the cottonwood REVIEW

contributors

allen ginsberg

john tagliabue

louis ginsberg

brother thomas kretz, s.j.

william d. knief

lee chapman

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an introduction

This is the third issue of the Cottonwood Review. It represents efforts during the summer and early fall of 1966. Included here is the second part of a tape recorded interview with poet Allen Ginsberg; a poem by his father Louis Ginsberg; poems by poet John Tagliabue, whose new book (A Japanese Journal) has just been released; a short story by William D. Knief; and poems by Brother Thomas Kretz, S.J., and Lee Chapman.

Because we have expanded our staff and facilities, subsequent issues of the Cottonwood Review will include reproductions of the visual arts, film manuscripts, and critical articles. The future of the magazine, however, depends on the quality of our submissions. Meaning it depends on you -- the reader -- as a potential submitter and those you know who might be interested. We consider any kind of prose or poetry, from anyone, anywhere. Address submissions to: Cottonwood Review, Room 118, Kansas Union, University of Kansas, Lawrence.

An interview with writer Robert Creeley will appear in the next issue.

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ginsberg

(part 2 of an interview with allen ginsberg)

The first part of this tape-recorded discussion appeared in the second issue of the Cottonwood Revue, in the spring of 1966. The interview itself, uncut and uncensored, was obtained at a party in a home located just off the University of Kansas campus earlier that winter. We sat on the floor huddled over the tape recorder, Mr. Ginsberg and I, in a room filled with people who had come to see him. And so we taped with "guitar strings in the background," as he put it. For nearly an hour this went on. He spoke in a quiet, unhurried voice, smoking cigarettes, taking an occasional drink of beer from the can on the floor by his knee. As he spoke, lamplight reflected from his glasses and he leaned over the microphone, concentrating, attempting to express and communicate the synthesis of his consciousness. And when the session was over, Allen Ginsberg was for me no longer the mystic enigma or the rampant wild man that he is said to be. Rather, I found him to be a genuine teacher, a poet, and a man with a great deal on his mind.

Ginsberg: Can you print all this exactly as said?

Interviewer: Yes.

Ginsberg: Including what might be considered off-color words?

Interviewer: Yes.

Ginsberg: That's nice -- if anybody questions it you've got to remember that the implications of this are ultimately political, so that any censorship of this is censorship of political expression, and that kind of censorship is prohibited in the United States Constitution. You see the exploration of consciousness and the manifestations of consciousness in language ultimately affects one's awareness of social conditions and political circumstances. And so the accurate expression of language has direct consequences on political thinking, finally. So that if a poet wishes to speak in a language that he chooses, if anybody tries to alter that language they are attempting to alter a citizen's expression of his consciousness within the society, and the citizen's reflections on the nature of that society, and that in itself is something that is a function of citizenship that is protected by the Constitution.

So that anybody who tries to censor anything I say is completely un-American -- I wrap myself in the American flag and do declare my soul.

The corollary of what I just said was a statement by Plato: "When the mode of music changes, the walls of the city shake." You can see an absolute, direct thing with the Beatles and Bob Dylan; when the mode of music changes, the walls of the city shake.

Interviewer: Would you mind clarifying the reasons for the "smoke pot" movement?

Ginsberg: Yeah, simple. One, there have been a series of governmental and scientific reports from the last seventy years asserting unequivocably that there is no physiological, psychological, mental, or moral danger to the human being that can be caused by smoking cannabis herb leaves. These reports are: one, the British East India Company report done in the late nineteenth century which concluded that pot was not a problem, but that alcohol perhaps was a problem. Two, the Panama Canal military commission report done in the twenties and thirties and reprinted in the "Military Surgeon" which was a journal of the U.S. Army. Also in the thirties and forties were editorials in that magazine which said that marijuana was not the cause of trouble, crime, degeneration, or disease among the soldiers in Panama after the surgeons had made an investigation. Some made the recommendation that nothing be done about it.

There was also a report in 1937 by the LaGuardia Committee, which was a group of doctors, who published a report saying there was no harm in pot; in fact that it made people kind of sociable and quiet, friendly. -- There was a report by the President's -- I'll give you the exact thing on that [here he took a small notebook from his coat pocket and turned to a quotation] -- "The Proceedings of the White House Conference on Narcotic and Drug Abuse" done in the State Department auditorium September 27-28, 1962, page 286. QUOTE: "It is in the opinion of the panel that the effects of marijuana per se have been exaggerated and that long criminal sentences imposed on an occasional user or possessor are in poor social perspective." And it continues, QUOTE: "Although marijuana has long held the reputation of inciting individuals to commit sexual offenses and other anti-social acts comma, the evidence is inadequate to substantiate this, period. Tolerance and physical dependence do not develop and withdrawal does not produce an abstinant syndrome."

