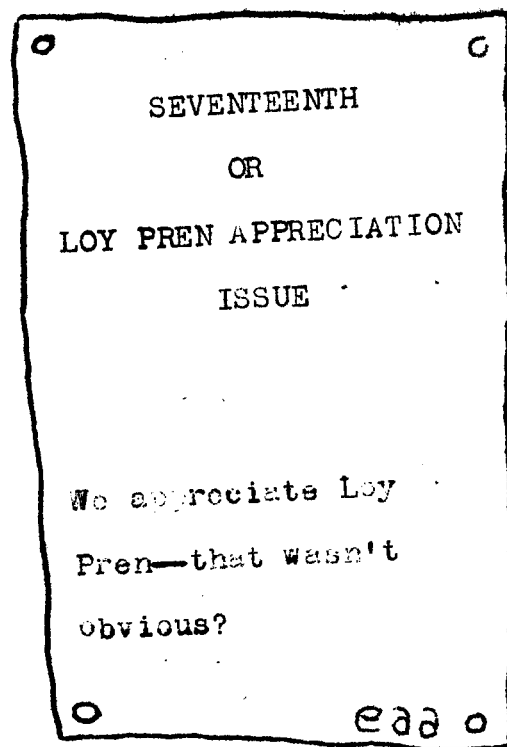
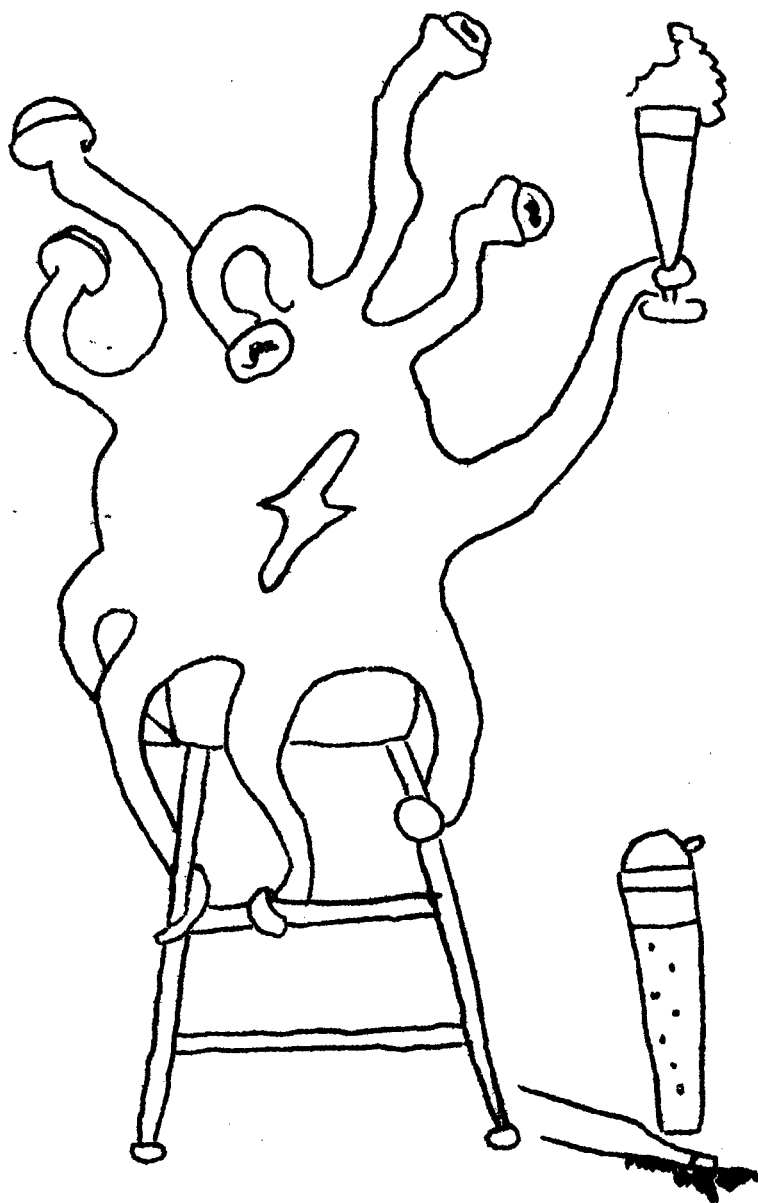


6 Sept '81

17



Neolithic

This is NeOL 17 from the basement of Ruth Berman, 5620 Edgewater Boulevard, Minneapolis 17, Minnesota. August, 1961, bimonthly. One gets it by trading (all for all), writing (once every two issues, more or less), subscribing (2/25¢), or by being stuck on the mailing list.

Cover.....	1
by Eleanor Arnason	
Editorialings.....	2
Only Vegan.....	4
by Eleanor Arnason	
Glances Over the Pond:reviews...	18
by Felice Rolfe	
I Want Column.....	20
Rising Star.....	21
reprint from SAPS	
by Bob Lichtman	
Clay Tablets.....	22
by Divers Persons	

I bought Broken Sword and Three Hearts and Three Lions, both by Poul Anderson, recently. Pete Mansfield has an excellent review of Broken Sword in his ELDRITCH DREAM QUEST 2 (20¢ to his man in ~~Manana~~ the U.S., Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 336, Berkeley 1, California, if you haven't got it), and most of you have probably seen the magazine version of Three Hearts and Three Lions, so I don't need to review them. However, I was struck by one thing: Anderson has been building up a concept of elves which is quite as convincing as (and quite different from) Tolkien's elves. The elves in these two books live in different worlds, apparently, but they are the same race: tall, slender, warlike, with blue, blind-seeming eyes. Their "magic" is explained away slightly—just enough to make belief easy without destroying wonder. And the elves in the two books are the same as in his "Interloper" (F&SF, April, 1951). In the introduction to Broken Sword, he says "As for what became of...faerie itself—which obviously no longer exists on Earth—that is another tale, which will perhaps some day be told." But the story has been told in part: it is "Interloper." I wonder if Anderson plans to write an elvish history as thorough as Heinlein's future history.

