

MAINSTREAM III





Mainstream #3 comes to you from Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins at 303 16th Avenue East, #102, Seattle, WA 98112, USA (phone # 206-329-6282). It is available for contributions of art or writing, for letters of praise and comment, for trade with other magazines devoted to science fiction, fandom or plain silliness, or for 75¢ (3 issues for \$2.00). This issue is being completed in time for the Norwescon #2, and today is March 18, 1979. This is a Specific Northwest Press Publication.

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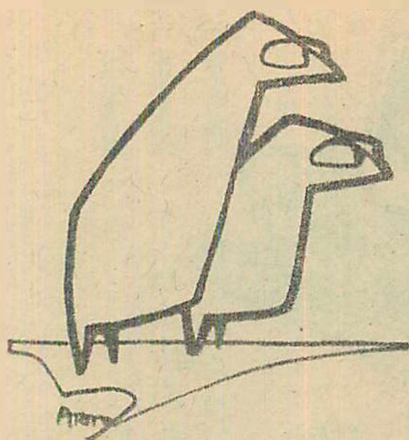
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SUZLECOL

SUZANNE TOMPKINS

Hullo. It's us. In case you're wondering why this fanzine is Mainstream #3 and haven't seen it before, well, actually, it's a letter substitute that Jerry and I started after moving to Seattle which sort of got out of hand. There have been two previous issues, sent to about 100-odd people (no comments, please); #2 went out before Worldcon.

Why we're doing this, I don't know. We miss doing a genzine (although I'm sure that along about running off page 20 we'll vividly remember why we stopped doing The Spanish Inquisition). and I never could get the hang of doing a letter substitute.

So here we go! You'll notice, of course, some similarity to SpanInq. (It's us, isn't it?) We already have two of our former columnists--in fact, Loren MacGregor started the whole thing by handing us an article. Somehow I couldn't grasp the concept of a letter-substitute with columnists, and Jerry and I both really knew it was only a matter of time anyway, since we're now both in Seattle. (Old faneds never die...) And Jon Singer is back, all the way from Boulder, Colorado ((typist's note: where he was the inspiration for a popular teevee show))(in spite of my protests about having to hand-letter "Technocrat of the Breakfast Table" again; his type of craziness is worth it). In future issues, we may have Peter Roberts and Ginger Buchanan returning. With Peter, one hopes, it's just a matter of asking him for material--we'd love to have some of his wonderful TAFF report, which is being printed in chapters in various fanzines, if he'll permit. However, being 3000 miles from New York may make slogging an article out of Bear a bit difficult. We'll see.

New approaches are planned to change our style a bit. For example, Jessica Amanda Salmonson's article on poetry, which is actually reprinted from Moonstill Tulip Wine and others, a collection of poetry by Jessica and Diane Policelli, ushers in what we hope to be a series of peripatetic articles on writing by different authors, run under the column title of "Skipping Stones." This is something different for us and I hope interesting to many of our audience.

#

Launching back into fanzine publishing has been amazing. Difficult, actually. You see, in moving to Seattle, I had to leave the mimeo (*snif*) in New York City, after being convinced by my father that it would cost more to ship it out here than it would cost to buy a used one when I got here. And since I couldn't find a way to ship my perfectly unbreakable, easily portable trunk out here and had to leave it in New York (where it's still living with Stu Shiffman, I think), the thought of trying to locate a machine box, etc... So, the Johnstown Flood Press was sold to a quickly rising New York SF editor and was left along with numerous mimeo supplies. Which is all just a wordy way to say that Jerry and I have had to start all over again from scratch as far as "pubbing our ish" is concerned. Thinking our first issue would be modestly small, we were going to xerox it, but it's grown considerably in the past few weeks and mimeo is the only way. And here we are in a land with few, few working mimeos to borrow. Not to mention electro-stencillers and mimeoscopes, and...well, you see. At this point, Frank Denton has come to the rescue with the loan of both his electronic stencil maker and mimeo--new to me, which is another way to say that I haven't the foggiest notion what this thing is going to look like. (A.B. Dick has

proven to be quite nice, though, giving me a price break on paper and locating a used machine for me to look at later this week.) Things have gotten so complicated. Why did I say I wanted to do this again....?!?

By our next installment, we are hoping to have our own mimeo, supplies, et al. Probably

#

Ah, yes, about this issue--We owe many thanks to a number of people (without whom...) --Frank Denton has already been mentioned; he really saved our lives on this; John Berry and John Carl both gave us art from their files for a fanzine which might otherwise have been artless (er, I mean, uhm); and Steve Stiles gave us permission to use the cover drawing, which originally appeared in a Lunacon program book. A Mr. MacGregor gave us the loan of his car on several occasions, and of himself (or himself) on one paper-buying expedition. (I can't resist throwing in a typical faned-type statement, i.e., Stu Shiffman's illustrations for Loren's article, which were mailed from New York three weeks ago, still haven't arrived; he's doing them over; I don't know what to expect...)

Also on "editorial matters", our print run will be about 250 this issue, of which 200 are being sent to all our friends and friendly acquaintances (which is why this damn thing has to be mimeoed). The remainder are available for the usual (you know who you are) or 75¢, which ever comes first, as are future issues. As far as trades are concerned, Jerry and I don't need two copies (unless we arrange otherwise), but I would like to be unreasonable and ask that both our names appear on the envelope since I automatically assume that zines that arrive addressed to Jerry are meant only for Jerry.

Enough of that. (I'm sure there'll be something interesting in the colophon to this effect; take a look.)

#

Having not written anything about goings on since before Iguacon, I have the strong feeling that I should mention what's been going on in my life, how I felt about the Worldcon, and your basic "news notes from all over," but I've been spending a great deal of time being very busy doing not so much. Basically, I've enjoyed the past nine months or so, but have little to say about them. I did want to mention Iggy, though, since it took me nearly a month to recover--some sort of record for me. Perhaps I was out of practice for a five-day con--my last worldcon was in 1974. And I did see three sunrises, average about three hours of sleep a night, see about 90% of the people I know, smile a lot and cry a little, and have a marvelously enjoyable time, at least most of the time. Even the time I spent "wired for sound," working for the con on security staff, was interesting since I could wander around and talk with people and "work" at the same time. (Did you notice, if you were there, how many of the people helping out at Iggy were from Seattle?) Even survived the convention "torture"--walking between the two hotels!

I think the committee, in spite of what may have looked like insurmountable problems at the time, did a great job, all of them. YAY!

#

That piece of paper which annoyed you when it dropped out of the zine onto the floor or into your dinner or whatever, is in fact a TAFF ballot and most of you probably have dozens of them by now. Be that as it may, if you carefully peruse the flyer, you will see that my name appears, magically, on the ballot in two rather different capacities. That is to say--

FRED HASKELL FOR TAFFO

I've embarrassed myself by not being more vocal about it, but this is the first thing I've published since the TAFF race began. It's rather exciting, actually. Just to be able to run is an honor. Scary, though, since I understand that I'm actually supposed to write something should I, uh...

#

And now, another in our continuing series, "Suzle Takes a Trip:"

Last night I was talking to Fred Haskell on the phone and the subject of plane travel versus train/bus travel came up. We talked about something that Tom Digby had said in a Minneapa mailing which Fred quoted and commented on in his Minneapa zine (I'm not even going to try to get all the quote within quote within quote marks straight) "One thing I notice about planes is that there is often no real feeling that you've really gone anywhere. You go to the airport and they load you into this funny-looking long narrow room, then you sit there for several hours while they jounce you around a bit and parade topographic maps past the window and maybe serve you a meal, and when they let you out you find they've rebuilt the waiting room, set the clocks ahead two or three hours, and changed the sales tax..." As Fred then commented, this is very well put. Later, I recalled one of my more interesting trips that helps me appreciate Tom's words all the more.