And, there are also editorials in the British journal of medicine called "Lancet" saying there is no harm in pot and therefore proclaiming the opinion of British physicians that they might as well legalize it in Great Britain -- actually there are a lot of other scientific things; there is a report done by the Rand Commission, which is the great Army military exercises bureau, a scholarly bureau; that says there's no harm in pot, it's just a cultural difference. And there is the fact that, man, from my concern -- that

I've lived in India for a long time, and it's legal there; it's part of religious rituals -- and I've also lived in North Africa, and there it is a part of commonplace day-to-day meditative relaxation and leisure and recreation of elderly respectable Muslim citizens in their tea houses. So that, to confront the hysteria and terror and police state activity in this area in the United States is a revelation of a shockingly low-grade bureaucratic activity of the Treasury Department. It's just trying to work up business for itself so that the narco department police won't lose their jobs. What's happening in the United States is that when the bureau was created, Anslinger, who was head of the bureau, wanted power, and proceeded to propagandize through the mass media that there was something wrong with pot, on the strength of a lot of unscientific documents and a lot of gossip which had nothing to do with nothing. They never really produced any scientific evidence that there was anything wrong with pot but he somehow managed to swindle and hypnotize some foolish newspapermen and editorial writers that there was a reefer menace, way back in the twenties and thirties, and that mythology has persisted till about ten years ago, when so many people were smoking pot that nobody believed it any more, and everyone realized that it was just a swindle. The swindle doesn't continue, really, in the sense that the great majority of intellectuals and college students and rock and roll singers and poets and advertising men and newspapermen who have direct contact with pot and who have themselves smoked it, know that it is all a big illusion and a big bureaucartic boondoggle. And an invasion of private consciousness by the officers of the state. Which is also forbidden by the Constitution. So I am merely defending the United States Constitution, again.

Also I think that pot has a positive valuable contribution in enlarging the consciousness. It amplifies the sensing awareness of the individual who smokes it. It makes him more sensitive to aesthetic forms, and to the sensations of the senses, and makes him explore the senses, and it makes him in fact in a religious way less attached to the senses, because he sees how the senses can alter the external universe. So ultimately it has a religious function which it is used for in India as part of Shivite ritual; part of the worship of the god Shiva who is the god of asceticism, meditation, and marijuana -- the creator and destroyer of the universe. Shiva is <u>not</u> marijuana.

So I was just speaking of the situation of the police state on this, of people getting busted and everybody having anxiety; it's totally unnecessary; it's time that that prohibition era ended just like the old prohibition of liquor ended -- <u>more</u> justly that the prohibition of marijuana should end because marijuana is less dangerous than alcohol. In fact I'm beginning to suspect that it was alcohol manufacturers who wanted to see pot banned, though I can't prove it. But I bet there's some connection. In the lobbying for the marijuana tax act of 1937 there must have been some liquor money in that one -- or cigarette money.

Anyway, I smoke pot all the time -- but very rarely, actually, like once a week or once every two weeks. But I smoke cigarettes all the time, and I'm addicted to cigarettes. And, like, cigarettes are much more of a definite threat to my metabolism than pot has ever been. In other words the whole anti-pot mythology is a lot of shit. It's about time everybody -- revolted -- did something about it because it's an imposition on us as citizens.

Oh, yeah, and one more thing. It's not good for the existence of the State itself -- State with a capital S -- to have unjust laws based on gossip and garbled misinformation and self-interest on the parts of the bureaucracies who have to administer those primitive laws -- it is not good for the State, it is a threat to the State itself in America that such unjust laws are on the books and are prosecuted because the most sensitive citizens of the State smoke pot. And it's merely destroying the best minds of every generation.

Interviewer: I've heard that line before. You said that pot altered your perception of the universe, and before this you stated that the universe is a fantasy -- please explain that.

Ginsberg: Well according to Buddhist theory and many other theories, probably Einstein, finally, the universe is a series of waves and these waves exist in what? A void? They never even took place; your flesh is a -- fake. Existence is a fake, the whole of the earth is a fake, the whole of the solar system is a fake, everything, the entire universe is a quirk, a misunderstanding that arose because there was nobody to shut off the light. The universe was originally a big unborn void. So here we are -- phantoms of illusion.

Interviewer: Then what are we perceiving?

Ginsberg: Each other, I suppose.