EDITROOLINGS: Breathes There A Man

Minnesota is beastly wet in the spring, beastly hot in the summer, and beastly cold in the winter. The autumns are sometimes beastly cold, too. Nevertheless, a strange feeling has been growing on me for the past several months: I love Minnesota. I could live happily in a number of places, but if I have my druthers, I'll stay here.

I can't say I love Minnesota—and Minneapolis in particular—because of its defects, but some of its good points go hand in glove (or root in ground) with the bad. The winter is cold, but the cold brings snow, piled in drifts, wind-swept into elvish lines, clear white. Downtown, the snow is grey and slushy, beat into a filthy cream of mush by the cars, but only downtown. Minneapolis is an expanded small town; most of the city has plenty of grass around each house, and plenty of white snow-drifts in the winter. It's hard for walking, but good for playing in and looking at.

The spring is wet. The new growth comes slowly, leaving great patches of muddy earth. The spring is also grey, not dull grey, but pearly grey. The spring has days when the sky is overcast, and the light is completely diffused. Every object stands out in sharp outline with clear coloring. A building, a tree, a child stand out sharp against the grey sky as if they were platonic ideals of themselves in a platonic heaven. In late spring the new growth finally finishes growing, and there are flowers everywhere. In late spring, too, come golden mornings when the sun shines much more brightly than it does at any other time. The light looks like late summer afternoon light, fermented, and mixed with honey.

In summer, Minneapolis looks very much like the setting for a pastoral comedy. It hasn't quite the dainty quality (nor the effeminate quality) of a pastoral, but if you open up your little fan painted by Watteau (this is very different from your little fanne painted by Rotsler), you will see a place very much like Minneapolis. I'll even go along with our weeks of 90°F heat for the sight of the big trees arching over the streets.

Fall, of course, is a blaze of glory. The trees growing up the cliffs by the Mississippi River change to a blaze of red, yellow, and brown (and all the colors in between).

Minnesota is most famous for its lakes. At any rate, our licence plates say we are. The lakes are beautiful all year round. They haven't the passion of the oceans, but they have a homey quality of their own. Besides, few oceans are good for ice-skating. Your homes may be beautiful, but they aren't as beautiful as Minnesota, because Minnesota is my home. They may be as beautiful to you; I hope they are.

ONLY VEGAN
by Eleanor Arnason

The cell was luxurious, as cells went, and, with modern penology, cells went far. The wall-window looked out over the tall, garish towers of Terraport to an excellent view of skyline advertising. A robotbar overflowed one corner. Two original and mildly phallic wooden Kochabian nut-harvest gods decorated a table, and between them was a five foot library of microbooks. In a second corner, Primary Inspector Othyiryaxnith-oth (not provided by the prison) sat and drank, his tail looped carelessly over his shoulder, and ~~the~~ crimson-scaled tendrils behind his black dragon-head quivering in alcoholic sorrow.

"So this is it," he said. "The end. Life on Batsbane. It's a rotten planet, Blackie. You won't like it. And I'll miss you." He finished his marstail, choking on the berry.

Trajan Cosimo Black sat up, crushing his cigarette, and sighed. "Hold the wake elsewhere, Oth. I've got enough misery." He stood and walked over to the window. Beyond it was the livid night of Terraport: "Heavensleep—For That Better Dream"; "Now—In Tri-D Tricolor! The Fabulous, The Fantastic Tale of the Prophet Gaha'neel—HE WALKED THE STARS!!!"

"I didn't do it. I'm no pure young Vorse with its spots all on. I'm a crook. But this one I didn't do. I'm innocent." He found a new cigarette in one of his pockets, straightened it out, and lit it. "It's not fair."

"Oh yes it is. I'll give up a lot for you, but not my sanity. You did it. You must have. You were all alone with him when he was shot." Othyiryaxnith-oth ordered another marstail.

Outside, a flitterbug hovered at ten level, blinking, "A Narcomint an Hour Makes the Whole World Flower."

"I didn't do it. I was in my chair; Aristotle was in his chair; and the gun was on a table behind me. I couldn't even see it. All of a sudden, Aristotle died."

"Uh-huh. Sure."

The door's bell rang.

Blackie turned around. "Come in."

The door slid open, and a small, plump mass of pink tentacles slid in. A collection of sea-blue eyes on long eyestalks surveyed the cell. "Not bad, Blackie."

"Pren!"

Othyiryaxnith-oth looked up. He smiled, displaying rowed, white needle-teeth. "The Fabulous Vegan."

"Salu, Oth." The door slid shut behind Loy Pren. "How's crime? Rigel Horror with gin," he said to the bar. "Trouble, Blackie?"

"Batsbane."

"Nasty place. Ought to be more careful. What did they get you on?" He took the Rigel Horror the bar extended—a tall, frosty drink of hideous blue—sipped, hummed approvingly, and polished it off.

"Murder."

"Blackie! How could you?"

Blackie tried to pull himself upright. He was swaying slightly. "I didn't. I am not a murderer."

"Sorry, pal." He moved over to the transparent wall and looked out. "Ugliest city in the galaxy. Makes even Venusport look pretty. Who died?"

"Aristotle Blake."