I was traveling from New York to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to visit my brother and sister-in-law, a 3½ hour drive, but a 6 hour bus trip, since the bus stops in every Middlesex village and farm, not to mention spending an ungodly amount of time in Philadelphia; so I had decided that flying was the only way to fly (and I'd gotten a good fare). I alerted Ken and Frances of my arrival--"I'll be flying in and arriving at the Harrisburg Airport; you know--Olmstead." (If this sounds too familiar a name to you, that's because somewhere up the road or across the river or whatever is Olmstead Air Force Base.)

In years past I'd flown into the Harrisburg Airport quite often, visiting my high school roommate during the summer or just flying one of Allegheny's older routes to Pittsburgh. Flying was quite possible during my college days--those of you my age or a bit older will remember one of the better, but unfortunately now non-existent, benefits of being under 22 (or even 23-25), Flying Half Fare, which essentially reduced the cost of flying to bus fare. We of the old WPSFA group went to many cons that were a little too far to drive for a weekend that way, a Midwestcon here, a Boskone there, cons that we were later to discover were within driving distance when desperate enough. (And, of course, there were all those Worldcons...) Flying wait-list has its moments, of course, but I don't recall ever not getting onto a flight I'd wait-listed, even during holiday rushes.

It was a weekend trip to Harrisburg, and my flight arrived about 7:00 o'clock, Friday evening. Walking from the plane into the terminal, I noticed that things certainly had changed in the few years since I'd been there. (There were signs of remodeling everywhere.) The Harrisburg Airport I'd spent so much time in had looked like an old bus station; the newer version now looked like a remodeled bus station. Ken and Frances were not there to meet me.

Since Allegheny Airlines (about which enough has been written by other fans), did not serve actual food, I was beginning to get a bit peckish, but hated to try to do anything about it since Ken and Frances were sure to arrive any minute. (You know how irritating it is to wait for someone who is going to "arrive-any-minute"? I spent about three hours like that once, but that's another story. You don't want to go anywhere--you just stay in that place with the great view of the doors, waiting...)

After about 45 minutes, worry began to set in and I tried to call them. Of course, there was no answer.

There was also no place to get any food. Not a coffee shop, or a drugstore counter, or the typical airport restaurant with the \$3.00 hamburgers and a view of the runway. Nada. It was Friday evening in Harrisburg and, of course, everything was closed up tight.

Eventually someone tried to talk to me. (One of my least favorite things about public transportation is exposing myself to strangers who may try to talk to me. Others look upon travel as a great way to meet interesting people, but the only people I ever "meet" are like the woman who sat next to me on the bus from Seattle to Vancouver and shelled and ate peanuts for the length of the trip to Bellingham, Washington--and dropped every damned shell on the floor of the bus. I had to sit next to her and was mortified to think that someone would think it was me. She got off there and I had to ride, with my feet crunching away at the shells, for the rest of the trip to Vancouver. Crossing the border was interesting...)

An older gentleman tried to strike up a conversation about the airport reconstruction (by now I was practically the only person left in an airport where there are about ten flights a day and therefore a tad conspicuous), and I mentioned something about hardly recognizing the Old Olmstead Airport since they'd remodeled it. (Actually, I had been becoming more and more nervous since I didn't recognize anything about the airport at all. And I do have a reputation for traveling well, and getting about in strange places, and remembering what places look like and stuff...) He looked at me in a quizzical manner and said something like, "But this is the Harrisburg International Airport; Olmstead is miles from here!"

Harrisburg International Airport?!? The mind reels...

The thought that I had arrived at the wrong airport in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for god's sake, raced through my mind. It is the state capital, but a basic description of Harrisburg runs somewhere between dull and somnambulistic. Somewhat akin to arriving at the wrong airport in Punxsutawney or Latrobe or somewhere.

About this time, just before the panic peaked, Ken and Frances arrived, mad as hell, after a frantic trip from the other airport, where they'd spent an hour trying to meet me. Eventually, they'd asked someone about flights from New York, were looked at as though they'd just asked about flights from Venus, and were informed that all flights of that nature were now arriving at the new airport, a mere twenty miles' frantic drive away.

I was, aum, er, chagrined...



By the way, the new Harrisburg Airport is "International" because Air Canada flies to and from Toronto (on alternate Tuesdays apparently).

#

The other piece of paper that tumbled out of the zine is the Fanzine Activity Achievement Award nomination ballot (FAAN Award for short), and is reasonably self-explanatory. Jerry and I aren't sure that we're even eligible to nominate this year, since Mainstream was really a personalzine last year, but we both strongly support them (come on, Moshe, where are the plaques for our funny little statues? it's been two years...) and hope that as many of you who are eligible will nominate and vote. ((Typist's note: Far as I can tell, personalzines are as good as genzines for nominating purposes :::jak))

Speaking of which, it has come to our attention that for several years now one of the best fan artists around has not gotten a nomination and we think it should be definitely rectified this year.

STU SHIFFMAN FOR BEST FAN ARTIST!!!

He's rather prolific and very good, and I really feel he deserves a nomination and thus a chance at this year's FAAN Award. Since they are peer awards, this means all you artists out there should fill in the enclosed ballot immediately and rush right out and post it. This means you!

#



Last minute thanks--in the short period of time since the first part of my editorial was stencilled, some things have changed and new thank yous are in order.

Clifford Wind is driving me downtown later this afternoon to pick up our new (well, old, actually) mimeo! I don't know what the thing is going to be like, but we'll all find out at the same time, since I'm going to try to run the zine off with it. (For those of you interested in this type of detail--it's a Model 425 A.B. Dick and has the two requirements I absolutely insisted on--it has a paste ink cylinder and is electric. As to what parts need replacing, etc., I'll have to determine that. I prefer older machines, really, since they were made with metal parts, unlike today's plastic.) Thanks, Cliff.

#

It has come to our attention (by way of those lucky few who have seen the cover in advance) that the subject matter is, well, obscure. We understand it, of course, but will the average reader of our zine? Judging from the local examples, our average reader is pig-ignorant when it comes to sf. So we will award the First Space in the Mainstream Hall of Fame (which the winner will occupy for fifteen minutes) to the most intelligent (or silliest) explanation of the cover. (Not you, Steve.)

---SVT

Technocrat of the Breakfast-Table

JON
SINGER

I.) New Job Department.

I recently started work at Colorado Video, a pleasantly mad little company here in Boulder, which manufactures a peculiar line of video instruments. I will not go into the whole thing here, but in general, I am now learning some of the intricacies of the video signal itself, how to send it (exquisitely slowly, over telephone lines and such) and receive it, how to make it from whole cloth (now, don't laugh; there's a hell of a lot of information in there that is not the picture itself, and sometimes one has to invent some of it), how to take it apart and use the pieces...all of this is fairly complicated, and I haven't even begun to deal with color yet. Any of you who are foolish enough to want to know how tv works, write furious insane letters to the editors of this highly esteemed wireless ~~copy~~ ~~copy~~ publication and demand that I be instructed to tell The Video Story in these hallowed pages. (Esteemed Singer imagines following exchange: "Ghosh, Jerry, what utter bullshit Singer is coming out with these days!" "Yeah, Suzle, I know, but we have to humor him to at least a small extent. He used to be all right, at least most of the time.")

II.) Justifiable Garbage.

With the current surge of interest in computers for home and hobbyist should come a fair amount of curiosity about word processing machinery: the two are almost inextricably intertwined. While there are editing programs for larger machines, I will not deal with them here, as most of us do not have access to anything other than micros. Moreover, micros are quite decently suited to the task at hand.