We are perceiving our own desire not to be wiped out from the blackboard. But ultimately we are all wiped out. In fact, the whole universe ultimately is wiped out, isn't it? Some day?

Interviewer: For us --

Ginsberg: Well, for the universe itself, I mean that's not going to last forever. So everything's going to be --. So it never was, really, Well, pot gives you a certain amount of perspective into that. Simply because it is a question of the senses -- Oh, I'm garbling it all up. It was garbled from the very beginning of the universe anyway. (Laughter) So I can't expect to undo the universe in three sentences.

But, say, you take the Buddhist doctrine as expressed in the Prajma Paramita Sutra [he spelled it out]. They say form is emptiness, emptiness is form, form is not different from emptiness, emptiness is not different

from form. -- Every Buddha depends on highest perfect wisdom, which is the understanding that where there is no eye, no ear, no nose, no mind, no touch, no object to touch, there is no consciousness, no world devised, no world of consciousness, -- .

Interviewer: Isn't this closely related to Taoism --

Ginsberg: Yes. It's related to Zen, Taoism, everything. Everything is related finally to the fact that we are all here by accident. It's an interesting accident, and nothing to be scared of, but to take it seriously and try to reinforce it like the police do, and hit everybody on the head to make them believe that the universe is real -- is a big mistake which any priest would disapprove of.

Interviewer: Do you find that through your writing and the revealing of your innermost feelings -- do you find that this isolates you in any way?

Ginsberg: No. It communicates me more. I get more contact, more attachment with people.

Interviewer: Does Creeley feel this?

Ginsberg: He writes out of isolation; he feels that everything is isolation, in a way, but they're little tentative steps toward saying one thing, one word after another, one syllable after another, to bring him into contact with his wife and his kids.

Interviewer: Doesn't he find this a painful experience?

Ginsberg: Not as painful as being totally enclosed and not being able to say one syllable -- his writing is a way of contact and communication for Robert, not a way of isolating himself.

Interviewer: What do you think about Henry Miller?

Ginsberg: We were talking about him before; I thought he was a great exemplar of authentic composition from the center of the mind, and in that sense an innovator in prose; he said what he actually was thinking -- at a time when most people were synthesizing structures for novels and structures of syntax for their sentences which did not reflect the actual process of thinking in their minds or hearts and were mainly built to satisfy an arbitrary idea of literature which they had inherited from their academic studies. Whereas he threw all that overboard and started looking directly into the raw material of writing which was his own consciousness. Much as Cezanne begins to paint directly from nature. Or redo Poussin from nature, as Cezanne said.

He was a sort of American Cezanne composing from nature.

Interviewer: What influence do you think T. S. Eliot has had on modern poetry?

Ginsberg: Well, he still has -- I'm sorry. Go ahead. I didn't let you finish.

Interviewer: Well, just on modern poetry in general.

Ginsberg: There's different kinds of modern poetry, like there's very different schools and very different styles. But there's still some modern poetry which depends on a previously organized, syntactical construction, and a previously dictated rhythmical construction and a previously dictated rhyme repetition; and a lot of that depends on Eliot. But he wasn't very useful in showing the way to reproduce authentic front brain consciousness on paper -- he influenced me a lot, with a swooning longing religious crooning melancholy which is very charming. He's charming, I would say. And everybody finds him charming, even the modern poets. But everybody took him much too seriously for a long time.

Interviewer: What about Dylan Thomas? What do you think about him?

Ginsberg: Well one thing, Dylan Thomas was writing in an old style in a way, except that he was writing out of his own lungs, and he got back to physiology in a very direct way, and in a very nice way -- how come your pupils are so large? Are you on benzedrine, or something?

Interviewer: No, nothing at all -- .

Ginsberg: (To the people around us) He has giant pupils.
Your pupils are bigger than mine. Anyway he got back to physiology, Dylan Thomas. (Laughter)
[He paused and reflected a moment, and grinned.]
If you could reproduce that, it'd be great.

Interviewer: I plan to -- .

Ginsberg: Because that's really prose, see?

Interviewer: Yes, I see -- .

Ginsberg: I think that's about it, isn't it? We've covered about everything.

Someone in the crowd: The library wants a copy of this.

Ginsberg: If you can hear it. The wires may have exploded.

Interviewer: What do you think is your best expression?

Ginsberg: Singing, at the moment.

Interviewer: Would you like to put some of that on the tape?

Ginsberg: Yeah, sure. There's too much noise outside, though -- it's very difficult to -- .

Interviewer: We could ask them to be quiet.

Ginsberg: No, I don't want to interrupt the stream that's going.