"Blake, A., eh? Let's see...interstellar financeer—that's a polite word for it. Lunar Hydroponics Scandle. Spacelanes Salvage Inc. collapse—widows screamed like banshees over that one. Fissionable materials Cartel. A louse. Brother to Archimedes Blake, the inventor. Crazy as a burrbeetle. Archimedes, that is."

Blackie nodded. "That's the man."

"So?"

"Archimedes is a friend of mine. Not much of one—we smile and pass on. He asked me to come over to his lab—for a fee, while he showed a synthetic fabric to his brother. He was thinking of selling, and he wanted an expert in swindles on his side. He'd been got a few times before by Aristotle."

A flitterbug flashed, "Alpha Flyers Fly the Best; Come and See—Be Our Guest."

"The fabric was supposed to deflect projectiles when under high tension. Archimedes fired an antique pistol at a piece of it stretched between two poles. The bullet went right through."

Pren began weaving a love knot out of two or three smaller tentacles. "So?"

"He said, 'Just a moment; don't move,' put down the gun and left."

"Why?"

"He told us: to get another strip of the fabric," Othyiryax-nith-oth put in.

"You're sure he put down the gun, Blackie?"

"No. The table was behind me. I didn't turn around. I was too busy watching Aristotle turn purple. But the gun was there before Archimedes returned to the room." Blackie paused to ask the bar for a vodka and vorgir. "Aristotle was sitting across the room. A moment or so after Archimedes left, he screamed. He grabbed at his chest and crumpled up. No gunshot, just Aristotle screaming. I ran over. He was dead. He'd been hit by a bullet."

Othyiryax-nith-oth began of his fifth marstail, his large, silver eyes thoughtful.

"The bullet was from Archidemes' gun?" Pren asked.

Blackie nodded. "Oth's boys checked. Bore marks were identical."

"And the gun was on that table behind you?"

"Uh-huh. I looked up after I was sure Aristotle was dead. It was there."

"No-one else in the lab?"

"Un-uh. It's a small room, No place for anyone to hide. Now windows and a spy-eye on the door. Unless the murderer was a trained cochroach who crawled through the drain, he wasn't there."

Pren sighed. "Oth?"

"Yes?"

"You know it's a frame. Blackie may lack my genius, but he's not mentally defective."

"I know, but—"

"But you're thinking of those Martian ruins, and that fixed storble race, and the Galactic Center Investments robbery. So you send him off to Batsbane for a crime that stinks like a female ginko tree. Just because he's a crook. Shame, pal."

"I was trying to say," Othyiryaxnith-oth said with dignity, "that Blackie has to have done it. It's impossible otherwise."

"Nothing, pal, is impossible. I'll need another Horror. And more third night wine this time." He undid the loveknot and began on an Incan llama-count. The drink was produced. "I don't suppose we can work on the court proceedings."

"My lawyer was Sagai."

"That's out." Pren probed at the Horror's pickled cherry with a free tentacle. "We've got five possibilities."

"What?" Othyiryaxnith-oth asked.

"First, that someone shot Aristotle through the door."

"The door was shut, Pren," Blackie said.

"Oh. Okay. How 'bout a ricochet?"

"One bullet in the wall; one in Aristotle?" Othyiryaxnith-oth asked.

Pren finished the Horror. "Two down. Any chance a machine had been rigged up to fire the gun?"

"Pren. Oth's boys searched the room."

"Clean, eh?"

"As a Denebian's temple-skin."

"So we're left with X."

"X?"

"The unknown and probably impossible."

Blackie nodded mororsely.

"Or, old thief, poss. five. That you're lying."

"Pren, you just said I wasn't an idiot."

"I know. Outside chance. Don't go righteous all over, pal. Just recall this: I don't much care if you were vacuum-skulled enough to send Aristotle Blake to the Great Stock Manipulator in the sky. It was a bad try, but the theory behind it was all right. Aristotle needed a little killing. If you're going to kill anyone, it might as well be him. But—if you did do it, tell me. I'll break you loose."

"Hey!" Othyiryaxnith-oth said.

"Yes?"

"You can't do that. It's illegal. I'm a detector."

"You're also drunk. Well, Blackie?"

"I'm innocent."

"Okay."

The radio on Othyiryaxnith-oth's Dabelt buzzed. He groped for its switch, setting off two moke bombs and a general alarm before he found it.

"Yes?" he asked, coughing slightly.

"The new burglar-proof safe at Peking Trust's been burglarized," the radio said.

"When?"

"They just discovered it. Sometime today. It keeps babbling about a paradox in Loy Tor's theory of integrated time. The safe, I mean."

"Find out when Loy Pren reached Terra."

"Pren's on Terra?"

"Uh-huh." Pren waved a tentacle.

"Eeb."

"Uh-huh. I'll be right over."

The cell's air-control had removed most of the smoke. Othyiryaxnith-oth located the bar through the remaining clouds and asked for an instant soberer.

"Go heavy on the mint," Pren put in. "You smell like a mountain still." He paused, returning Othyiryaxnith-oth's somber gaze with four or five placid blue eyes. "Don't arrest me, Oth. The charge won't stick. It never does."

"I know." Othyiryaxnith-oth sighed.

"I think I'll go down to Rhian's. And think. And drink. Come on, Oth."

"Let me finish this witches' brew. See you, Blackie."

Blackie nodded.

After they had gone, he ordered a new drink and lit a new cigarette. Outside, on the tower opposite, the newsband turned red: "Flash. Peking Trust theft. Perfect robot time-lock safe found insane. Ten million missing."

Blackie smiled.

* * *

The quality of bars in Terraport varies inversely with their distance from the spaceport. Rhian's Place, on Titian's Row, leaned on the spaceport's outer wall for support. It was good.

The door at Rhian's swung upon for Loy Pren, saying "Good evening, sir," and he went in.