There is a broad range of available word and text processing...I hesitate to say equipment, because for the hobbyist and home systems at least, word processing comes in various soft forms, rather than as add-on hardware. Any decent microcomputer system with a floppy disk can be used to do word processing. What one needs are the relevant programs. On the other hand, one can go out and buy from, say, NBI here in Boulder, a complete word processor, which has in it a printer of some sort (very likely a Qume typewriter...typewriter is hardly the word for devices like the Qume and the Diablo, but I don't have a truly appropriate word, as they are not just printers, not just typewriters, not just terminals...) and a box with the major goodies in it, and a CRT monitor on which you do the editing. The capabilities of the machine, from what I've been told, are fairly awesome, and are set up for maximum convenience for the person using it. The text under edit is shown on the screen of the monitor just as it will finally appear when printed out, even to the point of having the monitor look at only part of a line and walk along it bit by bit if the line is too long to display in its entirety. (On ordinary systems, the machine will insert a fake carriage return and continue to display the rest on the next line of the screen. This does not tell you what your actual output is going to look like, and makes editing rather difficult in many instances.) Machines like this are, of course, quite expensive (I am sure that one can go out and spend up to \$10,000), and are generally not intended for the hobbyist, but I'm sure there are a few individuals who can go out and buy such things. My understanding of the NBI machines is that they use the Motorola 16800 microprocessor...in fact, I have been told that they use up to three of them per machine! NBI, by the way, seems to

stand, at the moment, for

Nothing But Initials

since the departure of the founder of the company. They have a reputation around here for being a bit crazy, but they do seem to make (and make use of) good equipment, including one hell of a nice printer.

At the other end of the scale is the standard hobby computer, or rather the moderately advanced hobby computer with floppy disk and printer. (It does little good to edit, say, a four page fanzine article, if you then have to copy it out long-hand...) One can purchase, from various sources (I have been told that Technical Systems Consultants has a particularly good set of software available for this application) the programs which manipulate the text. One must bear in mind the fact that these will not cause your monitor to display the text as it will eventually appear on the printer; they will not anticipate many of your commands with regard to margins and tabbing, for example (the big machines really are designed with convenience in mind, which is not feasible under more ordinary circumstances); they probably do not have totally arbitrary line length. (An example: on a major computer, say, in a university, the printer is probably limited to a maximum of 132 characters per line. To prevent mishaps, the text editor in use on such a computer will wave a little red flag at you if you attempt to specify a line length in excess of that limit. On some smaller hobby machines, the printer can put only 40 characters on a line...) Some machines will, if the line length specified is in excess of their capabilities, generate a fake carriage return (as a terminal does) and continue on the next line. This can result in

text which

comes out in alternating long and short lines, a definite

inconvenience, wouldn't you say? In fact, it can be extremely

annoying! (File this under problems to avoid if at all possible.)

The commands used by editors vary considerably, and there is not enough space here to go into them too deeply, but I should state that there seem to be two major classes. Text editors are programs which are designed to deal with arbitrary concatenations of characters. Most text editors wouldn't know a word from a worm, and don't care. It is feasible to manipulate a string of 55,000 two-digit numbers with one space between each pair using the same commands one would use to manipulate a novel. (Well, actually one uses slightly different subsets of the same set of commands. The difference is small, though.) Many text editors use single-character commands. Example: in TECO (used on many Digital Equipment Corp. minicomputers and large computers), it is possible to locate the first occurrence of the word "tomato" in a piece of text by using two slashes and the letter S, if I recall correctly. Then hit the "escape" button twice to tell the machine that it can go ahead and do its thing, like so: S/tomato/\$\$.(I have used the dollar sign to signify a tap on the escape key. Escape is not a printing character, but the machine returns a dollar sign when you hit it, if you are in TECO at the time.)

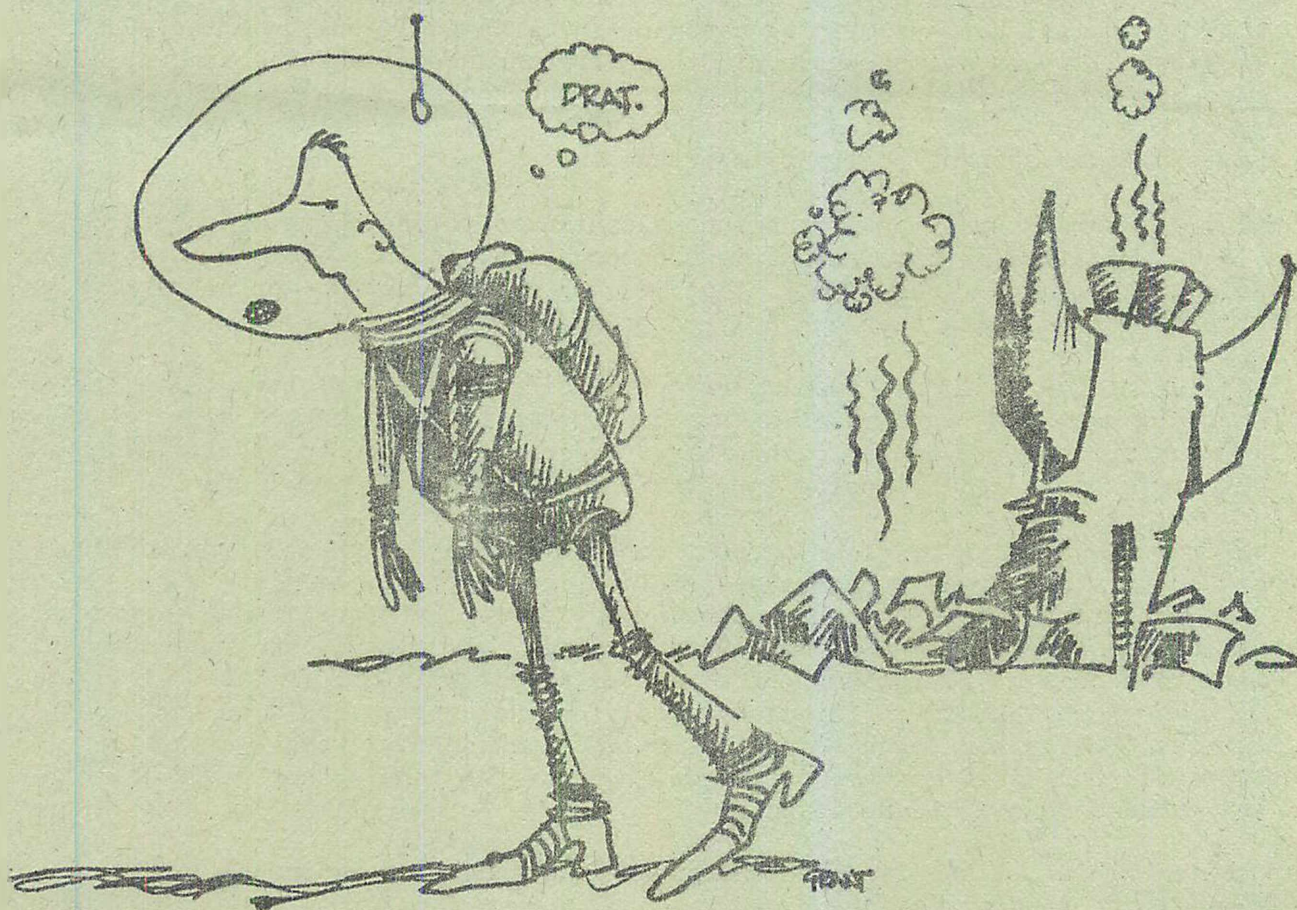
There are a great many of these one and two character commands in TECO, and it is a pain in the butt to learn. Use the wrong one, and you can do considerable damage to your text. (Partly for this reason, and partly because computers do occasionally fall asleep on the job, one is advised to prepare backups fairly frequently. This gives you at least a partially updated version of your text on the disk in case you

lose the version you are working on.) Many word processors use a smaller set of similar commands, and some use commands which are more readily comprehensible and easier to remember. Moreover, if one can jot down all the possible commands on a single sheet, with a bit of explanation of each, one can just hang the sheet next to the terminal. With TECO, one needs a little book just to list and explain the commands.

