

Ladeez and Gentlemen ! Presenting: (fanfare of penny whistles and ocarinas) - OZ-2, which, providing Pweston's duplicator doesn't have another fit, is scheduled for inclusion in the 44th OMPA Mailing dated June 1965. Produced, ante- and post-Bruncon, by BERYL HENLEY, at 59, The Fearnings, Crabbs Cross, Redditch, Worcestershire, England. E&OE. Copyright Beryl Henley 1965.

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OZ-2 duplicated by PETE WESTON, to whom sincere thanks, and collated by me. Front and bacovers by RON McGUINNESS of London.

Pages 12 to 20 inclusive to be credited to the OMPA activity of DON STUDEBAKER.

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At the time of writing, it looks very much as if I shall be able to attend the Worldcon in London after all. But dinna werriit - you've got till July 28th to cancel your bookings ...

I guess Terry Carr won't be able to get out of it, though, so I'll put the wind up him for a start. Terry: I hear that the Russians plan to send a cow into space. She'll be known as the first Cowsmoonaut.

If that's doused the beam of the LIGHTHOUSE, you can borrow my bacover candles for emergency lighting.

(Laugh ? I thought they'd never start ...)

May 17th, 1965

++ Beryl Henley.

C-OZ-MENTS !

.... mailing comments on OMPA-43.

March 26th 1965

OFF-TRAILS (Ethel). How very well your farewell AE-letter demonstrates the truth of the old saying: "If you want something done, give it to a busy person to do." I sincerely hope you'll soon be better, and please - don't you leave OMPA just as I've joined ! // Please, OMPAns - it's not my fault that Ken's resigned - though I guess it must look like a case of "In comes Beryl and out goes Ken." !

AMBLE-21. (Archie). I was halfway to disliking Mr. G. Higginbottom (is he based on anybody real, by the way ?), when it occurred to me that in many cases, the oppressor or tyrant is smaller than the "underdog," e.g. Napoleon and Hitler. One wonders if they, and others like them, might not have been more docile and peaceable had they been hefty six-footers. Small people are often aggressive, and, I think, not always because they need to be, or because they feel "put on" by taller folk. // Oh Archie, don't you think I display enough h'iggerance off me own bat without you dredging up my year-old defiance about Fearn ? Since then, of course, I've sampled a few Fearn-leaves - I read a "Golden Amazon" book. Er ... yes, well ... no comment ... (Phil Harbottle might be listening !).

THE MEADOWS OF FANTASY. (AM again). Ha ! I'll bet Pweston wishes he'd kept his trap shut ! (Hey, Pete - Am's written something !). I like this very much - it makes for easy, effortless reading, and one feels "at home" with the people. Especially in Chap. 5 (and I've never even been to a Con. Yet.) The main criticism I would make is that, apart from Theo and Barker, not a single character is described physically. Mine Smith (gorgeous name - are we ever going to be told the true story of its origin ?) - is described as having "a mass of long hair," but apart from that - nothing. Now, this may be deliberate on your part; you may prefer to leave it to your readers to conjure up their own visualisation of what your fictitious fen look like. Personally, I like to have at least a few details to go on. (You haven't even said how many heads each entity has ...). // Another point (again personal): I'm frustrated by being unable to comprehend the significance of Ian Omlet's remark: "Bird lives." Is this pertinent to an earlier fandom or something ? // I note that you're off on your "age-does-make-a-difference" kick again ! Poor Mine - just because she's a few years older than the male Thisburgers, they "don't count" ! Well, I hope she chucks Theo - if they are That Way about each other - and marries Ian or somebody, so there ! // Small quibbles, these - and I'm certainly looking forward to Part II.

BINARY 1000 (i.e. 8) (what is going on ??). Joe P. I'm still trying to discover how to read SKYRACK with my eyes closed ... // I remember seeing Ingrid Bergman in the film of "For Whom the Bell Tolls." I recall very little of it except a residual impression of tearing emotions and savage cruelty. // Well, I'm glad somebody else was as baffled by "Voices of Time" as I was. Over at Ken's last Sunday, I had several earnest Brummies patiently trying to explain it to me. And of course, each interpretation was utterly different from every other ! I was beginning to think it was me-being-dim again. // The matter of capital punishment and its abolition is, as you say, highly charged with emotionalism. But, Joe - is there such a thing as a sane murderer ? Could any man or woman who was ontirely sane take the life of another human being, for any reason whatsoever ? You may quote the instance of self-preservation, of shooting an enemy when it's a case of "him or me." But what kind of sanity puts weapons into men's hands and sends them out to kill each other ? // You're right, of course - it is a matter of a "sick

society." // William Temple's article is very interesting. Encouraging, too, for those of us who constantly voice the plaint, "Someone's always done it first!" There is nothing new under the sun, of course - but, reading the examples of other writers' plagiarisms - deliberate or subconscious - perhaps it's just as well that I've never found time to read half the books I wanted to! //

COGNATE-7. Rosemary Hickey. Every winter the cry goes up about this country's unpreparedness for bad weather. It's as if local authorities tell themselves comfortably every summer, "Well, it won't snow this winter," and of course it always does. Public and private transport is reduced to a chaotic state, plumbers get lots of overtime money and little sleep, people die in snowdrifts, and sometimes whole villages are cut off for days at a time. I must say I was surprised to learn that it's the same or worse over there. The American national image is, after all, one of high-powered efficiency and slick "get-up-'n'-go." Do you mean that your side-roads never get defrosted? Even in this small town, though the main roads are treated first (usually with gritty sand, or a mixture of sand and salt), in time all roads are so treated, even obscure little cul-de-sacs and suchlike. // I had a titter over: "Those with fireplaces in their homes returned to 'pioneer ways' ... huddling round the fireplace for heat." etc. Heh! Rosemary, lass, we do that every winter! // But we've never been without electricity for more than a few hours - I boggle at the idea of cooking for four on an open fire for FIVE DAYS! // I'm drafting these comments on March 21st, which is the first official day of spring. Also, we put all the clocks forward an hour last night, thus starting British Summer Time. I said it would snow today! It did! It's still doing it! // Bob Hope once said, "I love England. It's the only place I know where you can really enjoy all four seasons. All in one day ..." // There's only one piece of valid advice to offer a new mother and that is: trust your own instincts - and the baby's! Best of luck, anyway, to all three of you. Hope you'll still find time to tell us about your new field of activity. // I remember once going on a train with my mother to a place called Water Orton, only we didn't - we found ourselves in Walsall. We never did find out why. // How right you are about "colloquialisms can vary enough to confuse the listener." This subject cropped up at Ken's last Sunday. As far as I know, everyone present was a Brummie (native of Birmingham) or next-door to being one. But when I made some remark about, I couldn't see much sense in getting as drunk as a bobowler, most of those present said, "That's a bobowler?" The phrase I had used is a favourite of my father's, and he's as Brummie as all-get-out. Then we began comparing Midlands-type "catch-phrases" with those originating in other parts of the country. Like, I say, "I don't know if I'm coming or going," when I'm in a bit of a tiz. My mother-in-law, who has lived all her life in the south of England, says, "I don't know if I'm on foot or on horseback." But the lady with whom I work, who is also a Brummie, says: "I don't know if I'm in the Co-op or the Maypole." (sort-of national chain stores). It certainly isn't only accents that differ! // What? Oh, a bobowler - well, it's one of those big, furry, blundering moths that are suicidally attracted to one's light-bulbs in summer, and then, scorched, fall into one's lap or hair. Can't anybody tell me where this fascinating word originated?

