Price, some good satire, weird art. Price was 60 cents, may be different - write first.

AMBROSIA (Ed/pub Allen D. Gullette, 904 Allen Road, Nashville Tenn 37214) is in process of preparation; as to contributions and purchases, please inquire.

THE DARK BROTHERHOOD - organization for fans of the Arkham House writers, not just Lovecraft. Write to George Record, P.O. Box 426, Denver, Colo.

NYCTALOPS (ed/pub Harry O. Morris,Jr., 500 Wellesley S.E., Albuquerque, N.M. 87106) Latest issue was #5, 60 pp beautifully mimeo'd. All past issues (probably o.p. - inquire) have been extremely interesting and helpful to the HPL fan - topical reviews, indexes, etc. The last price was 50 cents per issue but it's best to inquire. Fiction editor is Paul Berglund and the Silver Scarab Press is planning an all-fiction publication - THROUGH THE DARK GATEWAY. Details from Harry including address for contributions. Issue 6 is due out shortly and sounds excellent. Highly recommended.

COLLECTORS BULLETIN 13 - due out in April/May, 1972; 25 cents or 6/$1 sub. Ed/pub is Mike Scott, Box 2043, Alhambra, Calif. 91803. Will feature articles reprinted from Francis Laney's legendary THE ACOLYTE, reproductions of Finlay's dj for THE OUTSIDER & OTHERS; Alva Rogers' Lovecraftian artwork, and more art by Schermeister, Docherty, Riley, Morris and others. More of an HPLish nature is expected. The latest issue (#12) feature's Ben Indick's article on David H. Keller, Tom Cockroft's Elliot Dold art index, reviews of recent bibliographic projects by fans, reviews of fanzines, large ad section and lettercol. We apologize to any publishers whose works should have been included in this listing but were not, for these are the only publications we have seen.