The big, high-ceilinged room held enough races to fill a zoo. Overhead, ancient fluorescing rods shone down on feathers, scales, and every color and texture of skin, and the smoke-thickened air stank of alien drinks and bodies.

There was a slight lull as Pren entered and was noticed. Then Rhian, big-bodied and even bigger-stomached, called him over to the antique bar he stood behind.

"Salu, old pal. Produce beer. Danish draft." Pren wrapped himself around a barstool and waited.

The beer came.

"Here about Blackie?" Rhian asked.

"In part."

"Peking?" Rhian grinned.

"They said it was burglar-proof. Pride goeth before the theft."

Rhian laughed. "More beer?"

"Thanks."

Rhian returned shortly with more beer. "So what do you do?"

"About Blackie? Use your viewphone. Where is it?"

Rhian pointed. Pren scooped up the beer stein. "Thanks."

He came back with an empty stein; and, after a while, a thin man with neat hair and a neatly arranged face, whose black eyes were thoughtful, appeared.

"Loy Pren?" he asked.

"Mr. Archimedes Blake?" The man nodded. "Pull up a stool and order."

"Thank you. A small glass of fifth night wine, please."

Pren cleared his throats and started into a Draconis Two sea chanty. It was very impolite, and a Draconian sitting nearby blushed chartreuse and left.

"You said, I believe, Loy, that you were investigating the— the murder of my brother."

"Uh-huh. 'Zoog val minik mordum voos veehor.'" Pren threw him several keen glances. "I know. I don't usually play detector."

"It is not," Archimedes Blake admitted, "what you are famous for."

"Blackie's a pal of mine."

"I see." He sipped his fifth night wine. "How can I be of use to you?"

"Tell me what happened. I got the story out of two lit friends."

"Well..." Archimedes Blake turned his glass in his hands. "I had evolved a new synthetic fabric capable—so I thought—of extraordinary strength under tension. My brother was interested in it. I could find no other purchasers, and so I was forced—forced into his claws." He smiled briefly. "He is—was—an extremely unscrupulous man. I am not a man of business, Loy, and I distrusted him. I knew Mr. Black moderately well; I determined to use his talents in—in crime to safeguard my interests. He agreed." Archimedes Blake paused.

"Well?" Pren prompted.

"They—they came to my laboratory. My demonstration did not work. The bullet that should have been stopped or deflected went through the cloth. When I returned, my brother was dead, Mr. Black standing above him. The gun was on the table as I had left it."

"Fingerprints?" Pren asked.

"I believe the detectors found none. I habitually wear thin gloves in my laboratory. There were, I believe, only glove smears on the pistol."

"And Blackie always carries gloves. Uh-huh."

Archimedes Blake nodded. "Apparently so. The detectors found two bullets missing from the pistol's chambers. I had loaded it

that morning and used one bullet for the demonstration. The other bullet was in my brother's chest. The gun, of course, had just been fired by me. There was no way to tell if it had been fired a second time."

"So." Pren finished his beer. "That's it. Rhian!"

"Yes?"

"Beer!"

"Coming."

"Will?" Pren asked after a pause.

"Will what?"

"Last will and testament. Aristotle's."

"My brother left his fortune to his three mistresses. However," Archimedes Blake added, being fair, "under one of our contracts the patent for the Blake Starship Engine reverts to me. I gain considerably from Aristotle's death."

"What motive do they tack on Blackie?"

"Blackmail, I believe."

"Blackmail?"

Rhian arrived with beer, Archimedes Blake passing it to Pren. "My brother was, apparently, an extremely vicious—and efficient—blackmailer."

"Not bad. Blackie might rub out a blackmailer. They offend his moral sense." Pren tasted thoughtfully and diverted the beer down one of his secondary throats into a storage stomach. "Aristotle had something on Blackie?"

"Not, I believe, that the detectors know of. The theory is conjecture."

"I see. Thanks for the info."

"You are welcome. Good evening, Loy."

"Night." Pren watched him go. "More beer, Rhian, and don't feed the rest of this to the cat."

"Why not?"

"The problem of a truly tasteless poison is great."

"Huh?"

"Not that the cat would notice it. I barely can, and I have Vegan taste stalks."

"I don't have a cat."

"Oh." Pren meditated. "Do you have a privatish drain, pal? I think I'd better eliminate that last stein of beer before it goes in." Rhian gestured to a back room. "Thanks." Pren heaved himself up onto the bar, slid across it, and was down the other side.

When he came back, he asked for a pen. He began to write in the long Vegan script that reminded Rhian, who had been raised in Kansas, of wheat bending before the wind, and was about that intelligible to him. After a while, Pren stopped writing and started pondering. Rhian brought him more beer.

"Listen, pal, I've hit a slight snarl," Pren said. "I'd like to try my notes out on the common mind. Got time?"

Rhian nodded.

"Starting. Archimedes committed the murder. Somehow. He set it up as a frame for Blackie."

"Sure of that?"

"Uh-huh. The synthetic fabric bit stinks to Luna. And he used a gun where, if he demonstration had worked, he would have had a ricocheting bullet on his hands. With gloves yet. No fingerprints to be not overlaid by Blackie's gloveprints."

"Huh?"

"Think it over. Archimedes didn't want an obviously cold gun produced as the murder weapon. So he set up a way to fire it."

Rhian nodded.

"The main problem," Pren consulted his notes, "are the bore marks on the bullet in Aristotle. They match the gun. And the gun was quiescent on the table."

"Oh."

"So Aristotle died of a bullet fired by a gun that was just lying there. And there wasn't any sound."

"Sound?"

"No gun shot. All in all, a bullet out of the blue."