HAGGIS-3. Ian Peters. At first I thought it was very odd that you should be the only member, British or American, to comment on the death of Sir Winston Churchill. Then I asked myself why I hadn't thus commented - because many of my own memories of the war are resonant with that unforgettable voice. And I think that the omission is because, as you said, "we have been expecting it for years." He died peacefully and quietly, at a great age. There was much more

comment on President Kennedy's death because it was (a) unexpected, and therefore shocking; (b) violent, and (c) occurred at a comparatively early age. There's a quotation niggling at the back of my mind - something about, "the hour produces the man." Of Churchill, it may be said that "the finest hour produced the finest man." That booming voice, with its slight impediment making it unmistakable, meant (to us who remember the war) - defiance, firmness of purpose, and the will to endure through the "blood, toil, tears and sweat" of which he warned us. To the sorely-tried peoples of occupied Europe, it must have represented sustaining hope and bright promise of eventual liberation. // Your home-town is Dumbarton? My first experience of Naval life occurred at Balloch, in the same county. The officers were billeted in Tulliehewan Castle, which was demolished about seven years after the war, I know not why. (Do you?). I don't know whether I took the high road or the low road, but whichever it was, I found myself dabbling bare feet one day in Loch Lomond's southernmost tip. // As a matter of fact my entire 2¹/₂-year Naval career consisted of my being shuttled from north to south and then back north again. After a fortnight at Balloch, I was sent to take my six-month training course in Staffordshire. Then I went north again, to Easthaven (between Dundee and Arbroath). After 11 months there, I was yo-yo'd south to Winchester for another course, lasting a month. Then back to Scotland, Paisley this time. Two months there, and whoops! back to Staffs. again - different station, though - from whence I was finally demobbed at the end of 1945. I was surprised they (Their Lordships at the Mad House) didn't see fit to send me back to Scotland for that little ceremony - t'would have been entirely fitting! // Is Ernest Dichter -(who was, you reported, trying to put sex into soup) - the Dr. Dichter who instigated motivational research in the States? The one Packard writes about in "The Hidden Persuaders"?

INTERLUDE - Bobbie Gray. Congratulations on managing to save up all your nervous tension, irritability and exhaustion until the exams were all over! (Thanks, too, for your letter - glad to know you got your diploma after all that effort). // Re your remarks to John Roles anent Crowley - if he's still interested, there's a fairly detailed description of these events in Dennis Wheatley's "To the Devil - a Daughter." (Which I'm sure you must have read, Bobbie). // All those names at the end of your ticking-off-of-Terry - have you read Arthur Koestler's "The Sleepwalkers"? If not, I wish you would. Well, I wish somebody would - I've been dying to discuss it for years, but most folk take one look at the size of the damn thing and make for the nearest exit! Come to think of it - if somebody does institute a discussion - I'll have to read it again myself to refresh me memory - HELP!

MEIN-OMPF-4. Colin Freeman. Thanks for your most welcome letter - I must say that you're one OMPAN I've been dying to "get at." (That's not meant to be menacing, however it may sound!). I've heard a lot about you, and read a few earlier M-O's - was most disappointed not to find one in my first mailing. (No.42). // This fixation on cami-knickers - what are you doing, hankering for the Good Old Days? No modern-minded female would be seen dead in the things nowadays, and no self-respecting fashion shop would stock 'em. They're old-hat, passé, OUT! // Saludos to Temple jr.!. The hunt scene completely ruined "Tom Jones" for me. If the film hadn't been so highly recommended to me by so many people, I'd have left the cinema at that point. And at the end of the film, I wished I had. I thought it was grossly over-rated, and a shocking waste of good acting-talent like that of Albert Finney and Joan Greenwood. // Does the Admiralty offer marine asylum, then? Because, to British sailors, it is, always has been, and probably always will be - The Mad House.

MORPH-37. John Roles. I hate to think what you're going to make of my initials !
So you think reincarnation is a "nice cosy idea." Ho-hum.
Graham Hall (a Tewkesbury-based fan) once described it, in an loc to BEYOND, as:
"... the last refuge of a frightened human striving against the fear of that
ultimate truth, Death." But, if reincarnation is a fact - and I can't prove that it
is, any more than you can prove it isn't ! - then we must face death (of the body)
not once, but over and over again. What's "nice and cosy" about that ?? What kind
of a "last refuge" is it, h'mmmm ?

NEXUS-3. Pete. I got a flawless cover, thanks. I could - er - make some personal
remarks about doing Christmas shopping for bashful males, but you
embarrass easy, dontcha ?? // Re your idea for an SF story ... I hate to tell you,
but it's been done before ! (It was ever thus !). Remember that story in the
Budrys collection ("Furious Future") - "The Skirmisher" ? That's the one I couldn't
understand, and you had to explain it to me ! But the basic theme is much the same
as your idea - though for different reasons. Try Kingston's "Manipulation" in the
latest Carnell "New Writings," too. (Great story). // Ask Joe, how does one get
hold of a subjective fact ? And tell him, it's not necessarily virgins who evoke -
or provoke - poltergeists, it's adolescents - usually female. Which, now I've
written it, sounds a somewhat cynical remark, but wasn't meant to be ! // I'll also
lend him some of my D&S books if he wants 'em - though I don't have the original
"Dianetics" book, nor "Science of Survival." I've got "Fundamentals of Thought,"
though, plus several others. // Seth is right - if a thing needs (in your opinion)
to be re-written - SEND IT BACK. But don't just say, "I don't want this" - tell him
why. Very few pro-eds do this, which annoys me. I know they are very busy people,
but surely they could depute - or hire specially - a staff member to add a couple
of explanatory lines to the standard, uninformative rejection slip. A little
constructive criticism would be of the greatest help to all but the most pig-headed.
(Any offers for my collection of lousyrottenrejectionlips ??). // I think I'll
leave the Tom Paine argument to Doreen and Ed ... if they set it to music, it
might make a good opera ... // Can anybody tell me who said something to the effect
that "Democracy is a lousy system of government, but it's the best there is so far."
? // Could I, please, correct a small error on your last page ? I didnt personally
receive any of the "Spider's" propaganda, if it can be called such. Probably
because he, whoever he is, knows that Charles Platt is a friend of mine. (And, I
may add, will remain so unless/until he himself decides to change that situation.
I am - regretfully - aware that Charles has alienated a number of people, but his
manners and behaviour in my house have always been beyond reproach. Furthermore,
he has never been rude to me, either to my face or in his writings). Archie did
receive copies of the "documents," and passed them on to me with the query, did I
know the sender's identity. I didn't. I thought that one of them had been typed
on Rog Peyton's machine, with its rather distinctive typeface, but I'd have staked
my life on Rog not being the perpetrator. He's too honest for this kind of under-
handedness, and would, as you said, have signed his name to it, even if he had
issued it. Later, Rog said that it wasn't a product of his machine, and I guess he
should know. Possibly you'll have more to say on this matter, and possibly not,
since the BSFA Committee elections will be over by the time OMPA-44 appears. In
either case, I'm staying out of it because I think it's downright nasty. And
somebody should tell this creep that spiders have eight legs, not twelve. What is
he - a mutated arachnid ?

PHENOTYPE - dunno what number - the one with the Japanese pop-song on the cover.

Dick: I, too, was tempted to take a crack at some of your queries about
London in your previous issue, but thought better of it, since I'm not a Londoner.

However, I'd like to pass on a silly story about the first time I visited London alone (1944). I arrived at one main station (Euston), and had to get across to another (Waterloo). I decided to use the Underground. This I found surprisingly easy, and didn't have to ask once for directions or assistance. There were different coloured lamps everywhere - "Follow the green light for Waterloo," etc. Then I spotted one that said, "Follow the red light for Piccadilly." I got some very funny looks, I can tell you! Though I guess it must have seemed odd to passers-by - a girl in Naval uniform, just standing there and laughing her fool head off ... // George Scithers' report was most interesting. As I remarked in a recent letter to Tony Walsh - I do think the word "convention" is just about the most inapt description possible for occasions like this! // A recent TV programme over here dealt with the R.C. attitude towards contraception. One woman doctor gave a very pithy reply to the claim that "the Lord will provide." "All that the Lord provides," she said tartly, "is more children!" // One thing bothers me, though. At one end of the scale, we have parents, governments, scientists, and - for all I know - the W.H.O. - desperately trying to slow down the birth rate. But at the other end, we have the geriatricists seeking ways to prolong human life, and to promote better health in the aged. Very praiseworthy - and, please note, I number quite a few elderly people among my personal friends. However, considering this matter with complete detachment, and in the light of the present population threat - wouldn't you agree that humanity has far greater need of new life, and its inherent potential for progress, than of extended longevity? // I can't help recalling a story (sorry, I have a shocking memory for titles and authors' names) about a world in which young couples were not allowed to have babies until elderly relatives had died, and this led to a shockingly sudden pogrom of old people

QUARTERING, Vol. 2, No. 1. Don Fitch. Sorry - I'm bone idle. (They Tell Me ...) Which means that, although I enjoy looking at flowers (growing ones, mind - I don't like cut flowers in vases and things - they ain't nacheral!), and sniffing the perfumed varieties, and even writing occasional nature-poems - I don't have green fingers. I don't even have green thumbs. The only type of gardening work I rather enjoy is pushing a (non-motorised) lawn-mower around the small patch of grass that calls itself our front lawn. Even this activity is only enjoyed under certain conditions; the sun has to be really hot, and I prefer to be bare-footed. (see, if the sun is hot, and the ground is dry, there's little likelihood of my treading on worms and things ...).