Fortunately, the return for this is that TECO is an immensely powerful program. Unfortunately, the nearest thing to a micro for which a version of TECO might exist is the LSI-11, which is rather expensive and which is not the usual hobbyist machine. (I think that because Heathkit offers the LSI-11 as their larger machine, one may be able to get TECO for it.)

But I digress. The important things to know are that if one does not have a disk and a printer, one will have a great deal of trouble implementing a word processor; if one does have the required hardware, there are various different sets of software around, and that if one is rich, one can go out and buy a beautiful and very convenient machine which will damn near anticipate your every desire, and will produce beautiful copy, ~~available for printing~~ ready to go in front of the camera.

---Jon Singer





STEPPING STONES:

I started writing poetry a long, long time ago but never considered myself a poet. Rhymester, maybe, since most of my poems had very careful schemata; they scanned swell, with rhyme sublime. These were like word-games to me, not art. There was poetry I liked; my first inkling that poetry could speak deeply to my needs came with the discovery of William Blake (for example, the brief poem "The Sick Rose")--but even Blake was missing some element that I did not yet even suspect existed. I didn't consider poetry as important a form of literary expression as fiction writing. Since I'd never found anyone whose poetry encompassed my own half-realized needs, and could barely relate to my own verse, I took this as evidence of a fundamentally limiting and limited arena. I had not yet discovered feminist poets.

Poetry was (in its then-manifestation) so much easier to write (and to get published) than a short story that the latter maintained the more mystic quality to me. Poetry paled to insignificance in the shadow of good fiction. Of the dozens of my poems snapped up by eager publishers, only a couple had struck me as meaningful on any level higher than exercise. Word for word they weren't any harder nor easier to write than fiction, but they took less time save in rare instances. The illusion of simplicity caused me subconsciously to belittle poetry.

Thus I had years of semi-disrespect for poetry (though I didn't recognize that at the time) when I finally discovered Adrienne Rich and Marilyn Hacker. I knew there was something special here--something changing in me as well--but even the genius of a few exceptional poets can be buried in the overabundance of awful, sincere, well-meaning poetry that appears more commonly in the chapbooks, pamphlets and feminist literary magazines (to use "literary" colloquially). So it still took me a while to gain a genuine awareness of poetry's importance.

Meanwhile, mainstream small press publishers continued to snatch up my careful rhymes, and I received letters and reviews on occasion, so that once or twice I almost thought, hey, maybe I am a poet. But it rang somehow untrue--or not yet true. No one excels at something they scarcely comprehend.

A storyteller at heart, I made sure my rhymery designed lucid, plotted tales. I think in their own right some of these are good poems (though perhaps bad art) and I indulge in them now and again to this day. These are written to fiction standards and oughtn't to be judged by poetry expectations.

Poetry, I was discovering by slow degrees, could be much more than patterned verse or rhymed short stories. It encompassed fiction, non-fiction, even music on some level, and philosophy--it is capable of being a transmitter of all human experience. By the time I discovered Olga Broumas, Susan Griffin, and others, and had developed an ability to recognize genius among the clutter of poets in the feminist small press, I had already gained an intense respect for what poetry could be and occasionally was. Poetry had begun to enrich my life in wonderful ways--what other feminist poets brought to me was, sometimes, part of the fabric that bound me to life even in moments of intense despair.

To get to that point, I had first to unlearn things taught me by inferior poets

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Originally published in Moonstill Tulip Wine and Others

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THE REVELATION OF FEMININIST POETICS

JESSICA SALMONSON

(mostly men). One of those things was an oft repeated diatribe against free-form poetry. Especially among science fiction and fantasy novelists (who are generally inferior fictioneers, and absolutely wretched poets), there is a tendency to lament Victorian style, to dismiss anything that doesn't rhyme. If it doesn't rhyme, say they, it is nothing but fractured prose ignoring simple grammar rules, divided randomly into meaningless sentences that never make a clear, concise statement or story; pretentious rot, to limited thinking. What I had to learn independently of these negative reinforcements was that no other art form allows such depth of expression in so few words, and strikes so swiftly the heart of an emotion, idea or vision. It could be ambiguous or direct, it could be anything, express anything, give vent even to feelings and concepts only half-understood but important, necessary...

I think rhymed, patterned verse is important, and I think if I've come to be a good poet (or will develop into a good poet someday) it is because I first learned traditional form and invented new schemata within traditional bounds. I learned early that "kitchen verse" (the kind that makes you tap your foot and read in time) is good only for humor or limited effects. To tell a serious story in verse, the rhymes had to be almost incidental. It wasn't a far jump from there to realize that poetry was improved by avoiding the rules--by relying on something more akin to instinct than learning. Even the restrictions of precise storytelling came to be, in some instances, abhorrent.

It seems to me still that a period of rhyme-writing lends a poet the "feel" for what is melodic as opposed to what is monotonous. When turning to freer poetry forms, this past experience helps in creating a fluid motivation of word and sound rather than the "fractured prose" critics expect. There's a difference between "poets" who cannot write a grammatical sentence or a well-plotted story, and POETS who choose to manipulate language to new effect or avoid convention to achieve a more intuitive result.

If poetry had not previously appealed to me on these important levels, it was because there was no accessible poetry "movement" with which I felt empathy, which spoke to my own still-formulating feelings, experiences, revelations, interests, emotions. Too, few of us are taught to respect poetry in the first place. The very concept of actually liking the stuff is supposed to be pretentious and pretended. (At least among the lowly classes from whence I hail, poetry, like opera, was something no one could really like--except for a snooty lot of privileged Exploiters of All, who didn't know what living was really about. That would be found from Hemingway, I suppose.)

I think even now that many women poets have greater artistic potential than they will ever explore because the patriarchy gives women only a couple of "acceptable" outlets for our creativity. One of the acceptable outlets is poetry. It is, for outward appearances, easier to write poetry than a novel, easier to be a housewife than an independent human being, easier to be an occultist than a philosopher...so we don't always fight the system. A few people will read our poems and we'll be slaves to our art--while men write novels for millions and are handed financial independence to continue to influence those millions. Well, I now know this is not universally true, and in any event, it is no reflection on poetry itself, merely upon society.

Though less popular, poetry is probably the superior art form dealing with words. Look at all the words it has taken to convey a few thoughts in this essay. It could all have been stated more quickly in a poem--perhaps less lucidly, but in a fashion that was of more momentous result and more compatible with native understanding. I am now equally committed to poetry and to fiction; neither dominates the other in my

mind, though I spend more time on fiction because by its very excess of wordage it is more time consuming. Poetry no longer strikes me as mere exercise--it is, at its best, so beyond anything else that it oftentimes staggers my ability of understandings. It may not be the part of my art that promises financial independence, but it is easily as important as my fiction writing, and sometimes on a very personal level it is more important.

A veritable feminist revolution is happening with poetry. It is important to our personal growth as individuals expressing ourselves and experiencing ourselves through others' work and gaining a sense of community, communicating and sharing. It is a strength and a learning that is raw and real. This is a cultural gift to ourselves that keeps us unique as a community of women, enriching us with a kind of ethnicity, empowering us against absorption into the different and sometimes injurious ideology of the "larger" world to which we are otherwise vulnerable and of which we are inescapably and rightly a part.