"Oh." Rhian went for more beer. While he was gone, Pren began to sing the Ballad of Kallyn Soh. It was a Terran song

concerning a low-moraled spaceman who was sent at great expense to a planet called Vif to explore and film life forms. It ended:

"Then they processed his prints
And there, in tri-d
Was a mottled, blue,
Hybrid Vif family.

"They showed them to Kallyn.
He smirked—foul to see—
And asked with a blush,
'Do they look much like me?'"

A Vegan came in as he finished, larger and plumper than Pren, with light blue eyes and a shocking pink skin. "May your toadstools flourish, father's sibling's son."

"Har! By Girl! How's life?"

"Unpleasant," Loy Har said severely.

"Toadstools? Speaking of which, grab one. Stools, I mean. Rhian! Get out that Vegan wine."

"My toadstools are a part of it. The damp." Har shuddered. "Mildew. I try, Pren. Firl knows I try, but mildew always returns. Look." He produced a small, clear cube. In it was the reproduction of three off-color Vegan toadstools, unhappily potted in three purple pots. Their crimson gills were faded, and the mottling on their hoods was a pale, unpleasant green.

Pren looked. "Tch-tch, Har."

"I know," Har sighed. "But the roses...." He located another cube, this one showing a green rosebush. "Har hybrid green."

Pren hummed. "Good."

"The first pure green. Not a spot nor a streak in the lot." Rhian came with the wine; Har took it. "'673. An excellent year." He poured. "However, my garden is not my greatest affliction. Is that sufficient wine?" Pren gestured 'yes.' "You are. I am here about Peking Trust."

"Thought so."

Har sipped. "Firl! This is magnificent." He rolled a second sip of the wine in his mouth and swallowed. "Narm Vinyards."

"Right."

"Incredible aging. You must stop stealing things, Pren. It is un-Vegan."

Pren waited politely.

"You are the first criminal in almost four thousand years of Vegan history. The Vegan Embassy feels the stain strongly." Har bent a few eyes to gaze at the wine. It was yellow, one of the bitter, burning wines of Vega four's southern hemisphere. "Magnificent! I know it's hard, Pren. I had to give up keevil fruits last year. It was agonizing at first. But you must try. For the honor of Vega. Theft is antisocial. Where did you get this wine?"

"Loy Tor."

"Ah. Yes. His mother's father is a sibling of the Narm Ancient."

"How is Tor, anyway?"

"His last opera is well thought of." Har sounded slightly bitter.

"Trouble?"

"Loy Mirn was unimpressed by my death aria."

"He hates my stuff," Pren said.

"I should hope so. Five part operas. The idea is obscene."

"Uh-huh. Tor's not doing any research?"

"Not since that argument with you."

"Logic has that effect on some people. The robotlock went batty. And it's obvi-eureka!"

"Obvi-eureka?"

"I solved it."

"What?"

"A Murder. Let's hear your aria."

"Not here," Rhian said.

"Okay." Pren produced money. "See you." The two Vegans departed. As the door swung open for them, Har began to sing.

* * *

The office of Primary Inspector Othiyaznith-oth had, along with a series of ten scroll paintings of the Inspector's native

mountains on Proxima Centauri one, the limp, stale aura of an all-night vigil's tail end. Othyiryaxnith-oth put down his mug of coffee and fermented sorb. "Well? How was our revered superior?"

The detector who had just entered slumped into the nearest chair. It was built more for Othyiryaxnith-oth's small frame than for his, and he bumped several things. He swore. He looked like a tall and emaciated green bat, draped in a blue-green robe of supreme excellence, and with loud crystal earrings of merit in his large ears. "He was meaner than a girch with an ingrown claw."

"I thought so. Have some sorb."

"Thank you."

Othyiryaxnith-oth went over to his wall window and looked down on the brown-black river. It was sometime after dawn. The sky was a pale, washed grey, turning pink behind the buildings on the river's eastern side. "What do we do?" he asked.

"Arrest Pren."

"I know," Primary Inspector Ska-vee-heek said savagely. "He'll prove he was one Beta Cygni twelve at the time, de-hiding Cygnians at vilgor sticks. And then our revered superior," he snarled audibly, "will stiffen up his sinews and imitate the action of a tiger again." He tried to finish the coffee in one angry swallow and burned his mouth.

The intercom made arousal noises. Othyiryaxnith-oth answered in. "Yes?"

"An area detector, sir, with a machine. He says you sent orders."

"But.... Oh, all right. Send him in."

The area detector was sent in. He was a small, fat, black man swaying slightly under the weight of a large, thin angular machine with a hole through its center. "Sir?"

"On the desk."

He put it on the desk. The impact moved the model Othyiryaxnith-oth had once made of the rock he wanted to settle down on someday and sent a pile of papers onto the floor. "Sorry, sir."

"Orders?"

The detector produced them. They were photoreplicas of what looked just like an H. Q. order: the right paper, the right seal, and the right glyph—his. "These came over your station photoport?"

The detector nodded.

"Pren." Othyiryaxnith-oth sighed.

"What, sir?"

"Listen to this, Squeek." Ska-vee-heck frowned. "'The area detector is directed to obtain a warrant to search the entire premises of Archimedes Blake, 39447 Vern Avenue, Terraport west, Three level, and to search the aforesaid premises for an unidentifiable machine, probably with a hole entirely through it, in any odd or unusual circumstances.'"

"That's this," the detector said. "It was ~~in~~ his living room, labelled 'Free Motion, 21b4, Dubinsky.' Like an action sculpture."

"It isn't?" Ska-vee-heck asked.