What I've been doing is singing -- for the last couple of years learning to sing -- Mantras. That's an Indian form of magic religious short-form prayer formula. Uh, combinations of words mostly in Hindi or Bengali or Sanskrit or Tibetan or Japanese that are supposed to affect the vibrational structure of the universe when they are pronounced properly.

Interviewer: Do you feel that they do?

Ginsberg: Oh, they affect my physiology, so they do affect the structure of the universe. Actually, if you sing out of your belly instead of out of your chest or throat, it affects your breathing and that affects the intake of oxygen, and that affects the chemical composition of your body and that affects your metabolism and that affects what you're feeling, and that affects, as I said, the vibrational structure of the universe in the sense that "the eye altering, alters all." Unquote, William Blake.

Interviewer: Have you seen the movie, "Zorba the Greek"? What you just said sounds something like --

Ginsberg: No, I didn't see the movie. I'll get around to it.

Interviewer: What do you consider your best published piece of poetry?

Ginsberg: I don't know -- pieces of "Kaddish," um, pieces of "Howl," pieces of "Over Kansas" -- a few lines in that. Um, some stuff I wrote a few weeks ago. I'm just experimenting now with working with a Uhler tape recorder, composing directly onto the tape. But I haven't transcribed them yet, so I don't know what they'll be like. I'm more interested in that, son.

Someone in the crowd: Are you afraid of the tape recorder at all --

Ginsberg: No, I carry one around. I've got one here.

Voice: I mean the continuity of thought --

Ginsberg: No, I don't need one; who needs a continuity? If it's not there, why force it? I'm just interested in what really exists, not in stitching together some nonexistent entities. If my thought is too discontinuous, well then that's my thought, and so why should I have a continuous thought? But, anyway, how can it not be continuous in some way or other? So the problem is to find out how it is continuous, really, and recognize the continuity, rather than saying, well, these things don't seem to fit together so they must be discontinuous. In other words, whatever is real, whatever I really said to the tape recorder, must have some connection with the next thing.

Interviewer: Can this serve as a communication?

Ginsberg: I find most people are talking the way I do, lately. We're all talking the same lately. It's the space age.

Interviewer: I just remembered a line in one of your poems about giving autographs. Has fame --

Ginsberg: What's the line? I don't remember it.

Interviewer: Something about, uh, who really wants to give autographs --

Ginsberg: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: Has this atmosphere of notoriety had any advantages, any disadvantages?

Ginsberg: Yeah, it's had two definite advantages. Three definite advantages. It's easier to get laid. Four advantages. Two: it's easier to score, for pot or anything I want to score for. It's easier to score; that'd be one and two. Secondly, since I have seen the difference between the actuality of my own subjective phenomenon, which is to say the facts of my own existence as I can see them, and how they are reported from the outside, I've got an ENORMOUSLY useful insight into the operations of the mass media and mass communications. So that I can see the difference between the external image which is projected and the actual thing which I sense and feel with my own -- body. And I know that there are a lot of lies being sold to a lot of people, because I know that the whole Public Reality, capital P, capital R, is a shock comma, an illusion comma, a manipulation of consciousness; a mess, see? So that I can see what's the difference between what is me and the image which is reported. I can also see what actually was going on in Viet Nam where I visited, and what was reported about it. In other words I can see the difference between Private Consciousness and Public Consciousness. Private reality and public reality. And the only one that exists is private reality; public reality is a complete lie that has been invented by people who are trying to protect their interests -- or their fantasies.

Interviewer: What would be the ideal world?

Ginsberg: No world at all, I suppose.

Interviewer: Would you elaborate on that because I sure --

Ginsberg: The bliss of the unborn, as Kerouac says.

Interviewer: What's he doing?

Ginsberg: He's living in retirement and isolation in Florida composing ditties.

Interviewer: Is it true that he wrote "On the Road" in one sitting?

Ginsberg: No, not one sitting. In about two weeks. That's quite long for one sitting. He had to sleep occasionally. He didn't revise it though. He just sat down and wrote it. I watched him, so I know. I was there while he

was writing. Not every day, but I came by visiting and he read me little pieces, just as it was. On one long roll of paper. United Press teletype roll. The third advantage is -- the question of identity, or who am I, which everybody is interested in, searching for. Fame is like an image mirror, an echo, a -- pun on identity. So that, if you are originally interested in the problem of identity and then you get famous, it makes the problem in a sense more difficult to solve. In the sense that if you have no insight into the fact that you don't even exist at all, you can then from the image which is projected by other people, assume all sorts of different identities, but if you are firmly affixed in the unborn, and realize that you don't exist to begin with, then the same reproduction of identity makes it easier to understand the illusory phantom nature of all identity. So that actually it's a catalyst to the further understanding of illusions. Unless you get trapped in one or another aspect of illusion.