---Jessica Amanda Salmonson

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You were talking to me in the future, but I heard you in the past. SVT

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If I read a book, and it makes my whole body so cold no fire ever can warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way?

---Emily Dickinson

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That night, as I fell asleep, I thought of the speed of the car, and of the pebbles, crunching, damp, beneath my boots: pebbles worn round and smooth, all of them, by the endless knocking. Strange, I thought, that so much ceaseless soft and endless violence should create such tender shades, so fine a grain, such cool and delicate surfaces. I would have liked to write a poem as round and hard as a stone. But words, but thoughts obtrude. A poem so round and smooth would say nothing. And being human, one must speak.

---Margaret Drabble, The Waterfall

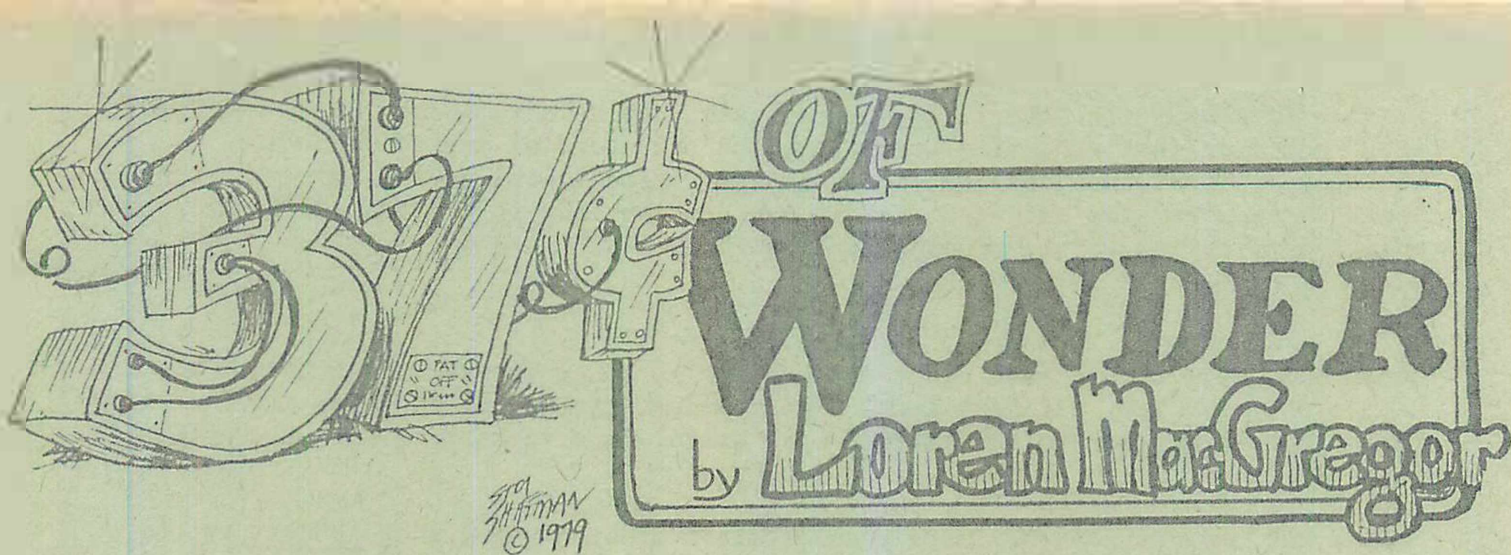
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DEPARTMENT OF INTERESTING OPINIONS

When I look at all the other guys who've got into Galaxy for any length of time at all...if they've had any luck at all, they've been able to stretch a couple of illustrations a long way. I still feel that professionally it made Fabian and Vaughn Bode. As much as people like the Cavalier and Swank stuff Bode did, who would have seen it if they didn't look for it, after seeing him in Galaxy?

---Gene Day, interviewed in Copper Toadstool #5

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Until recently my luck with cars could be described in one word: nonexistent. I've already written about the Coney Island Car, the one which gave you a marvelous ride ...as long as you didn't care where you were going or how you got there--and as long as you weren't at the wheel. "Oh, I think I'll go over...HERE!" it would say, while the driver, in astonishment, would say, "But... But..." Marvelous for the ego. Marvelous for the id.

Do you remember Ralph Nader? Do you remember what he said about Corvairs? Well, they really do that; one tire went flat, the car sort of ambled over to that side, then sort of continued ambling, in a bemused, lacadaisical way--while my brother and a passenger scrambled out--and when it was done ambling it had managed to drop the engine out, on its way to crushing in the roof.

My, my.

Oddly enough, I didn't rush right out and buy me a new Corvair. Not that I was intimidated, mind you, but here I was a year older, getting on in life, and I decided that I should get something a little more solid, more in keeping with my station in life.

What I got was a truck--or, more accurately, a station wagon that thought it was a truck. Where Sheldon's car had leftist leanings, this car was a staunch conservative. Nothing short of a court order could stop this car once it had decided on a course of action, and even then it would have to be issued by an Eisenhower man.

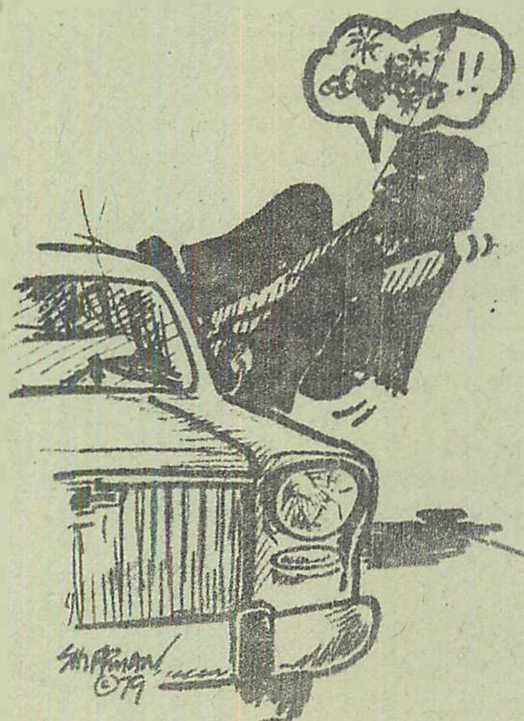
It was a 1958 Ford. They don't make them like that any more. Thank God. Imagine, if you will, that you are sitting behind the wheel of a Cadillac Imperial, or a Lincoln Continental; the finest engineering that money can buy is at your command. There you are, tooling along the freeway, enjoying the cool breezes of spring. Up ahead you see some disturbance; with the flick of a finger you've changed lanes, the power steering of your car functioning effortlessly. You slow, and power brakes respond to the slightest pressure of your foot. Now imagine you're in the same car when every effortless device fails. That's how my car drove every day. With my foot to the floorboards, the car eventually trundled up all the way to forty miles an hour; with both hands braced, shoving with all my weight, I could make a fairly sharp, almost perpendicular turn; and it very seldom took more than 600 yards to brake to a stop. Lovely.

With all that in mind, I decided that there were two things I should do: first, I should have the car insured; second, I should have it stolen. So I tried. I parked it, unlocked, on street corners in unsavory parts of town; I left the key in the ignition; then I went to a cafe, to have breakfast, or lunch, or dinner.

It worked. The car was stolen. Three times. Each time it was returned, twice within twenty four hours.