THE SCARR. No. 7. George Charters. I thought it was only garrulous women who talked about their operations ... However, I got as far as the word "dentist," and hastily turned the page. The very word sets every nerve in my mouth cringing! Please George - don't do that! Or I shall retaliate with details of my two Caesareans! // It was finally decided that holes can not only be seen - they can also be sold. By wholesalers. // A coffin with a 3 h.p. engine? Funny sorta Love-craft ... // Perhaps Cordwainer Smith saw that bit about the horse plodding to the sun - and wrote "One the Gem Planet" as a result? // Is Mack Reynolds the guy who has willed his ranch to his sons, on condition that they rename it "The Focus."? So that when they inherit, it will be ~~xxx~~ said that, "'The Focus' is where the sons raise meat." (With acknowledge-ments to Archie, who inflicted that on me many moons ago - I'm still groaning!). // Oh - so it was John Berry who originated those particular Famous Last Words, was it? "Don't worry - it's One Of Ours ..." The spalpeen! I'll bet it was one of Berry's Beaufighters that chucked 16 bombs at me, one memorable night in Brum. (Don't worry, folks - they all MISSED!). // All the above 'orrible puns are offered as proof of my Irish ancestry. Bedad, loike ...

TOMCHATS-4. Tom Schlück. Your ~~DM~~ Magazine sounds something like the Consumer Advisory Council over here. This puts out a mag. called "Which?" There is also a TV programme called "Choice," but whether this is sponsored by the C&C, I don't know. It certainly seems to keep manufacturers and retail traders on their toes, though. A customer who buys an item, finds it to be defective, and fails to get satisfaction, can, I believe, take his or her complaint to the C&C, and they will then act on his behalf. // "Kind Hearts and Coronets" was shown on TV here only a few months ago. I first saw it in Brighton in 1949. The primary gimmick of the film, of course, is that all eight of the victims - one of whom is an elderly lady - are played by Alec Guinness. And I think that your indication of this fact - i.e., "Alec Guinness 8" - will probably be regarded by some people as a typo!

VIPER-8. Bill Donaho. Thanks. I can't comment, not knowing any of the people involved (a few by name, such as Carol Carr, but nothing more) - but I do love reading about larger-than-life individualists.

WHATSIT-10. Ken. Oh, Ken - must you? Well ... when you gotta go, you gotta go, I suppose. Alas, poor Olaf - I hear his knoll! And I'll never know what you thought of OZ-1. Tell you what: I'll swap you this pile of Brooke Bond tea-packets for an loc, how's that?

The news of Don Ford's death came before I had drafted my comments on POOKA-15. I didn't, of course, know Don, but he was a part of OMPA-within-fandom, and was, therefore, a potential friend. I regret that this potential will not now be realised.

POST-MAILINGS.

NADIR-4. Charlie. Dave Wood ought to get together with the guy who is being currently stalked by "Garth" in the "Daily Mirror"! // "The World of A.M." - Archie knows very well that the children couldn't possibly eat Arcturians, since the latter are viruses ... (gorrouta that, Mercer!). // Well? Did Toskey write a thesis on The Gobbins? // Terry's advice should be carefully read and committed to memory. The new H.P. agreements are dead sneaky. If you sign one on the retailer's premises, All Is Lost, for you cannot return your purchase later and ask for your deposit back. // They're still talking about Redditch New Town. And political control of the local Council has just changed hands, so goodness knows what will happen now. // Charlie, wherever did you find that gorgeous word, "Hocatoncheires"? In my book they were called Centimani.

I also received a sheaf of BROBDINGNAGS. Sorry, Dick - I'm completely baffled.

The latest arrival is "a Finky Issue of PHENOTYPE," which (It Says Here) was included in OMPA XLII. Mr. Enoy, sir: I have enough trouble protecting an ordinary Queen from being abducted by one of my sons (and to think that I helped 'em to learn chess in the first place ...) without equipping her with wings! Still: one of these days, when the rain is roaring on the roof, and if I can find the chess-board, and the box with the chessmen in, - who knows? It might stop 'em fighting for half an hour. In which case, I shall cable you a hearty vote of thanks!

E A R L Y B I R D S
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and

N I G H T O W L S
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Meet the Early Bird. He leaps eagerly from his bed at exactly the right time, scorning the unnecessary (for him) stridency of an alarm-clock. The sunlight of summer dawn and the unwelcoming morning dark of winter . . . are alike to him. He sniffs the air of his new day, be it balmy or icy, and trips into the bathroom, whistling blithely. There, he strips to the waist, and ignoring any consequent gooseflesh, performs his ablutions with gusto. If he is a really spartan type, he will wallow unconcernedly in a cold or tepid bath, telling himself smugly what a tough fellow he is. He flings on his clothes and emerges, hungrily anticipating a three-course breakfast augmented by innumerable cups of tea or coffee.

He switches on the radio, turns up the volume to an ear-splitting blast, and adds his own (usually cacophonous) accompaniment to its issue of morning cheer. He jeers at the cup of tea or coffee which comprises the breakfast taken by a bleary-eyed spouse. He flings open doors and windows, and noisily fills his lungs with whatever sort of air happens to be around. He regales other, less lively members of his household with snippets from his newspaper. At last, with a roar of "Look at the time !" and "Mustn't be late !" he takes his cyclonic leave, sped on his way by sighs of heartfelt relief from his demoralised family.

Bright-eyed, his brain ticking over on all cylinders, he breezes forth to his daily labours. On bus or train, he is living anathema to other passengers who do not wish to discuss the weather, last night's play on the telly, or Villa's chances in the Cup.

But observe our hero on the way home. He has wilted like a lettuce in a heat-wave. In response to solicitous family enquiries of "Had a good day, dear ?" he utters a series of uninformative grunts. His evening meal is regularly conducive to a state of gentle somnolence; he sinks gratefully into the best armchair with his newspaper on his lap. During the evening he may rouse sufficiently to open one eye, the better to observe the doings of Dick van Dyke or Amos Burke. Or both eyes, if it's a football match, or a line of energetically-kicking chorus girls.

Usually, however, one may expect the evening to be punctuated by occasional snores and yawns. At about ten p.m., our Early Bird announces that he "can't keep his eyes open," (having had them shut almost continually since seven), and is ready to go to roost. No need for him to woo Morpheus; one of his regular boasts is: "I always fall asleep as soon as my head touches the pillow." (He maintains that this happy knack is due to his clear conscience, but neglects to add that the clarity of his conscience is singularly ineffective in overcoming the insomnia caused by an incipient bilious attack, or an aching tooth).

Diurnal pest though he is, he will be extremely efficient as a postman, milkman, newsagent, or on the six-till-two shift in a factory.

.....

Meet the Night Owl. The alarm-clock yells, at least half an hour before its summons is required. An arm gropes from beneath the bedclothes, a hand waving on the end of it, to silence the row by pressing a button, or by dropping the offending timepiece into a convenient drawer. A muffled groan of despair is heard, and then silence as the sufferer sinks back into his interrupted slumber.

Usually, he must depend on the efforts of others to persuade him from his bed. The birds are welcoming a summer dawn? - he curses them tiredly. The winter stars are still ice-bright? - his misery is even deeper.

He tumbles into the bathroom, limbs shivering, teeth chattering, whatever the season. No hot water? - he will hasten back to bed until a kettle boils. Wash in cold water? - perish the thought! His circulatory system is still asleep; his awakening must be a slow process, with no shocks.

Having washed hastily, he returns to the bedroom and takes, one by one, his garments from beneath the eiderdown, donning each quickly so that it shall not lose its warmth. No morning shave for him - too dangerous, his eyes still blurred with sleep, and his hand movements not yet properly co-ordinated.