"Not with that shape. No definition at all. It's a lump." He turned it on. It did nothing. "See? Nothing." He turned it off. "The fellow whose place it was, Blake, said he'd never seen it before. Me, I think he had. He went green ~~when~~ he saw it. He knew what it was."

"I see. You didn't arrest him?" Othyiryaxnith-oth asked.

"No orders."

"Uh-huh. Thank you."

The area detector left.

"Well?" Ska-vee-heck asked.

"We wait for Pren."

The intercom burred again. "Yes?"

"Loy Pren, sir."

"Send him in."

Pren came in like a small, pink, tidal wave capped with glittering blue. "Salu, Oth. Squeek, old bat, why the ear-sparklers?"

Ska-vee-heck stiffened. "The earrings are in recognition of my unrivalled pacifism. I received them after protesting the keeb root tax in two hundred days of silent vigil."

"Keeb root?"

"It's a candy," Othyiryaxnith-oth explained. "Verv popular."

"Oh. Congratulations. Oth, got the machine?"

"Uh-huh. What is it?"

"That, old sleuth, is something special. Archimedes Blake's own little contribution to history. A time machine."

Ska-vee-heek moaned. "No. No. No."

"No jokes, Pren," Othyiryaxnith-oth said.

"This isn't, pal. Look." Pren flipped the control switch to 'on.' He twisted several other things, singing happily to himself. "All right. All set. Now." He picked up the model of Othyiryaxnith-oth's dream-rock.

"Hey!"

Pren heaved it through the machine's hole. Or, rather, into the machine's hole. It didn't come out.

"Eeb." Othyiryaxnith-oth reached for the sorb. Ska-vee-heek was there before him.

Five minutes later the model completed its journey and landed on Othyiryaxnith-oth's desk. "Well?" Pren asked.

"It does something. That hole was empty. I looked in."

"Uh-huh. Suppose, now, that the rock were a bullet, and that had set the interval at two or three days. And removed the machine, so that the bullet appeared in the empty air. That's a contradiction in terms, by the way."

"What is?"

"Empty and air. Suppose the bullet's trajectory brought it right to where my brother Aristotle's chest would be when I had ejected him—with its original force.

"But Loy Tor's theory—"

"Has holes big enough to march a mammoth through. I pointed them out to Tor. He gave up time mechanics."

"The timelock!" Ska-vee-heek said.

"Was right about those paradoxes. Not to disturb you, Oth, but Archimedes has a head start, and he ought to be running as if the bloody legions of Smiroc the unspeakable were on his tail."

Pren settled down and watched Galactic Detection begin to move.

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The Black Pirate hung briefly in the midnight sky above Terra, while her rockets died and the inter-space engines took over. Then she vanished. Blackie, sitting in the pilot's seat, saw the stars blur into a colorless, light-filled haze. He sighed and swung his feet up onto the control board. "Pren?"

"Uh-huh?" Pren asked from the co-pilot's seat.

"Bless your brilliant little mind."

"More brilliant than you think, pal."

"What?"

"That was my machine. I invented it."

"Huh?" Blackie stared at him.

"You ought to remember my genius for applied science, Blackie. And," he added dreamily, "I was always good at time mechanics at school. Not that civilization will benefit. There's a nifty little heat-bomb inside the machine for when they try dismantling it."

"Why?" Blackie asked.

"Archimedes wasn't a half-wit. He destroyed his machine. I found its very fused remains in his furnace when I broke in to plant 'Free Motion.' It was the only way to get him. Not strictly vorse, but I gave him a warning: the detector's coming to search. And he got away. Without ill-gotten gains, but we can't have everything, can we?"

"You can."

"Most of the time. But," Loy Pren added, with obviously false modesty, "I'm not perfect. After all, I'm only Vegan."

GLANCES OVER THE POND
Felice Rolfe

Intorduction: these two magazines, Science Fantasy and New Worlds Science Fiction, are roughly analogous to Amazing and, say, Galaxy, in story content and in quality. Science Fantasy, as is to be expected, runs more to the magic or thud-and-blunder story, while New Worlds takes in what I think of as straight science fiction.

Both have given me a good deal of enjoyable reading, although I find that I'm a good deal more critical (or less gullible?) when reading for review....Insofar as there is a difference between

these two and the American zines, it seems to lie in just a shade more naivety over the pond.

New Worlds #105: "The Scapegoat" by Alan Barclay, is the lead novelette. Attacked by extra-terrestrials (sic), Earth finds that, united, it can raise about 200 space vessels. A British general is given the job of welding this motley mob of Russians, British, Americans, Chinese, Pakistanis, and what-have-you into a fighting force. The politicians intend him to be the scapegoat who is disgraced after the inevitable initial defeats, but the general has other ideas. Many of the scenes are well-written, but abortive because of lack of space. More development would have made this an excellent novel; it is entertaining as it is.

In "Time of Arrival," by David Rome, a space-hungry boy is beat out of the only berth on the Mars ship by a space-hungry old man. Quite short, but effectige. Venus Plus X, by Sturgeon, is run as a serial. This issue has the conclusion. As I'm sure you've read elsewhere, this is more of a Utopian essay than a novel. Sturgeon, as usual, writes beautifully, although the reader will be either impressed or disgusted by the theme, according to his nature. I feel that it is a needed change from all the crud you hear about "the proper role of women" and "American men are losing their masculinity." Other stories in the issue are "The Ark," by M. Lucas, "The Other Face," by Donald Malcolm, and "Button-Pusher," by Bill Spencer.

New Worlds #106: "Blink," by John Rackham, is the lead novel. Earth in an extreme of revolt against violence is threatened, and saved by a group of misfits who are trying to retain some of the "violent" tradition, a good deal of it, in fact. The enemy is of the cardboard variety—but existence is all that is really demanded of it. The story is told from the point of view of the proponents of violence, but the author inadvertently gets in some plugs for the other side. Fast moving, but not always convincing.