If it's frustrating to have your car stolen, just think how bad it must be to want it stolen, to have it stolen--and to have it come back, like some mythic figure from an old Greek legend. (If that wasn't bad enough, the car later developed a theft-proof device of its own: the lock on the driver's side rusted in a most peculiar way. With a key--or with a jimmy--one unlocked the door, pushed in the latch...and locked the door. Unlock the door, push in the latch. Unlock the door... Remember those old jokes about keeping an ape busy by turning between two pages of a book, looking for the answer to the question, "How do you keep an ape busy?" Try it some night when you're in a hurry to get home.)

I did get rid of the car, though; I have an



uncle who never returns things, and he borrowed it.

By this time it was 1968, and I was dissatisfied with the cars I'd owned, as well as most of the ones I'd driven. So I decided to build one. This wasn't as simple as it sounds. For one thing, I had no money. For another, I've lived in my present home for over three years, and I still haven't quite figured out how to repair the doorknob in my bedroom.

Nevertheless, and undeterred by facts, I set about building a car. Now, let's see: first you get a mechanic...

My mechanic was a close friend by the name of Bob Penner, also known as Crazy Bob Penner. He lived in one of the strangest houses I've ever seen, a small place with a tiny living room, a tiny kitchen, a tiny bedroom and a tiny bathroom. Actually, he didn't live in the house itself; he lived in the servants' quarters, a small addition built over the garage. I suspect that the whole affair was built by a couple of very rich midgets.

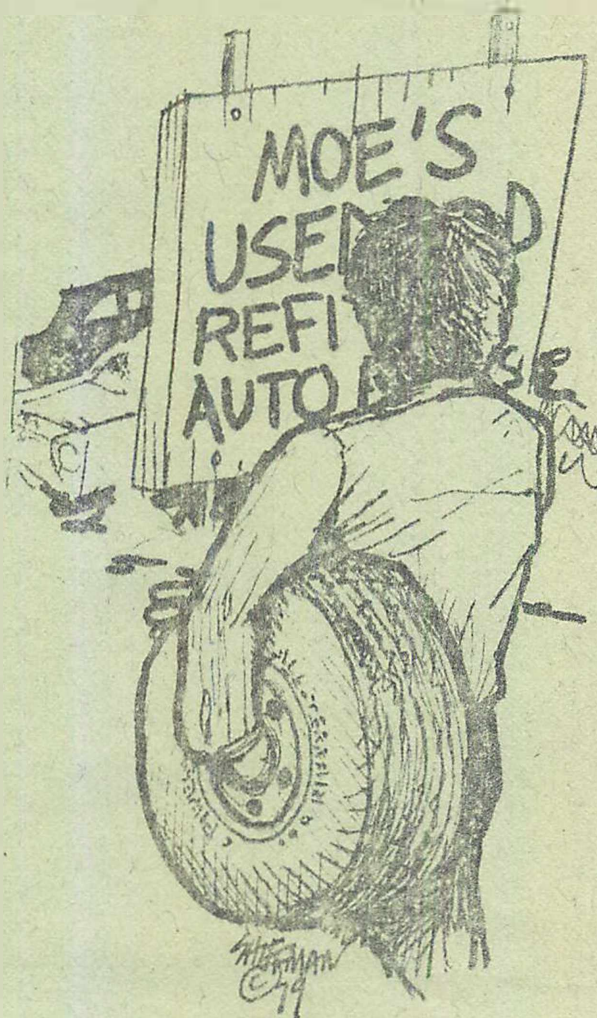
(The relationship between Bob and me takes some explaining. He and I used to live not far from each other, and we both attended the same school. Other than that we had very little in common--except that Bob, when pressed, would admit that he read science fiction. He even abbreviated it properly.

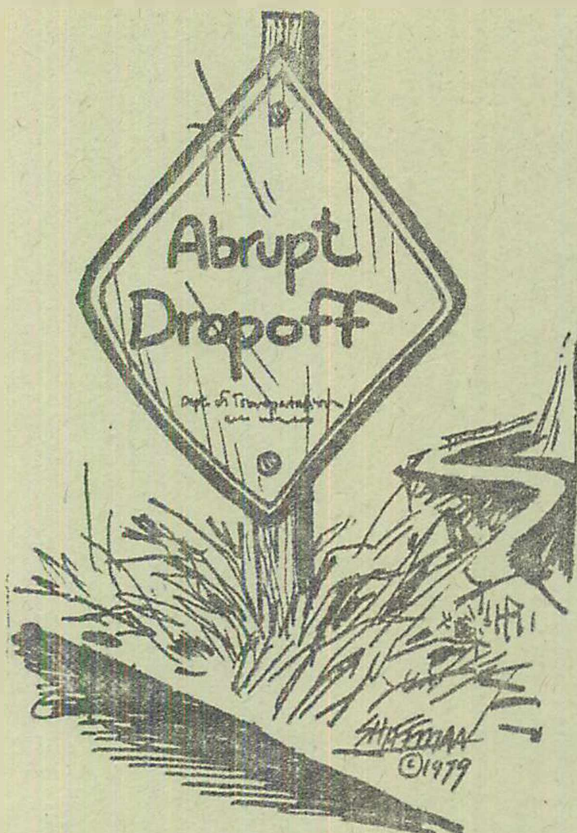
(But I fell in love with him one day when we were going to different destinations on the same street at the same time. Bob had a part-time job as a carpenter, and he was going to work, while I was going downtown to a film class. It happened that we were walking down a fairly busy road, and several times while crossing intersections we'd almost been run down by some idiot trying to slide unnoticed into traffic.

(Bob was wearing his work coveralls, and he had his tools set in those convenient little belt loops so handily provided by the manufacturer. As we entered yet another intersection, and were honked at by yet another irascible driver, Bob took his hammer and as we pulled abreast of the car, casually bashed out both headlights. And kept walking.

(We've been fast friends ever since.)

Bob was understandably cool to the idea of building a car, and convinced me that we should start small. So we built a Volkswagen, a perfectly serviceable, if somewhat bizarre, model. We started by visiting every junkyard in the county, bringing home bits and pieces of Bugs that had gone on to their Reward. Eventually we assembled something that was, more or less, the right shape. Of course, we didn't have a back seat, though we did have a nice new seat in the front on the driver's side and an older but still serviceable seat (from a 1963 model) for a passenger. And we had a transaxle from, I think, a '62 Bug, a basic body from a '65, one fender from a '59, another from a '61. We once calculated that no two adjacent parts were from the





same year. It looked like it. No two adjacent parts were even the same color.

Finally the big day came; we had everything except the engine in place. Right. I don't suppose you've ever lifted a car engine into place by hand? A Volkswagen engine is, fortunately, fairly light. On the other hand, given the choice between holding an engine in place (admittedly I had a rope and a pulley to help) and buying one already in place, I'd rather be in Philadelphia. But in a mere nod and a wink it was done, Bob had affixed the five bolts, and we suddenly had a Car, a workable Car.

"Well, I said, "care to go for a spin?"

"Well, said Bob, "why not?"

So we tooled all around Seattle, thoroughly enjoying every jiggle and bounce, and trying madly to avoid the envious stares of those around us. It was a good bet that none of them had ever built a car for themselves!

But all good things must end someday, and autumn leaves must fall; towards the end of sum-

mer Bob told me he was leaving. He had a job offer in Oceanside, California, and he wanted to know if I'd sell him my interest in the car.

I looked at it, and I thought a bit. "Sure," said I, with a sudden cry, thinking with only a slight pang of regret of the repairs we'd put in since we'd first finished building it.

My, my. Do you know the coast road from Washington to California? That's Highway 101, and it twists and stretches circuitously all the way through Washington and Oregon. Mainly it's Steep, and once you start down there's few other places to go.

Bob started down. About halfway his brakes failed, and he went the rest of the way using his clutch as a brake, trying desperately not to look over the side of the road. The ocean is very lovely right about there, but there's a time and a place for everything.