"Porridge, dear?" Ugh! "Bacon and egg, then?" Eecchhh! Perhaps a few cornflakes, soggy in warm milk, (for he will have nothing to do with cold substances at this unearthly hour), an uninspiring slice of buttered toast, and a cup of tea or coffee. After his first cigarette of the day, he begins to feel vaguely human. This feeling, however, is crushed into its former oblivion by the chatty nit on the bus, who will persist in making fatuous remarks about the weather, last night's play on the telly, or Villa's chances in the Cup.

Our Night Owl's responses consist of a series of uninformative grunts, as he tries to hide behind his newspaper. He isn't reading it, of course; not yet. One glance at the headlines is sufficient to warn him of the depressing nature of the contents, and he is depressed enough as it is by the simple effort involved in facing a new day.

Somehow he struggles through his morning, a perfect example of living automation, and after lunch he wishes fervently that he was a native of some unmapped South American village, so that he could decently indulge in a siesta. But, at about four p.m., a subtle metamorphosis begins to take place. His pace quickens, his wit livens, and his brain moves smoothly into top gear. Warm energy floods his limbs, and by the time he reaches home, he is a new being, roaring, "What's for tea? I could eat a Boy Scout on toast!" and fairly bursting with bonhomie and joie de vivre.

After doing justice to a gargantuan meal, he's raring to go. The telly? He can't sit still for that, and anyway he's bored stiff with it. In summer he dashes off, whistling blithely, to play cricket or tennis, or he may attack the garden with happy ferocity. In winter, unmindful of climatic malignancy, he is the guiding spirit of clubs, amateur sports organisations, dramatic or debating societies, or evening classes. He sweeps along other, more lothargic members in the torrent of his irrepressible energy.

By ten p.m., he is really "with it," ready to tackle a moonlight hike or an old-time dancing session. "An early night" is just so much wasted time for

him - his brain and body are so active that he couldn't possibly sleep before midnight.

Nocturnal pest though he is, he, too, may prove himself almost indispensable. Anyone seeking a leader for some evening activity, to produce or star in an amateur play, to organise a youth club, or to act as honorary secretary for any amateur, evening-meeting society, should seek a person who is a sub-human, snarling creature in the mornings ("I'll be all right if only people will leave me alone!"). His night-awakened personality will bring sparkle and gaiety to any group.

But supposing our Early Bird mates himself - or herself - to a Night Owl? In the latter instance, things may work out quite well. An early-rising wife can be worth her weight in alarm-clocks to N.O. husband and children. They will never be late for work or school while she is around, dispensing her ruthless morning efficiency. And all such wives become resigned to "Don't wait up for me, dear, I may be late."

Having tried, ineffectually, to keep up with the late-night energies of her N.O. spouse, she will soon own herself beaten. She retires to a lonely bed, but her feeling of being the put-upon, hard-done-by family martyr is soon swamped by ghoulish anticipation of revenge next morning.

When a female N.O. weds a male E.B., this may present a more awkward situation. If the female's circle of male acquaintances is restricted to E.B.'s, she would be wise to choose her mate with rather more care than usual. She should also put into effect stringent training measures as soon as the strains of "Lohengrin" have died away. These tactics should be based upon the fact that E.B.'s are usually tolerant and good-humoured at the crack o' dawn, and may, therefore, be persuaded without much effort to let sleeping N.O.'s lie. The male E.B. who is disposed to spoil his wife a little will even cosset her to the extent of providing an early morning cup of tea, laced with good spirits - his own. (This will be as much as she can face at that hour).

She, in turn, must flatter his male ego by telling him how clever he is to be able to get his own breakfast during the working week. She should try to subdue her morning spleen on Sundays and during holidays. She must resist sternly the temptation to bash him with the frying-pan when he comes dancing into the kitchen, exclaiming "Oh, what a beautiful morning!" to vistas of grey skies and pouring rain. She should not scream obscenities when he fetches her a playful swipe across that portion of her anatomy best fitted to receive such attentions. He can't help it; and she should fortify herself with the reminder that she will probably be just as infuriating to him at the other end of the day.

There are certain rules applicable to unions between E.B.'s and N.O.'s, the observance of which will help to smooth the marital path. To the E.B.: do try to restrain yourself in the morning, especially if your N.O. mate has managed to rise at the same time as you. Don't sing, except when you are safely locked in the bathroom, and then only sotto voce. Don't indulge in sparkling conversation; the sparkle will blind his/her sleep-dulled eyes. Don't jeer at his/her frugal or non-existent breakfast; don't pour scorn on the cornflakes while the N.O. is pouring boiling water into the teapot. You might cause a

nasty accident, and it is much more likely to happen to you than to your sorely-
tried mate.

E.B. wives should never try to persuade N.O. husbands to shave
in the mornings, especially if said wives are apt to faint at the sight of blood.
E.B. husbands should reserve complaints about burnt porridge, leathery eggs and
dry-fried bacon until the evening. If they are rash enough to complain about the
rashers at 7.30.a.m., they will probably be caustically invited to do it themselves
in future.

Above all, E.B.'s must not refer to N.O.'s, in the morning, as "bone-idle,
lazy good-for-nothings" (even jokingly); and N.O.'s must not address E.B.'s, in the
evening, as "dull, dreary, stick-in-the-mud clods."

Murders have been committed on less provocation.

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OZ WELCOMES DON STUDEBAKER

When Ken Cheslin first mentioned that he was thinking of leaving OMPA,
his main concern was in finding a new "home" for Don Studebaker. I told Ken that
I was quite willing to carry Don's material if Don himself had no objections.

He hadn't. On the contrary: he wrote to me, "The idea of appearing
in OZ has certain fascinations for me, Oz, at least, is as real to me as most
of the places I've been on my recent journeys. But I warn you, I sometimes
practice strange magicks"

Well ... if my own modest incantations prove ineffective against Don's
powers, I guess I'll just have to enlist the help of Bobbie Gray!

However, OZ and I are happy to have the Naked Artichoke gambolling among
our pages. I only hope that the rigours of British winters won't prove too much
for his state-of-nature ...

So: let go forrard, let go aft, right hand down - we're off to the West
Indies.

Glad to have you aboard, Don.

+ + + + +

THE NAKED ARTICHOKE

by Don Studebaker.

ESCAPES ...

Jerémie, Haiti
1964

Well. Here I am sitting at my typewriter (faithful old thing) and I am sort of at a loss for words. For the first time in, oh, two weeks at least. Where the deuce should I begin, I seem to be saying to myself. I could start at the beginning, but that's already begun (last time around) so I'd just be repeating myself. So, start where I left off. Yes, that's a good idea. So the usual, before the madness of the city comes upon you, and you begin to recite in strange earthy rhymes.

I was aboard the Sturmflieger Drei, a ship chartered by one Herr Schmidt and his wife, Maria, supposedly for a vacation in the Caribbean, supposedly terminating in Miami. Supposedly.

I suspect it was Frau Schmidt who did the chartering. She didn't push her husband around, from what I saw of them, but she was certainly the most dominating woman I've ever seen. She ate little, and cared less for her husband's complaints about the food. But there was little he could do, considering that he had hired me to cook. I began to worry, in this respect, when the pre-packaged ice-cream mix ran out. One cannot make Baked Alaskan without ice-cream.

.....

Since we are on the topic of food, maybe now is the time to tell you about Jim O'Neal. He remained my secret all the time I was aboard, at least when it came to eating.

Jim is an elderly seaman, about sixty-five I think. He has the saltiest vocabulary I've encountered in a long time. He has knocked around the world for most of those years, and used his brain as a sponge most of them.

He looks like any old seaman will look after sixty-five years. He doesn't talk much, but when he does, it's worth hearing. From conversations with Jim I have filled to brimming many of the empty warehouses of my mind. Yet Jim continues to move slowly but surely through the world, intent on one thing only. A peculiar obsession he has.