"This Wonderful Birthday," by John Ashcroft, is a simple and affecting account of the ceremony which opens for settlers a planet re-made from desolation: Earth. Very good. "Haircrack," by Alan Barclay, is about a European bank system's thief-proof setup. It is a logical extrapolation of today's techniques. The thief is an engaging rogue, but a little too ingenious to be convincing. Other stories are "The Jackson Killer," by Philip E. High, and "Deep End," by J. G. Ballard.

Science Fantasy #46: "Need," by Theodore Sturgeon is the lead novel. An ugly, unlikeable, little man has the special talent of knowing what people need. Sturgeon, with his usual nicety in such philosophic matters, points out the difference between "need" and "want." Very good. "Behind the Cloud," by Edward Mackin, is about Hek Belov, loveable but unpredictable cyberneticist (according to the blurb), who gets a job (finally) repairing the computer for

a solid theater. In the process, he and the theater manager get caught in the evening's feature show, which is a space-opera (a tale within a tale). Mackin has a delightful way of turning a back-handed phrase. A third story is "Displaced Person," by Lee Harding, with a familiar theme, but nice treatment. This would be an excellent issue for any magazine.

Science Fantasy #47: "The Dreaming City," by Michael Moorcock, is the lead novel. This is space opera on the order of Anderson's thud-and-blunder stuff, but not of his quality. Elric, last of the kings of Earth's first and oldest nation—Melniboné by name—leads a raid against his own people. He means to gain revenge against his cousin who is on the throne, and rescue the girl he loves. The raid ends disastrously; however, it appears that Elric will appear again in another tale. As a hero, Elric is disappointing; he depends on sorcery much as Conan does on muscle. May Scithers, forgive, but I prefer heroes with wit.

"The Veil of Isis," by John Rackham, is a novel, a detective story involving magic instead of murder, but complete with Irish inspector, bodies, and a suspicious blonde who turns out to be dead in a particularly unpleasant way. The hero is an Egyptologist, the villain an adept in ancient Egyptian magic. This incident is one of a series. My technical mind is doubtful about the amplifying devices used by the hero to augment his occult powers, but for all that it's a good tale: the best in this issue. Others are "Blood Offering," by John Kippax, and "Valley of the Rain-birds," by W. T. Webb.

Memo to Ruth: the editorial introductions in SF seem to be pretty descriptive of the stories. Will wonders never cease?

I WANT IT COLUMN

Fred Galvin, boy completist, wants Nook #10. He'll pay 25¢ for it. In fact, he'll pay even more than that.*

I want TWIG 18. I'll pay 25¢ for it. Or more, if you insist.

PAFF wants your vote. They'll pay minus fifty cents or less for it. I admit it's hard to choose (I want to deport the squirrel), but go on and choose anyway.

*This address is in the letter column.

RISING STAR

Bob Lichtman

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After a concentrated reading of HABAKKUK #5, it came somewhat as a relief to read my way through the paperback edition of Huxley's Brave New World Revisited (Bantam F2124, 50¢). Huxley, who wrote the book that has been banned by so many narrow-minded educators the country wide, writes interestingly and to the point. Why, it's even possible to agree with his viewpoints.

One thing came to the fore when I was reading this boo, however. As a matter of fact, it became obvious when I was in the process of purchasing the book. This is that the price of paperback books from popular publishers is getting entirely out of hand. This book, a slim 116-page volume with type not much smaller than elite typewriting, cost a whopping 50¢. This was totally outrageous. Why, a 116-page book wouldn't be worth 50¢ even if it were a special edition of the New Lady's Tickler.

Apparently the publishers of these pocket-size books have revamped their thinking along the lines of how much to charge for a given volume. Where their prices used to go directly with the size of the book, now they seem to follow the size of the author's Big Name. Huxley is a Big Big Big Name; there is no denying that. So 116 pages of him costs the hapless reader 50 ¢, unless he chooses to paw through endless stacks of dusty volumes in a used book outlet. Something which I used to do all the time, but for which I have neither time nor patience these days, for the most part.

There have been three separate editions of Huxley's Brave New World put out by the Bantam people. The first of these was in their old short format, and cost, I believe, 25¢ (it may have been 35¢, but I doubt it). Several years later the pages were reset, and a new edition in the now standard tall format appeared. This sold for 35¢ probably only because almost all books except westerns sold for 35¢ by that time. I purchased a copy of that edition the first time I read the book. The Bantam publishers, in a drive to give their books Snob Appeal, started their Classics series. The first book to come out in the series was another edition of Brave New World. This one had a new, more austere and arty cover, and also sold for 35¢. However, about this time, Bantam must have decided to revamp their prices along the lines they now follow, that of Big Name Author appeal, and this 35¢ Classics edition was withdrawn in favor of a nearly identical version. This version was exactly like the 35¢ edition except for one minor, yet very important thing. Where the previous one formerly been 35¢, it was now 50¢.

It is amusing to note that science-fiction, our favorite literature-child, doesn't seem to fall under this brutal new form of price-setting. Science-fiction paperbacks remain at their usual price of 35¢ each. All in all, even this 35¢ tariff seems a bit high to me. Using the publishers' reasoning, I must say that stf is pure crud and should be given away gratis; in fact, it's so terrible that they ought to pay me for the service of taking it away from them.