Somewhere near Oceanside he finally slowed, pulled over to the curb and stopped. He went the rest of the way into town. The Volkswagen didn't, and as far as I know it's still there.

Meanwhile I'd bought another car, a 1963 Dodge Dart (which, for you car buffs, is just like a 1963 Plymouth Valiant, only different). By now you're expecting me to enumerate its faults, but you're wrong. It was a lovely car, if a bit strange; but its strangeness was built in, designed by an engineer who had a wonderful idea. Why not, he said to himself, build a pushbutton car?? And so it was: the Dart (and, as far as I know, the Valiant) had this nifty arrangement; on the left of the steering column were five buttons and a lever, a button for each of the five gears and a lever to put the car in park. On the right side of the steering wheel there were four buttons and a lever, for the airconditioning and for variable heat (it didn't

work; I've never had a car where the heater worked properly). It was a lovely car. Lovely.

A friend of mine owned a car that was equally lovely. It was British, I think. It, too, was a pushbutton automatic. One of the things about automatics is that they become, you know, automatic. His gear box was on the right side of the steering wheel, and the reverse was right about where I was used to reaching for the fan.

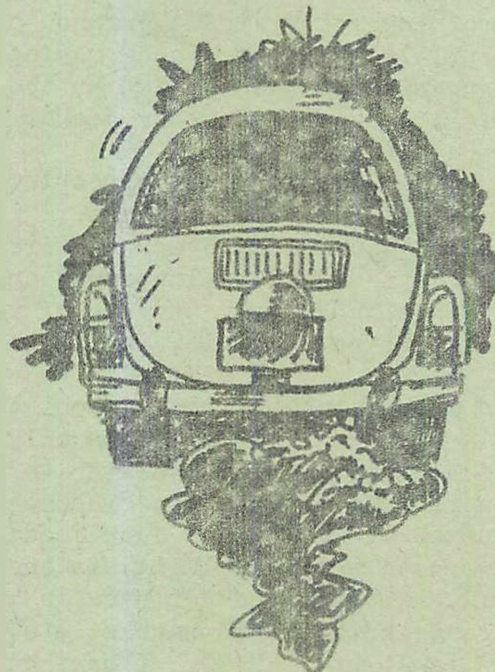
Yes. Well. He, um, wasn't too pleased when I borrowed his car one day.

My '63 Dodge eventually went the way of all flesh, but I still miss its clumsy, ungainly, but small body. My current car was considered a small car in 1968, but times change, and when friends see me driving around in my blue 1968 Dodge Dart, the reaction seems to be, "What do you need a car that big for?" Well, I don't. But I like it. Jeff Frane, my soon-to-be-erstwhile roommate, has been the car's most vociferous critic, but even he's changed his tune. After all, as Suzle keeps telling me, my car has been to more conventions than I have. The poor little thing has been through minus-20-degree weather on the way to Wisconsin last winter, and this past summer it weathered the Sonora desert, through temperatures up to 120. A couple thousand miles later it had been to the NonCon in Alberta (without me, *sniff*), and even now another trip to Wisconsin is planned--not to mention a small jaunt up to Vancouver for the Raincon.

Let's see, in a year I've put roughly 40,000 miles on the car, and except for almost running out of gas in Hysham, Montana ("There's not much to do in Hysham," we were told by the young gas station attendant. "Um...got any dope?"); except for being unable to start the car on the way home from Madison ("We're having a special on Dodge Darts," we were told by the almost-middle-aged gas station attendant, "This is the third one I've started today"); and except for nearly blinding several truckers on the way home when our low beams burned out in Montana ("I don't care if you've got them adjusted better now," we were told by the past-middle-aged cop, "either you stop and get them fixed tonight or you wait until tomorrow to leave the state") I've had really good luck with the car. (Oh, the universal went out on the way to Igua-nacon, but what's a universal among friends?)

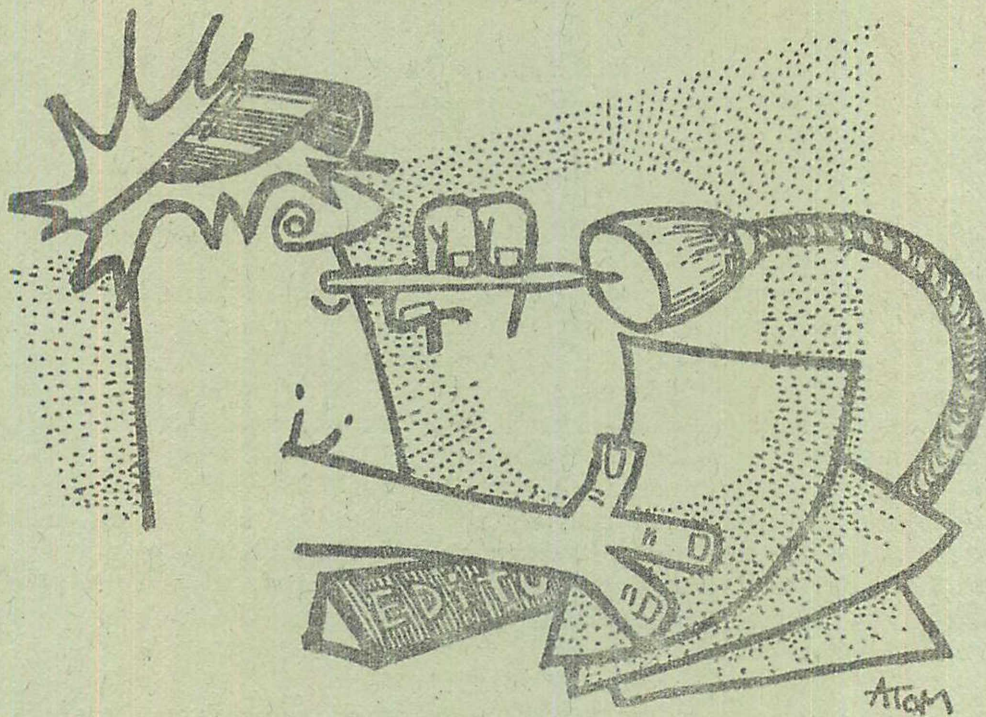
The trunk opens, the doors unlock, it steers without undue stress and strain, it stops with a minimum of fuss--and when I turn the key in the ignition, the motor starts. What more can I ask?

---Loren MacGregor



BEWITCHED, BOTHERED & B

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JERRY KAUFMAN

Much to my surprise, I am writing an editorial for a genzine, rather than a portion of a letter-substitute. Yet the following, written about four months ago, still is worth using, because the details of my life are the same.

"Because of the Christmas rush, we're all going to have to come in to work on Sunday. It's just amazing how much property insurance is given as gifts each year."

Seriously, the backup in my new office job was caused by the time elapsed between a former employee's leaving this job and my entering on it a month later. The company I'm working for writes insurance on buildings, equipment, jewelry, etc. (no life, health, liability or ocean marine) and has to have all sorts of record changes and extra premium charges posted by the end of the year, and there were toppling stacks of files buttressing our desks.

It's a small company (only four people in the Seattle office) and a flexible one, willing to train a novice like myself in the intricate and arcane ways of the insurance business, made even more intricate in Washington by the existence of an examining bureau which, by law, must approve most of our transactions. The company is called Deans and Homer, and few of you, even big-time underwriters like Lynnette Parks, will have heard of it, as it operates only on the West Coast.