When he was a young man, just going to sea and all, he made the acquaintance of an elderly fellow sailor who had retired to San Francisco and opened a restaurant and ship's rest. This old man was probably the world's greatest cook, if Jim's description is accurate. For fifteen years, after Jim made his acquaintance, he ran a tourist attraction, the attraction of which was that he could cook anything. People came from all over California, and sailors from all over the world, to test the man's culinary knowledge. He was said to have never failed in preparing an exotic and rare dish, provided with the ingredients.

When he died, and all his equipment and possessions were auctioned away, it left Jim, and I presume a lot of other people, with an empty feeling in one corner of their stomachs. Jim there and then decided to take the old man's place when he retired, and provide just as many people with a lovely place to eat.

So he started collecting recipes. He has been collecting them ever since, every possible one he could lay his hands on.

But, you ask me, with such a fine cook, why hire me? Simple. Jim has never touched a skillet, never boiled an egg, except in dire emergency. He has never tested a single one of his many recipes. He just collects one after another, adding tons of flour and corn syrup to his mental pantry and waiting for the day when he retires. He actually believes he will be able to cook the first time he tries.

At any rate he has a vast storehouse. His mind is like a computer. All he lacks is experience.

He will soon get that, however. This was his last voyage. He left ship at the Canary Islands to take a passage through the Canal and thence to San Francisco. As some of the ship's company warned me of peculiarities in the mails leaving the Canaries, I entrusted Jim with the manuscript for my last OMPA column. When I last talked via phone with the States, I was told that OMPA was having mail troubles, so I thought it might be safer to trust Jim than a homing canary.

So I said goodbye to Jim, and we headed for lovely Miami; or so I thought.

.....

I think I mentioned last time that Herr Schmidt and Maria were practicing Spanish a lot? Well, it filtered down from the muchly displeased Captain of our stalwart little vessel that we were heading for Havana. That is in Cuba. Which is a little Red Island, run by a man with whom the only thing I have in common is a beard. I have American papers, an American passport, an American vaccination mark(s) in appropriate places, which places would be in dire danger if that Other Beard ever got his hands on me. Americans are not liked in Cuba any more. I did not want to go to Cuba. So I went to the Captain.

The Captain threw up his hands in disgust and sent me to see Herr and Frau Schmidt. And see I did.

Maria Schmidt was taking a shower. When she heard that the cook wanted Out, she simply stepped out and proceeded to conduct the interview. She is, if one gets the point, built like a brick commissary.

The trouble with these people of high breeding and good upbringing, is that they think it is perfectly proper to do anything at all in front of persons of poor morals. And their definition of poor morals is that you weren't born with a silver spoon in your teeth. She fumed. She ranted. She raved. She dried off with a large yellow terry cloth towel.

From the way she screamed, you would have thought I had asked her to tattoo a picture of Barry Goldwater on her left nipple. She was magnificent, the way a hurricane or a plague is magnificent. I suspect that she is also deadly, in much the same way. I pity her husband, on the one hand, for having been hitched to her. On the other, I must admire him, for this Fury incarnate phased him not one whit. He interrupted her halfway through a dissertation on gasoline costs and told her that it would be very easy to swing across the forty-mile Windward Passage in some nice cove of the Dominican Republic, or Haiti.

Drop me they did, in the middle of the night, rowed ashore by two men in a dinghy, and left on the lovely shores of San Domingue with a boy scout pack of clothes, a portable typewriter, and my pay in a brown paper envelope. May I here say a fond farewell to the Schmidts, whatever or whoever they may be.

.....

It wouldn't be a bad place for a vacation, if I could speak French. It wouldn't be too good, either, as the people speak a Creole patois. It's beautiful, and I'm told much easier to learn if you speak English than if you speak French. But for me to learn another language, however, simple, takes years, I think. Yet, I shouldn't complain. I could have been landed in Alaska. Or, with a little effort, the Schmidts could have sailed further west and landed me in a desert region. As it was, I managed to walk to Cap Haitian, living on mangoes and Champagne Kola, the local equivalent of Popsi.

In Cap Haitian there are some English-speaking peoples, who suggested that I go to Sans Souci, or the Citadelle, and wait for a tourist going south. For the non-initiates in the audience, there are two things in Haiti that one must see, aside from Vaudau. They are, respectively, Sans Souci, and the Citadelle.

Henry Christophe had himself crowned King Henry I, then he started to build. His efforts served to show the White World of the early eighteenth hundreds that the Negro too could create monuments of style and beauty. In the early, benevolent part of his reign, Christophe constructed Sans Souci. On a smaller scale, it must have equalled Versailles. Though it is now a ruin (and one of the most beautiful ruins in the world), its grandeur remains.

Sans Souci is ~~xxxx~~ four stories high and covers about twenty acres. Built of brick, overlaid with stucco (which is now falling away) it slopes beautifully from the two sentry boxes to the royal stables, where the King kept his £700 carriage. There is now a tourist stand under the giant star apple tree where Christophe dispensed his judgements. To describe the whole thing would take a hundred pages.

Over one arch is a carved sun of black wood bearing the inscription:

"Je Vois Tout et Tout Voit Par Moi Dans L'Univers"

Anyone out there who can give a decent translation? I think I can guess the meaning, but I'm not sure.

Sans Souci, I am told, had everything when it was new. Floors of marble and mosaic, walls of polished mahogany, pictures, tapestries and drapes, imported from Europe. Under the floors, conduits carried a cold mountain stream (which later emerged in a fountain), thus providing the King with air conditioning. There were also a good many bathrooms, a fantastic luxury for the times.

From Le Cap you can see the Citadelle, but then not again until it is upon you. It's on a sort of mountain, beyond Sans Souci.

In his later years, Christophe became a tyrant. He spent a fortune in money, and more in human life, to construct a great fortress. One can photograph the thing he built, but a little picture is inadequate. One cannot describe its aura of pain and power.

Three thousand feet above sea level, where the air is thin and sharp, it thrusts its massive stone prow forward in a vain attempt to dominate the Universe. Perhaps that is a key word concerning the Citadelle. Vain. Its walls are a hundred and forty feet high. They are covered with a lichen which is locally called "Christophe's Blood." They are 20 to 30 feet thick. They were built to house what amounts to a modern Division, fifteen thousand men! There are four gun corridors, 270 feet long and 30 feet wide, with ports for firing. I think most of the original 365 giant cannon are still there. How, save under a tyrant, could human beings be induced to carry such monstrous weapons over so inadequate a trail at heights where each breath is a luxury? Some of the cannon have Roman names, such as Scipio, Romulo and Remo. I saw another one with Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité inscribed, and yet another with 'Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense,' which I seem to recall is the motto of the Knights of the Garter. There are hundreds of smaller guns littering the battlements.

Christophe had a section of forty rooms constructed for himself and his family. This included a billiard room with two sentry boxes and an open fireplace!

There were immense store-rooms for ammunition, and a factory for the manufacture of gunpowder. Hospitals, dungeons, treasure chambers, everything, buried in the dark foundations of this great pile of stone. Eight huge water cisterns, four of them covered (for drinking water), built into the walls. Plus catch basins and reservoirs for rain water.

It took sixteen years, the agony of countless tens of thousands, to build the Citadelle La Ferriere; and all as a safety precaution against an attack that never came. The infamy of the Citadelle, the cost in human life, was too much.

At the Cathedral at Limonade, Christophe suffered a stroke. His palace guards revolted openly. The King locked himself in his chambers, and, taking out a silver bullet, (forged years before with some morbid precognition), he shot himself.

The queen and one faithful courtier dragged the King's body from Sans Souci, up the long trail to the Citadelle. There, high on the ramparts of the fortress that proved the symbol of his doom, they dumped Christophe's body in a pit of quicklime. On that spot, above the pit, is Christophe's monument. It is typical of Haitian cemeteries, made of heavy stone, like a small building. Heavy stone, to prevent the dead from walking. Perhaps a silver bullet also, to prevent a bocor from making zombi of the King.

In death, even as in life, Christophe rose higher than other men. High to the stark walls of the Citadelle. Here, I am fairly sure, Napoleon will never assail him. The inscription reads:

CI-GIT LE ROI HENRY CHRISTOPHE
NE LE 6 OCTOBRE, 1767, MORT LE
20 OCTOBRE, 1820, DONT LA DEVISE
EST: JE RENAISS DE MES CENDRES

I was standing on the parapet, I should imagine somewhere near the spot that Christophe was when he marched a platoon of his Royal Dahomets off the edge to demonstrate their loyalty (for a visiting foreign dignitary), when I met DeMaiffe.