CLAY TABLETS

from RICK SNEARY, June 21, 1961
2962 Santa Ana Street, South Gate, California

Just for the record, I approve of the idea of spelling reforms, but not of the Old English system of spelling as one pleases. In this day and age, meaning is too hard to come by to have it clouded over by some blok who spells the same word wrong three ways on one page. Our current system of spelling is bad enough, not to be made worse. The fact that I can't spell may have lead to fame and famine, but it doesn't mean I like it. Just think of the hardship I'm under. I can't use puns in letters (Who would know I did it delibortly?). I have to write on crapo paper to be taken seriously. I'm not bothered when people kid me about my spelling. What bothers me is the spelling.

Speeking of plays, I saw something on Sunday Vidio two weeks ago that surprised me: an hour long presentation of Hamlet by the U. of Redlands drama dept. Just the kids from one of our smaller colleges getting a hour of late-afternoon time on the local NBC station. It was went as an example of what a college dramagroup could do. Just the story, badly cut, and in too fast a tempo, and overly well acted. The point is that it must have been a great thrill for the cast to reach out to possibly millions, surely, at least many thousand people, all at once.

I'll be glad to stand up as a character witness for Ron Ellik. He is indeed all he says. It is a propaganda trick that has brain-washed most of fandom into thinking of the boy as a big, loveable squirrel. But I never think of him as a squirrel. No, I think of him as a tiger. A great big orange tiger, with black stripes. Well behaved, most of the time, but a raging beast when aroused. Now you may not think root-beer and chocolate cake is exactly tiger good. And you would be right. And this is the only thing that bothers me. But on the other hand, it isn't exactly the food of a 6'1" USMC man either. And it stands to reason while the Marine Corp. might let a tiger into their outfit, they would never pass a squirrel. So you see, despite what 95% of fandom says, Ellik is a tiger. So watch out....

from REDD BOGGS, 27 June 1961
2209 Highland Place N. E., Minneapolis 21, Minnesota

Neol #16 is a rather stunted feuille to have sprouted and grown in this luxurious June weather, but summer sun seems not very conducive to the flourishing of fanzines. I wonder why. But if it is thin and undernourished, Neol is still enjoyable and I liked the couple or three innovations that are present. I approve of eaa's cover (which of course could've been better-stylused) but I approve of having a cover even more. Same goes for the backcover.

"Editroolings": best thing in the issue, usually; here, tied with eaa's comments on New Maps of Hell. Alas, there's very little here, or in the article on Amis, that inspires me to quibble. In regards Amis' attitude toward fandom, I'll be interested to see what effect his attendance at the LXicon will have. Evidently Amis enjoyed himself and may even have been impressed by the sf 'fiends."

Eleanor Arnason is taking over Neolthic, I think—RB

from RICH BROWN, July 4, 1961
Box 1136, Tyndall AFB, Florida

I was interested in plays, once, but not from the acting side; I wrote a couple (which, thank god, have all been lost), and I worked on technical effects, lighting, staging, etc., for high school plays. Let me take back back what I said, because I suddenly remember that I was interested in it from the acting point of view, only this was when I was in Elementary school. For two years I played bit parts, and then they let me play the villain, which I played with a good deal of hamming, and rather successfully. I was set for the S*t*a*r role, except that I developed a stutter which I didn't lose until I came into fandom. And when I was in fandom I just barely had time for the minimum amount of school work.

from FRED GALVIN, July 21, 1961
140 Algonquin Avenue, St. Paul 12, Minnesota

What's this, the incredible shrinking fanzine? Do you realize that at 12¹/₂¢ per copy, you are charging almost 2¹/₂¢ a page? Do you realize how expensive YANDRO or CRY would be at that rate? I suppose now that Neol 17 will be 4 pages long, [Surprise!—RB] and Neol 18 will consist of only 2 pages, and #19 will be a single page....

In Neol 16: "Omegas" was amusing; I liked it. It is well above the average level of fanzine literary pieces. I don't quite get it, but I like it. Or maybe that's why I like it. Bruce Polz's poem was not bad for that sort of thing—not great, but it will do. The rime between lines 20 and 21 is a technical flaw, since it doesn't fit into the rime pattern.

from ROY TACKETT
MSgt L. H. Tackett, USMC, H&HS-1 (Comm), MWHG-1, 1st MAW
FMFPac, c/ Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, California

It is sort of late in the day for comments on number 1f, but, briefly, "Omegas" was. Pelz' "Say Hey, EAA" was appreciated. Author liked it although it isn't great shakes at poetry. I'll hazard a guess and say that Arnason is one of those outsiders who has stumbled across the fannish microcosm and is studying it with vast amusement. Myself, I find vast amusement in studying outsiders who study the microcosm.

A point or two about #1c. I question your second rule for a great work of art (whatever that is). "There is more in a great work of art than its creator knows." Rubbish! The only thing to be found in any art, whether it be a painting, sculpture, or literature, is just what the creator put into it. The various levels of symbolism and meaning are usually put there by the critic who usually doesn't know what he is talking about to begin with. Oh, certainly there are books and paintings and poems filled with symbolism but it was put there by the author or artist. And said author or artist was well aware that he was that he was putting it there. He knows what things he puts in; does he always know why a given thing seems appropriate?—RB

The trouble is that most of the alleged critics have been exposed to a smattering of psychology and have picked up the patter. It is "smart" these days to find all sorts of obscure symbols and meanings in art and literature. Now and then some joker comes up with a mess of paint or a stream of words that really doesn't mean anything at all but the critics can find all sorts of meanings. No, the only thing to be found in any work of art is exactly what the creator put there and anything else is sheer imaging on the part of the critic.

Minor case in point: "Magic Casements Opening," my best story; I showed it to my English teacher who commented that the beginning was much like E. M. Forster's "The Celestial Omnibus." I hotly denied any influence until I re-read both stories, noticed that they were alike, and decided that I must have had Forster's story in mind—subconscious mind, of course.

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