Interviewer: If you don't exist then how does death fit into your idea of reality?

Ginsberg: An old friend. A letter that was never sent, or Mr. Pzucqrx -- that's Corso's phrase, or something similar, maybe XbAJB. Death doesn't exist either. Our old friend doesn't exist. I am drunk and speaking reckless words, so listen to them recklessly --. That's what Chuang Tzu said: "I will now speak some reckless words and I want you to listen to them recklessly." Period. Enough?

william d. knief (interviewer)

1.

HOY LA NAVE DEL DELEITE

Tonight
there's a boat swaying
in the port, I'm sure of it,
who's getting on? here I am late at night
dreaming, thinking about it; but I see
mountains are lovely by that port;
and I'm going downstairs
where's waiting for me
and I'll blow the
whistle; the winds
must have told
both of
us.

2.

A GRAND VIEW

Now that
you've written the poem for the night
you can let the rope ladder down the side
    of the boat
and slowly in the dark swaying and dreaming
    climb down
and get your feet wet, even if some fantastic
    octupus kisses your superb foot
it will be like a star and send us whirling
    running around on the dark water
    of the port
I'll call you the nameless names you'll toss
    things at me;
the boat looks beautiful largely waiting
    there for us,
doesn't it, from out here?

love
her
of
moon
the
to
higher
and
higher
climb
to
want
always
you
makes
swaying
are
music
the
and
ladder
this
though
even
more
want
you
makes
and
dizzy
you
makes
that
there
up
something
there's
sailor
climbing
keep
Look

3.

watching the storm

This story has been written with two slightly conflicting objectives in mind. First, I wanted to tell the story in words: produce my idea in a strictly literary media. And secondly, I kept thinking of the story presented in visual terms, on film. Both possibilities seem workable, and so while reading "Watching the Storm," it might be a good idea to keep both points of view in mind.

I woke early in the morning and could not go back to sleep because of the heat. I tossed about for a long time hoping to ignore my discomfort, but the longer I lay there with my eyes closed and my heart beating fast, the wider awake I became. The sheets tangled around my legs and arms, and my pajamas were damp and unpleasant with perspiration. A fly, the first one I had seen all year, fought noisily for liberation at my window. I felt as if I couldn't breathe properly.

Finally I gave up and opened my eyes. I kicked off the covers and sat up. The clock said six thirty. I turned on the radio and a stream of incongruous music came belching into the room. It served to clear the fog from my head, and I put my feet over the side of the bed and sat staring at the floor, waiting for the heat in my body to subside. On the floor next to my foot lay a magazine, and I picked it up and fanned myself.

I sat and fanned for what seemed a long time. I wished I had an electric fan; even a small one would have helped in the tiny bedroom. Besides, I had always loved fans. Summers when I was very young my parents used to put a little old oscillating fan on a chair next to my bed, and I would go to sleep to the sound and the feel of its cheerful backward and forward hum. I thought about this and could hear the even blowing sound loud and distinct in the room. It increased to nearly a roar as I drifted and dozed, and it seemed to fill the whole room with its presence.

Then, gradually, the noise of the radio overpowered the sound of my imaginary fan; I was beginning to feel more alert. I put the magazine down in the knotted sheets and crossed the room to the window. I raised the shade, which had been up only a few inches, and looked out. There was no screen on the window and the fresh air smell came in quite nicely, although

there was no breeze. Right next to the window there was a painter's ladder, and down below I could see two stacks of screens piled in the short sparse grass. A gray painter's tarp splattered with white paint and flakes of old paint from the house lay across the shrubbery beneath my window. The sun cast delicate bright shadows through the trees, and the sides of the houses were speckled with light. I got some clothes out of my closet and went across the hall to the bathroom to dress.

A girl about my age, or a little older, was just coming out. She was dressed already for work, and had the pleasant appearance of just having come from a bath. She was neither beautiful nor ugly: a plain, substantial female.

"Hello, Johnny," she said, smiling.

"Hello," I said shortly. It was embarrassing to be caught in my pajamas on the way to the bathroom by a fully dressed girl, and I was anxious to get out of the hall. I held my clothes casually in front of me.

"You certainly are up early," she said. It seemed to me that her smile held a certain enjoyment in my awkward position.