One of the most fetching things about the company is its location just north of Seattle's downtown. The office is only a few blocks from Seattle Center, which contains the Pacific Science Center (a science museum), the Modern Art Pavilion of the Seattle Art Museum, an amusement park and Center House, which contains the Food Circus (better known as Junk Food of all Nations). Tower Books and Tower Records are both within walking distance (I can get from work to Tower Records, pick out five albums, and get back in half-an-hour) as are a selection of restaurants, supermarkets, Radio Shacks, etc. There's even a movie house, though the first show isn't until 7:30. I have gone there only once, I must admit, to catch a re-release of A Boy and His Dog (filling out the bottom of a double-bill, with

an old Roman Polanski movie, The Diary of Forbidden Dreams, heading it (anybody know anything about the latter?; it was given a most misleading representation as a sex-ploiter in the newspaper ads)).

Speaking of going places (if you look back, you'll see that I was speaking of going to movies: this is a sneaky transition), Suzanne Tompkins wants to go to England with your help. She is standing for the Tran-Atlantic Fan Fund (she doesn't run because it puts her out of breath). Need I remind you of the years Suzle has put into fandom starting clubs, fanzines, conventions and Thanksgiving dinners? Should I tell you that she's been a co-Guest of Honor at two conventions (something she herself forgot to mention in her TAFF platform)? Do I have to tell you how funny she can be, how charming, how nice to be around? Should I even begin to mention how much she wants to go to Seacon, and how amazed she'll be if she wins? Let's all get in there and amaze the hell out of her. *S*U*Z*L*E* FOR TAFF! (This has been a free political announcement. Partiality our Speciality.)

#

What to Give Your Spiritual Master

(written after overhearing a strange conversation on a Metro bus)

Give him the first day of the rest of your life. Give him a hand. Give him the gift that keeps on giving. Give him the peace that passeth understanding. Give him a piece of your mind. Give him a piece of your heart. Give him hell. Give him Chanel. Give him up. Give him away. Give him what for. Give him the key to the golden door. Give him hope. Give him a lift. Give him the secret of the badger grift. Give him the secret handgrip of fandom. Give him a smile.. Give him everything you've got. Give him tsurris. Give him such a look it could kill. Give him a hint. Give him a thrill.

Give him a glimpse of Rainier. Give him the word "my." Give him the smell of lead-free gasoline. Give him the taste of steel wool. Give a 1912 Bluebook. Give him a pinch of magic dust. Give a sequel to Lord Jim. Give him flannel socks. Give him a report on alcoholic children. Gim him a tour of Western Avenue. Give him a palimpsest. Give him to understand that you've mastered his koan. Give him a runaround through you ego. Give him your ego. Give him a Latin Grammar. Give him the word, and tell him it's out. Give him a pencil, and a little plastic sharpener, and a yellow legal pad. Now give him the test. Now give him the go-by.

Is he gone? What did he give you?

#

I don't want to say much about the Worldcon in Phoenix, beyond saying that I enjoyed much of it, seeing old friends and making new ones. (Someday I will take notes and avoid personal traumas, thus allowing for a report as voluminous as any Walter Breen opus.) What I really want to talk about is the going to and the returning from.

My way to Phoenix was rather round-about. I first spent a week in Denver, traveling there by Greyhound bus, through Oregon, Utah and Colorado. Much of Oregon was bountiful and green, but once into eastern Oregon (quite similar to eastern Washington), I saw nothing but desert, bare rocks, jagged empty land and a few antelope. This is all fascinating country, but I don't have an affinity for it.

In Denver I stayed with my sister and brother-in-law. They put up with me and trundled me off to restaurant after restaurant. Denver is (as far as I could see) great masses of cars traveling great ribbons of highway to acres of bizarre restaurants under green-grey clouds of smog. No one in Denver cooks or walks. (I must admit my sister never took me further into the city than the Museum of Natural History with

its beautifully crafted dioramas, but what I saw was thoroughly unprepossessing.)

I spent a day in Boulder, which was rather nicer, but Boulder is a university town, and I generally love university towns. They have such nice things as stores, nice houses, modest distances and, in this case, Jon Singer, who demonstrated wire-wrapping; Howard Davidson, who talked about air-suspended record turntables; Connie Clit, whose band The Dancing Assholes, has since disbanded; and Fred Haskell, who proved that the Beatles had primitive ideas about stereo.

From Colorado I sped to San Francisco for the Whole Earth Jamboree and a quick visit with various friends. The Whole Earth Jamboree was organized by Stewart Brand, the founder/editor of The Whole Earth Catalog and The CoEvolution Quarterly. It was dull. I could detail this claim, but the details themselves would be dull. (I must admit that John Berry, also in attendance, did not find it dull. Perhaps sometime he will explain to you all why he found it interesting.)

My visit to the Mabuhay Gardens with Rich Coad, Gary and Denise Mattingly, Larry Rehse and Bill Kostura wasn't dull. It was rather brutish, however. Mabuhay is a club featuring San Francisco's punk and New Wave bands, and between the drunken crowd, the churlish waitress dis-serving our table, and the fight Denise got into, the brutishness reached rather dizzying heights. (No, Denise did not start the fight, nor did she start a more recent fracas with the lead singer of the Dead Kennedys (I do not make these names up).)

The ride from San Francisco was a long, hot one, but the company was good. It included Doug Faunt, the owner of the van, and Terry Garey and Ctein, who had been my hosts for the previous several days. We discovered one significant fact about the stretch of territory from Los Angeles to Phoenix: it is inhabited by a plague of giant crickets. These creatures are especially fond of urinals.

Phoenix itself is horridly hot and, while I was there, radiates an aura of desertion. The hotel and convention center were part of a city plot to wage war on poverty by eliminating the poor people: it was a former slum with traces of the poverty businesses still clustered at the edges of the new buildings. And the committee gave us precious little help in finding our way to the more interesting areas, beyond allowing some expensive steak place to solicit potential eaters in the atrium of the Hyatt.

Then I flew back to Seattle. What a contrast it is to all those other cities! I used to return to Cleveland or New York longing to stay away a little longer. Not so this time: I have never been so glad to return to anywhere as I was to come back here.

I think I came back home.

---JAK

=====

My name is abdul, my fate is tied with those of the three wise men and their small black camel with the purple tongue. When i venture out into the dessert, my feet stumble over the raisins, and rice fills my ears. Too long have I lived here, the time has come to move to another place, perhaps somewhere different or elsewhere. Who knows? Certainly not I, who fell in love with a deep-pool-eyed swan, Leda by name, who lost herself in the sands of the calimari. Oysters are the happiest people, particularly when their rockefellers.

--JF, the Phantom Hedgehog

[illegible]

the only way I know a good from a bad typer is the number of errors it makes!
Not at all bad. One whole line without an error. all???

What I really want is a typer that makes no noise at all. Have you^l ever felt very full of wrods at a time when you had a headache? CRASH! CLANK! DIEG! Very painful. Sometimes I put in earplugs whilst typing, which makes people who try to speak to me while I'm writing think I'm concentrating very, very hard!

In the past people use to write with their hands. Now they write with their... hands? Well, yes. But they have this appendage, you see. It prints a little bit more clearly then I do. At least I can read it. I lost two novels once. I'd ~~w~~ written them both late at night, and when I awoke, they were gone. Or possibly in Yiddish. They weren't, however, in English, ~~via~~ which is the only language with which I'm conversant. Cy.

[illegible]

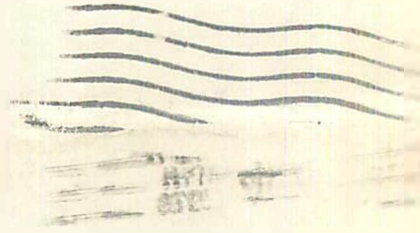
Now is the thyme fo all goodmunchkins to come to the aid of their munchrooms.
The lazy brown ymir leapt over the fat lazy snufkin. Lazy lazy lazy. What's
the world coming to anyway??? Red Peril.

Third Class

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