"You're an American, aren't you?" he said.

"Yes," I blurted out, not thinking that it could be the wrong answer.

"I thought you were the one," he continued. "Come on. I'm giving you a ride to Port au Prince."

.....

DeMaiffe is like looking in a rose-colored mirror. He looks like me, only more so. He has the same sort of cavalier, heroic look that in drunken moments I fancy I might have. I was thunder-struck by this resemblance, though he hardly seemed to notice. We made our way back to Sans Souci, where he proudly showed me his orange Volkswagen. I sometimes think the world is completely in the grasp of those pregnant German roller-skates. I wonder if the U.S. has objected to their sale in Cuba yet? Or if they are sold in Cuba? Surely they must be! But I digress.

.....

DeMaiffe told me that he was the sole proprietor of the Port au Prince Young Men's Tacist Association, Turkish Bath, and Electric Fencing Club. This made him a person dear to my heart, having developed a passion for fencing in Berlin. A real live fencing master was just what I wanted. Not to mention that I had never seen Electric Fencing. DeMaiffe seemed to me, from the start, a true Fan.

Unfortunately, he continued, the Club would soon be closed, and he would be moving south. This was to be his last scheduled trip to Le Cap before he cleared out his possessions. There had been some 'pressure' ever since he opened the place, which was, after all, a place for persons of Liberal philosophical viewpoint, to gather and drink themselves under the table; or, as happened one night, under a gigantic canvas which stands against the wall.

The Haitians bear no bitter hatred for Americans. This one thing ennobles them, in my eyes, beyond belief. One has only to see Obin's painting of the crucifixion of Charlemaigne Perault to understand my feeling. Criticism of the

British for their Colonial practices has always been high in the U.S., but the enormity of the occupation of Haiti by the U.S. Marine Corps is equal to anything done by Britain in all her years. At one point a certain Smedley Butler ordered three thousand Marines to exterminate all the Cacos in the Central Plateau. It was this massacre which ended in the ambushing of Perault near Grande Riviere du Nord and the roping of his dead body to a door as a 'warning' to guerrillas.

I suppose I'd better shut up about this topic. My dislike of militarism is well known; and it does not overlook the recent aggressions of Haiti against the Dominicans. Back to the orange Volkswagen.

The trip to Port au Prince went smoothly. I slept most of the way. On occasions when I did awake, Demaiffe glanced over to be sure I was conscious, then continued a somewhat one-sided conversation on poetry. Mostly this consisted of his reciting Haitian poetry, partly in patois, then translating. One of the poems I especially liked, so I had him dig up a good English translation for me. I think it's by Redman, but I'm not sure. (The translation). The poem is by Roumère, and goes:

Black bird of my heart, whose breasts are oranges,
More savory than eggplant-stuffed-with-crab, you please
My taste better than tripe in pepper-pot;
Dumpling in peas and aromatic tea are not so hot.
You are the corned beef in my heart's custom house;
The meal-in-syrup in my throat; the grouse
Smoking on the platter, stuffed with rice.
Crisper than sweet potatoes, browner than fish-fries,
My hunger follows you - no wonder crude,
You whose buttocks are so rich in food!

Haitian poetry is a veritable feast of rare (and sometimes well-done) imagery. It's unfortunate that most of the best Haitian poetry is in Creole, and lacks decent translation. Except, of course, into French; which does me no good at all.

.....

It was in Port au Prince that I once again became infatuated with a beautiful woman. The madness of the city, perhaps, or just the tropical climate; whatever.

I tried to grok the city at one great gulp. I ran madly hither and yon, absorbing atmosphere in every nook and cranny. It was, I thought, the opportunity of a lifetime. What other city would have the nerve to name a major thoroughfare the Boulevard Harry Truman? I ate my lunch each day on the green in front of the splendid National Palace. (Usually mangoes or plantain, but sometimes my favourite: papayas). I saw the savagely gorgeous paintings in the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral, with their harsh and wonderful sense of colour. In the Iron Market I met a young woman of the elite, by the simple expedient of bumping into her and spilling her basket of cashews. I apologized profusely, and was quite surprised when she answered in halting English.

My heart was taken! That night I composed an exquisite little epistle, requesting that she be my guest and companion for dinner and a show. (You might guess

how badly I had fallen; I was still living on my ship's pay, and trying to find a Way Home). Then I had DeMaiffe translate it into French and send it to the elite beauty by messenger. All night I dreamed of her delicate features, the coffee-with-cream softness of a shoulder that had been exposed by the light tropical dress.

In the morning there was a messenger at the door. A small coal-black boy wearing a light red shirt. He grinned cruelly as he handed me a delicate pink envelope, then ran off down the street. Inside the perfumed envelope, bearing my name in a thin, feminine script, was a printed piece of paper. I had DeMaiffe translate for me.

It was a polite 'No Thank-You' written with all the finesse of John W. Campbell on a good day. In short, a bloody printed rejection slip!

.....

Shortly thereafter, crestfallen, I went south with DeMaiffe, to Jeremie, the city of Poets. The last leg of this journey is well worth describing. It's only sixty-five miles, but it takes well over eight hours, provided you don't run into landslides, floods, or any of the other usual hazards.

There is a road. It was built around 1930, and is a little wider than a jeep. About a foot and a half wider than the orange Volkswagen, I'd say. It has not been repaired since it was built. (Maybe this is a hasty conclusion. Maybe it was repaired and then used as a test site for small atomic weapons). It winds around mountains up to six thousand feet in the air. It is slowly crumbling away.

I got somewhat of a thrill when DeMaiffe stopped to give me a lecture at a place where the road dropped off into a bottomless pit. Occasionally one could hear a little dirt crumble, as he talked on:

"This is the Gouffre Effrayant," he said, as I nervously noted the absence of a guard rail or a retaining wall. "The cliff drops two thousand feet straight down at this point. At the bottom is the Glace River, which continues for about five miles. At the end of its icy turbulence it drops into a black pit in the base of a cliff, and, so far as anybody knows, never emerges again. I wonder how many people fall in each year? No-one would ever know what happened to them, you know."

After that things got easier. I figured that if I had survived the Glace River Gorge, I could get by anything. Including the three impassable rivers ahead. The rivers, it turned out, were easier than I expected. The last of the three, the Grande Anse, is spanned by a \$450,000 steel suspension bridge. The bridge is fondly referred to as Estemo's Folly.

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So congratulate us, good people. Here we are in Jeremie, the weirdest, wildest city on earth. The City of Poets. The pastel houses here, perched one atop the other, are at constant war with the insatiable frangipani, as are the little triangular tin dove cotes perched everywhere there isn't a house. The frangipani seems intent on possessing everything. What other flowers there are, including every kind of orchid you can imagine, literally grow from cracks in the walls.

The town has electricity, produced by a single Diesel plat. This suffices to illuminate the town by night, unless the local movie house is showing a picture. Then all the other lights in town go out.

There are beautiful black and white sand beaches outside of town. Unfortunately, I don't swim. If any of you folks want an undisturbed vacation, this is the place for it. There aren't any signs pointing to the beaches, and as they are down among the rocks at the base of cliffs, you aren't likely to find them unless you are, like me, an insatiable walker.

The only worthwhile café in town is called the "Nirvana !"

I am told that further out, at the headwaters of the Tiburon, are rain forests as dense as those in New Guinea. There are people there, some of them 80 and 90 years old, who have never seen a white man. I wonder if they have missed anything ?

About five miles out of town is the airport. It's at the end of an awful mud road. I don't blame them though, for not fixing it. The winds are so unpredictable, and the currents so peculiar, that it is seldom used. The approach by sea is just as bad, or worse, and the result is that the wharf has just about crumbled away. You now know why Jérémie is so isolated. It's one of the most beautiful places I've ever been.

The natives (all of them mad) paint pictures, beautiful primitives, on old 48-inch Pathe records.

And on the subject of mad natives, I might as well mention our current plight. Last week Delaiffe managed to get in a little tiff with the locals over the honor of a certain young lady. He was, oh, defending her honor with someone he should have avoided. The Garde d'Haiti gave him a short while to get out of town; only to 'prevent complications,' you understand. They made it clear that they would prefer he left the country.