"I couldn't sleep -- the heat -- "

"Yes, isn't it terrible? I just had the most marvelous cold bath, I don't know what I would have done without it."

There was a pause, in which I could think of nothing to say in reply. She kept glancing from my eyes down to my rumpled pajamas and back again, always with that maddening smile. I don't know if I only imagined this or not, but it made me nervous.

"Well," she said at last and turned to go, "I've got to run. Be good."

"You, too," I said and locked myself in the bathroom. She made me very uncomfortable.

Coming out dressed and clean I felt better. I decided to eat breakfast out to avoid having to make it myself, so I got my billfold and a big padlock off the desk and left. I put the padlock on my door and tried it several times to make sure it was locked, and went downstairs and began to ascend a really gigantic hill that seemed to start right at my doorstep.

I stopped to rest halfway up. I was breathing hard and already I felt sticky and hot. I sat down on a low brick wall and looked out across the little valley beside the hill. I watched the mist rising from a corn field in the distance, drawn up by the rising sun. In the early haze the sun looked small and flat. Its unnatural, bloody red contrasted sharply with the browns and greys of the rest of the world. I caught my breath and continued to climb.

When I reached the top I was on the campus, walking along level streets beneath pleasant old buildings and pleasant old trees. I saw very few people, and had the street mostly to myself. As I walked past the museum building I looked up to greet the gargoyle that hung from a stone gable on the third floor. He had three horns and pointed ears and an expression of uncertain malice. I had liked him from the first moment I noticed him

up there half hidden by a small balcony, gesturing mutely at the people below. I doubt if very many noticed him, and his frozen, mocking rage seemed that much more absurd. I looked up at him and he glared down as usual, and then I was past the building and could not see him any more. But I could sense his impotent, angry presence all the way down the block.

I was still thinking about the gargoyle when I got to the cafeteria, where I had planned to eat. There were only a few people in line, and I got my food and found a place to sit without much effort. I ate slowly, as slowly as I could, in order to prolong and intensify the tastes and feeling of good will that the food provided. And while I ate I watched the other people eating. It was pleasant sitting in the nearly empty room laced with early morning shadows having nothing in particular to occupy my mind. I looked out the window and wondered if it would rain.

A group of girls went past me on their way to an alcove that adjoined the room where I sat. Some of them were good looking, all were rather dressed up. They must be having a breakfast party, I thought and then forgot them.

A few minutes later I heard a rustling and a few giggles and then people singing loudly, "Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday dear Mag---gie, happy birthday to you." Then they applauded. I looked around, but no one was there. The voices were coming from the other room, and no one in the part of the cafeteria where I sat could see them.

"Good old Maggie," I said to myself and, finishing my coffee, got up to leave.

I took the same way back, past the gargoyle and on down the hill. As usual I smiled at his staring disgust, but I was secretly comforted by the thought that he was still there, rooted forever to the spot, vigilant, accusing, taking note of my meagre comings and goings. It was a lot easier walking down the hill, and I was only a little winded by the time I got home.

I had some trouble with the little tin key, but the padlock finally came open and I went inside. My room was stuffy and hot, and I yawned. I lay down on the bed and fell asleep before I had time to decide whether I wanted to or not.

I must have slept for hours, because when I awoke the sun was coming through the western window. I got up feeling depleted and worn. I touched the back of my shirt and it was wet clear through from lying in it in the heat. I went to the window and raised it as high as it would go and looked out.

A few feet below the window sill there was a gable. I had never paid much attention to it before because the screen had always been on, but now I looked at it with interest. I thought how nice it would be to sit out there and watch the street, and maybe there would be a breeze. I climbed out carefully and sat down with one leg on either side of the slant.

It was then that I first realized that the storm was coming. There were no visible marks of it in the sky, but once I sat down and became aware of my surroundings, I could sense it in the unnatural heat and in the sinister silence of the atmosphere. The birds knew, too, I think, for they hadn't made a sound all day.

Thinking about these things made me uneasy, even though I had no tangible cause for alarm; the sun beat down and the wind was still. But having lived most of my life in an area where big storms are not uncommon, I knew how they developed and very rarely mistook their soft coming. Always it was from out of a vast sky terrifying for its lack of perspective, and out of the closeness of the air. The first of the real cloud bank was just now beginning to rise up over the horizon, and the sun still shone hard and hot as all eternity. But I knew that there was going to be a storm.

Watching the still innocent clouds reminded me of a game I had played when I was very young. I would lie on my back in the grass and try to identify the clouds as they passed overhead. Someone had told me once that you could see the shapes of men and animals in the clouds, and I had become fascinated with the idea. I was never at a loss to contrive some sort of meaning for even the commonest of clouds, and I carried on the game for a year or so.

Once, though, an odd thing happened. As I was watching flurries of storm clouds pass in a bleak, stormy sky, I thought I recognized one of them. It was large and fat, and a greyish white. It had a hump on its back, and I had seen it -- I was positive I had seen it -- once before as it sailed out of the high eastern sky. I was so excited that I even gave the cloud a name. I had no use then for words like apocalypse, or anakh, so I called it, simply, Richard, which was my brother's name. I felt a great kinship with the cloud in the lonesome horizons of my youth, and for years I watched and conjured, hoping that it would appear to me again. But it never did, and I grew older.

I glanced at the gathering sky. The storm was more obvious now, and the horizon behind the sun was darkening. There were a few scattered clouds high above me, but I could recognize none of them.

A pigeon came out of the sky and landed on my roof a few yards from where I sat. The thing happened so suddenly that I jumped and said, "Oh." The pigeon paid no attention though, and did not frighten away. He was fat, with speckled markings on his wings and back, very pretty. But his legs were a pinkish-orange, and when he walked his head bobbed up and down, making him more laughable than admirable, in spite of his finely structured bird's body.

"A bird has hollow bones," a voice in my brain said irrelevantly.

"You aren't very pretty," I said to the pigeon on my roof, but he paid no attention. He was busy pecking along the gutter, muttering to himself. In a few minutes he came up with a leaf tangled around a twig, and this

seemed to be what he was looking for, because he flew off with it in his mouth. Flying, he was more graceful, and more like a bird.

He must be building a nest, I thought, and then wondered if pigeons built nests, or just lived on people's roofs in corners and niches. There had always been pigeons around the houses where I lived, but I realized that I did not know the first thing about them. Except that "You should never touch a pigeon. All birds and dirty, but pigeons are the worst."

"Why's that?" I remember having asked. "They look clean."

"They're dirty," my mother had said. "They have lice in their feathers, and if you touch them you'll get the lice on you, and you'll get sick. It's all right to feed them, but just be careful they don't get too close."

After that I had always been careful, even though it seemed strange that something as harmless as a bird could be dangerous. I decided early in life that the only safe thing to do was to watch them and enjoy them as much as possible, but keep a safe distance.

The oak is felled in the acorn
And the hawk in the egg kills the wren.

These lines came to me as I saw the pigeon fly and felt the first wind. I could almost see it coming; the trees waved their branches, and dust and paper lifted off the street. Then it passed me, pushing my shirt and blowing my hair. And silently, it was gone. The air lay as still as ever.

While I had been sitting and thinking, the clouds had advanced until they covered half the sky. The big anvil head stood above me majestic and white, and frightening.

There were fewer people in the street, now that the storm was obvious. For some minutes no one passed, and then two women came along, walking slowly, pushing a shopping cart between them. They were both pregnant, one painfully large, the other just beginning to show.

The two seemed totally unaware of the storm above their heads, but pushed on unheeding up the hill, talking. I wondered if they were longstanding friends, or if the likeness of their situation had drawn them together.

No, I thought, pregnancy has made them friends; it was too likely a possibility to discount. I could visualize from my snug rooftop their need to confide in each other, to plan, to compare. It must make things far more pleasant for them both.

It seemed to me that they should be getting home, though. The storm was not far off and it would not do for them to get caught in it. I pictured calling down to them and asking them if they wanted to stop at my house to wait out the storm, but decided that that was silly, and they would not understand. They turned a corner and were out of sight as bits of a forgotten song came humming through my brain:

The old Master Painter from the far away hills
He paints the rainbows and the daffodils . . .

I hadn't heard that song in years, dozens of years, and recalling it

now surprised me. I tried to remember more, but the two lines were all I could come up with; I could not even recall the melody of the song, or why it possessed such a fascination for me.

I searched back as far as I could in my mind, until all I could dig up was an occasional flash, a fragmented scene. Then something clicked and lights came up on a street in a city I could not remember ever having been in. But the image was positive, and I followed it clearly. There was not just one street, but a whole block, square, seen from above like in a movie or a dream. I recognized it immediately, but did not know why.

There was rain, and clouds all around, and I was down on the street now, looking up at a big brown hotel. We hurried in through brass and glass doors, my mother's hand holding me tightly. Then a room, and my brother there too, and lots of black wooden chairs with high backs, and a big bed with a brown brass headboard. We sat on the window seat and looked out.