So far as I know, the ill-feeling doesn't carry over to me. But I came to town with him, and I can't speak the language, so I have no way of saying what the feeling toward me is. Therefore I have decided to leave with him. He is an amiable chap.

Aiiiii ! One thing I have to mention is Vaudau. It pervades the island like a wondrous incense, and flavours everything. But my stay has been too short. The only ceremony I saw was presided over by a singularly in-adept houngan, whose tonelle was ill-kept. There was only one crise de possession. The loa who mounted was a peaceful, minor sort of spirit. The feeling of the religion, nonetheless, is out of this (or rather, that) world.

People have been known to go mad after only two weeks in Jérémie, isolated.

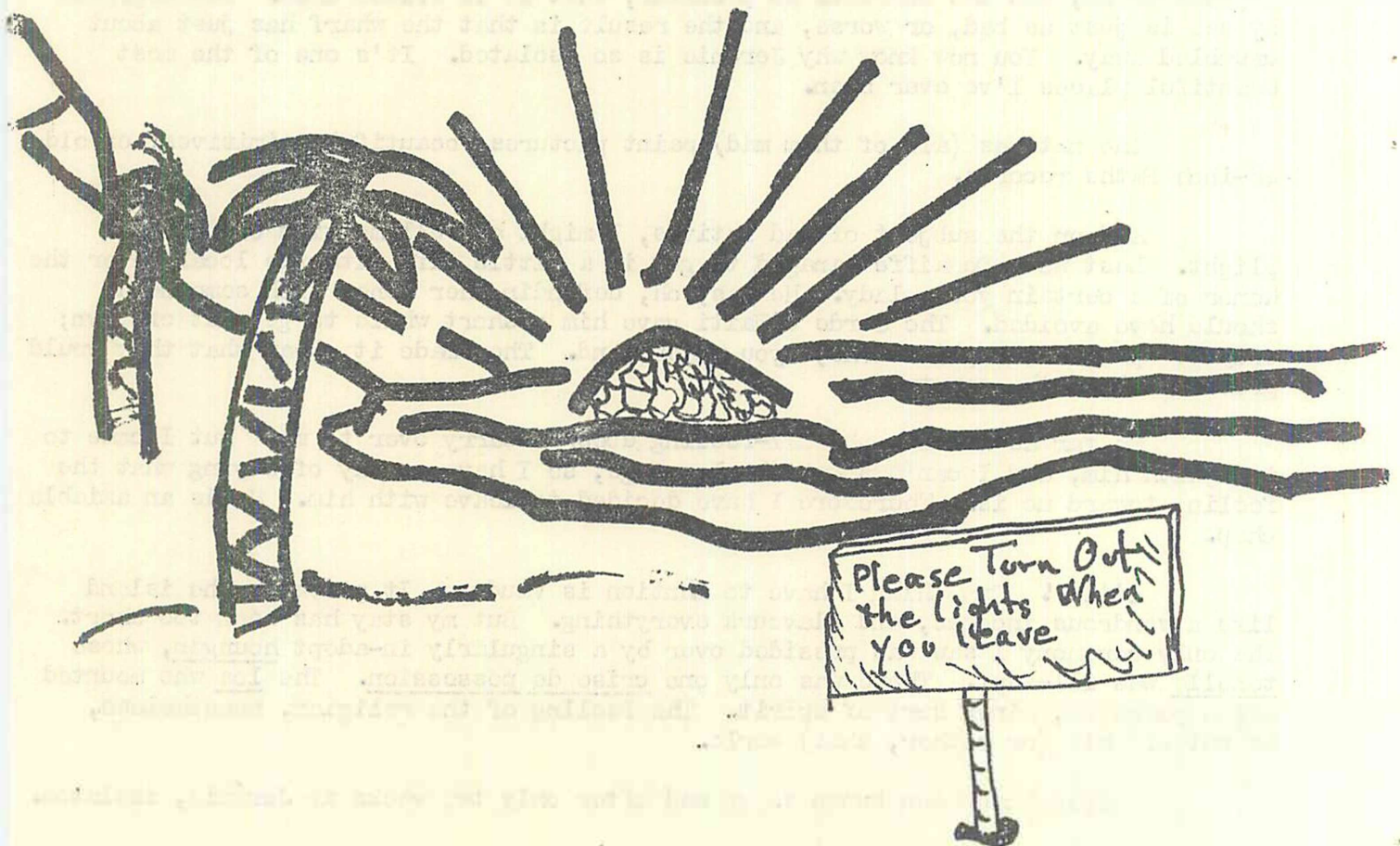
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DeMaiffo just came in. He has rented us each a passage on a banana boat chartered by Habanex. I think he has some pull with the company. We'll have to drive overland, back across that damnable road, to Los Cayes. We'll pick up the boat there, and after one stop in the Dominican Republic, it's heading for New York. So it looks as if I'll make it back to the States in time for the Pacificon after all. See you there.

Don Studebaker

Jorémio, 1964

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THE POZTMAN BROUGHT

letters from friends, commenting on some of the features in OZ-1. Re "I Can't Seem to Break the Habit, Doctor ..." :

GRAY HALL of Tewkesbury, Glos., said: "Actually it so happens that my great-grand father knew a chap called Bridges who'd never even heard of Napoleon, and thought France was the girl next door, but he told me the outcome of this duel between Dupont and Fournier-Sarloveze ... someone suggested they toss a coin to see who should have the honour and benefit of shooting the other at point blank range ... they thought it was a great idea ... and they congratulated the bloke, "Sacre Bleu, vous etes le grand tete, mon ami !" "Ah oui, oui, oui" and other Sharle Boyer phrases ... and they clubbed together to get a coin ... and then they ... tossed a good old Napoleon franc ... and it landed on edge ... so both the soldiers drew their pistols ... and shot the bloke who suggested it ... since they were only a pair of thwarted sadists anyway, this satisfied their urges and they went home to read Victor Hugo ... or hadn't he been born then ... my knowledge of French literature is abominarbl ..."

MARY REED of Banbury, Oxon., said: "P'raps those French gents stopped fighting because it was time forOxo ... or they saw Mick in the distance ... or a camol kicked them ... " Which is, of course, all disgracefully in-groupish, and I wouldn't have included it except that I understand OMPA is due to hear more of Mary in the near future. Much more ... You Have Been, as the warning notice says, Warned !

E.C. TUBB of London said: "Re the duel - couldn't they have been doing something other than using normal weapons ? I mean, one could have challenged the other to a drinking match - no wonder they made it last !"

CHRIS PRIEST of Brentwood, Essex, said: "This chewing-gum opera. Well, it all seems a little improbable to me. I mean, chewing-gum cards aren't exactly the highest form of journalism, are they ? It reminded me of something I once read in a comic when I was a kid; about these two Prussian officers who had a face-slapping contest. It seems they clouted each other for 300 hours, a fact which struck me as being not so much remarkable for its duration, but for its high level of entertainment. When, in a subsequent issue of that comic, this fact was apologetically withdrawn, with the addended note that the duration was only 30 hours, my estimation for the magazine, and admiration of Prussian officers went down in parallel proportion. I therefore view this statement about the two gallant French officers with the gravest apprehension. But, prepared as I always am to suspend disbelief for the sake of itself, I'll accept that they went on fighting for 19 years. All I'm working round to is that I expect the duels finished for one of the following reasons: (1) They were both lousy shots and/or swordsmen; or (2) The duel was oventually won. (This second assumption is based on the aforementioned dependability of chewing-gum fanzine inserts). That they both forgot what they were at odds about, I think most unlikely. Men of honour and all that, y'know. Anyway, wasn't that the duty of the seconds, to read out the issue at stake before each duel ? Sorry, Beryl, I must regard this piece of historical research as whimsy. Distressing though this may be to you. "

and NINA McDONAGH of Kirkby, Lancs., said: "I think I know why those two blokes ceased duelling ... after all those years of fighting without getting anywhere, they saw a psychiatrist in a bid to rid themselves of their obsession. During the treatment it was discovered that they were not two, but one man only. And he had a duel personality."

Re "We're Human Too ! (I Think ...)" :

CHRIS PRIEST said: "This here article about minority crank-cases (that's what my car is suffering from at present) struck right home. Fandom is generally regarded by my immediate circle of mundane friends to be an assorted rag-bag of layabouts, hobos and junkies. (In the intellectual sense, that is). In that respect, this dissertation should ring a true note with most fans. If they're anything like me, they'll feel a misfit, at the very least. One of fandom's encumbrances over the past fifteen years or so has been the very close affiliation of the flying saucer brethren. It's really surprising how many times I am asked questions about saucers, and I've never taken much interest in the subject. You made quite a point here, Beryl, about them-up-there just watching us. But I think you've missed the point as to why they're watching us. Scientific experiment ? Awe ? Entertainment ? Or perhaps they're just waiting for us to blow ourselves up ?" (+ (How should I know, Chris ? How should anybody know, until "They" choose to tell us ?)+). "There's nothing original in this sort of thinking; sf has speculated about it many times. The trouble comes on the last line ... you claim a certain kinship with those flyingsaucornauts. Why ? What has being a crackpot minority have to do with aliens in space ?"

(+ (I was referring to the fact that human beings who are "different" are treated with suspicion, ridicule, or even fear. Aliens-in-our-midst would therefore be treated in the same way - only more so. See ?)+)

GRAY HALL said: "I think 'We're Human Too !' reveals your pessimistic outlook on world affairs in general, even if your own appearance is one of optimism. The world isn't really such a bad place. Read Leibnitz sometimes ... it's better than Yeast-Vite ..."

And re "Party at Peyton Place," hearken unto Gray again:

"I do understand the difference between loving and being in love, but I've not really had too much success in expressing it to other people. Especially girlfriends. I wish I could have joined in this argument; trouble is, I think I was in the other room trying it out. But I read somewhere (probably in a fanzine, so don't execrate me) (watch it !) that romantic love is a relatively modern notion and it remains only an unknown but longed-for ideal for at least 90% of the population, which seems fair enough.

"But you see, we really need a new vocabulary for love. We need a word for what the Greeks called 'Agape.' We need another for what they called 'Eros' (lust is damn unromantic). And another for what they called 'Platos' - though I doubt that such an emotion can really be anything but sublimated 'Eros' unless it is 'Agape'. But there ought to be a word for it anyway. Then there ought to be a word for 'to be fond of' - and that'd leave 'love' as 'love'.

"Now which one is it tonight ... ?"

And Chris again:

"The report on Rog's party started fine, but ended up as a comment vehicle for love and associated Clubs. You'll give the wrong impression about that party, you know. Now everybody will think it was reduced to Unadulterated Orge ..."

Finally, "Missing Link" :

Chris: "It registered itself on my Conscious Enjoyment Meter with a resounding zero. I'm a traditionalist when it comes to poetry. I like rhyme and I like meter." (+ (sic) +). "Blank verse means as much to me as purple prose. Nowt."

He was backed up by Ted Tubb, who said:

"You are a poet but, to me, you are a cheating poet. "Missing Link" was not, again to me, poetry. It was prose cut up into irregular lines. Now there has been much argument on just what poetry is supposed to be, but my own definition is both old-fashioned, square and simple. The stuff should rhyme. The modern stuff is so simple to write that it requires no effort at all. Like modern abstract painting which seems to consist of a couple of lines drawn at random on a convenient sheet of hardboard, modern poetry defies judgement because what are you judging it against? No scan, no rhyme, no meter" (+ (again sic!) +) "no sing-song when spoken aloud, no sound of the sea or the clop of horse's hooves, no emotional picture painted with dancing words in a spoken song. So how do you tell if it's good, bad or indifferent?"

"It tells a story, at least 'Missing Link' does, but so does a story. So do we look for effusive phrases and macabre pictures, fantastic symbolism, etc.? No. I'll stay square. I know that a deep, arty, critical review can be written about anything and mean exactly nothing. At least, with the old stuff, you could always say it didn't rhyme."

(+ (I would define modern poetry as a more-or-less simple idea, or series of ideas, couched in language which one would not use in ordinary, everyday conversation. That is, an idea dressed up in lyricism. It seems such a pity to waste all the beautiful words which are so rarely used, except by poets and Ray Bradbury And I assure you that there is quite as much discipline involved in writing modern poetry as in writing traditional poetry. Anyway, if you can bear to read the poem in this, I think you'll find a few rhymes in it somewhere ... strategically scattered, like ...) +)

(+ (Afterthought: there's a phrase up there which appeals to me: "... no emotional picture painted with dancing words in a spoken song." Careful, Ted ... that is as near poetry as prose has any right to be !) +)

I'll let Chris have the last word, with one of his Ghastly Gags:

"Hey, what's made of pastry, got no hair, and whinnies? A piobald
OZ !"

Oh, he'll have to GO

"To get here, one has to do the most peculiar things at Paddington." - Ethel Lindsay, at Charles Platt's party, 27th February, 1965.

POET'S KISS

He has stunned my ears with words
that wheel and mount in my head like birds
making wild music. Now,
in the wind-hushed night,
nimbused by pale lamp-light,
we pause in the lane.
An instant of silence, wonderful, complete,
is whirled into the hungry past
by the soft, muted hiss
of summer's warm rain.
Comes the staccato of hurrying feet,
towards, with, beyond us, fast, fast ...
("Goodnight, goodnight ...")
And then the rain, the night,
the lane, the light,
are abruptly lost to my awareness,
crumpled into nowhere by his kiss.

A poet's kiss; it is as though
all the glowing words he has poured out
have laid a potent magic on his lips,
an exotic flavour
for mine to savour.

Something nameless stirs within.

Byron beats in my blood,
rousing strange thunder.
In my pulse a shout
that is Brooke and Stevenson.
Insistent waves of Tennyson
foam and flow over my head,
luring me under.
Willingly, eagerly I go,
down into that sea with Masfield's ships,
hearing without surprise
Kipling's Song o' the Dead,
and Debussy's drowned bells.

Behind my closed eyes
mighty Shakespeare wakens, whispers to me
of love that alters not, and strange inner hells.
Words, lines, rhymes beat about me,
and submerge me in a singing flood.
"What is life to me without thee?"
(Whose voice? Mine? His? Keats'?)
"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"
(Whose question beats
along each quivering nerve?)

Dazed, my lips now free
to smile, to speak,
I stare at him. My voice, woak,
makes unsteady reply
from lungs that seem to surge
with some bardic urge.
"No. I am no 'darling bud of May,'" I say.

"Compare me rather to a summer's night,
Sholley's night. This night, maybe."
Thoughtfully,

his fingers trace the curve
of my still-wet cheek.
"Yes - you are night;
dark, warm, tender, wise ..."
("And all the world shall be in love with night....")
"Have you stars? A moon?"
("O moon of my delight!")
"I have all I need of light."
("She walks in beauty as the night ..."
O, hear how the voices blend!").

"All nights must end."

"Yes, all. He who
sleeps, dies
a minor death."

"And is resurrected at sunrise."
("Come soon, soon!").

He touches the drops that glisten
on my bare head,
then lifts his own to listen
for whatever strange message
the darkness and his own being
hold for him. Unseeing,
he seems to await some immense
revelation. I, very still, scan
the pointed, shadowed face,
waiting to learn if I hold any place
in the life, the heart of this man,
who, for a timeless moment is
no longer with me.

I know that this must be,
must happen times unnumbered,
and must be solely his.
No matter; if I do not tug or call,
he will return to my open hand,
waking as if he had slumbered.

At last he looks at me,
lit by the slow dawn of a joyful astonishment.
"You understand !
You know how it is with me !"
I nod. "How could I not know,
when I, too, sometimes need
to search into the vast silence
of the soul's firmament ?"

Something is born.

The pool of light in which we float
is deepened to gold by the slow
flowering of that seed.
Music vibrates, each dancing gnat a note
of silent melodies
that rise, fall, fall,
faint as single elfland's horn.
The fluttering voices go
away on the dying music's wings.
Nothing moves, or speaks, or sings.

And so
I am admitted to the secret places of
My love, my love ...

++ Beryl Henley

1963

+ + + + +

"Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say 'I will compose poetry.' The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our nature are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, ~~for~~ it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results; but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the wane, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet."

P. B. Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry."