Then down on the street in the misting fog, walking around the block so long and huge that it seemed never to end, I began to doubt that the hotel would be at the beginning, and began to be frightened of the noises of the street and the people under the clouds. The cement was grey as the sky; the sign above a drugstore showed cheerfully red in the damp. The hotel came large into sight at last, and that is all I could remember.

The wind had picked up by now, and the sun was blotted out by the clouds. The great gusts made it unsafe to remain any longer on the roof. I turned around carefully and crawled back inside.

Standing by the window I watched the wind. Leaves and branches skipped along the street, and the trees waved wildly. A piece of newspaper was lofted high in the air and floated in slow motion over the tops of the houses. But there was no rain. It would come later, I knew, and when it did the wind would die down. Now, though, the wind was raw and pure. A bird flew, or rather was not flying at all; blew past the window like a rag.

Then suddenly I was not watching the street and the wind at all, but was far away in a car in the sunlight again. We were searching through the big streets of Harlem for the one road that would lead to the turnpike and home. I could remember everything perfectly; my family was there, around me, and we were safe in our family car, but somehow I was terribly, quietly frightened. Of what I was not sure. It could have been the crush of the strange, wild people about me, or the strangeness of the place itself, or any number of things. But the fear was great, and years later, recalling the scene, I felt a tiny shudder inside of me as I stood by the window.

Stopped at a stoplight the sun beat down cheerfully, and I was afraid in the back seat of the car. Then right beside me, not twenty feet from the car, I saw a man and a girl step from the curb and get into a taxi. The girl was young; she could not have been more than sixteen or seventeen, and she was very pretty. But she was crying silently, and I could see the tears on her face, running down. Her mouth was open slightly because of the pain,

but no sound came out. She held both hands pressed hard against her stomach, down low. That was where the pain was, I knew, but I did not know why, and I was terrified. The girl could not bend down to get into the taxi, and the man had to help her. It was very painful for her to bend down like that, but the man did not seem to be concerned. There was, in fact, a sheepish grin on his face. I could see it clearly as he helped the girl in and and flopped down beside her.

"What was wrong with that girl?" I said, and I was frightened.

No one answered for a long time, and then I remember my mother's voice saying, "She was sick."

"No, she was hurt," I said. "She was hurt."

"Don't think about it," my mother said. "She had a sickness. Perhaps she just had an operation -- don't worry -- don't think about it."

But I could not get the vision of the girl in pain out of my mind. So now, many years later, I saw her again as I watched the storm.

The wind blew more fiercely now, threatening everything in its infinite path. It howled, it raged, and it would not stop till the rain came and it was stifled, slowed, destroyed. I put the window down; the storm chilled me and I was a little frightened of it, even though I had been through a great many of them and knew that the only thing to do was to wait until the rain came and it was all over; then one could begin to forget.

william d. knief

my meat is to do another will

> If you knew what it is God gives, and who this is that is saying to you, Give me drink, it would have been for you to ask him instead, and he would have given you living water.
>
> John 4: 10

I

Slotted sun cornered the barren apartment
with strips of gold and light-striking start;
bound by these warm belts across their iron-stead bed
she mused the glorious daytime part
of life, of working husbands and babies fed;
then, of her shackled body, her prison dress,
the bum in bed and the whole darn mess.

Still, the sun struck hopefulness, her headache spent,
weeks of morning sickness and disgust
(no child to fructify, only a nine-month rent)
faded in a blond trial of clear day;
today she didn't scarf her unbound hair
but faced the market with bare array,
preened her yen for a richer nest.

II

Rounding a corner of chicken soup
she bumped the cigarettes from a long black sleeve,
grunted, then blushed at the binding hoop
of white around his neck -- better to believe
and pray than be pierced with the needle-eye
of this priest (for she judged him awry)
weaving a scarlet A on her breast.

(He just wanted directions to the canned meats
because his housekeeper had to see Cork
before she died and before going wrote sheets
of what to buy and where but he liked pork
and understood why Kate omitted it.)
She re-appraised his steel-sharp eyes,
seeing they only dug to chat a bit.

She smiled and explained that frozen pigs were better;
his thirsty Thank you told her what she should do:
warn the crooked cashier that he saw her letter,
fly back to her parents in Kalamazoo,
tell them this withered priest was one of the few
who didn't warden her, shove or petition.
She did nothing but cart her recognition.

brother thomas kretz, S.J.

animals in the zoo

Like an incredible hoax is the giraffe
Whose spindly legs are added to a laugh.

The tiger seeks with circling to disguise
Vendetta that is smouldering in his eyes.

The lion, heraldic-curled, about his cage
Keep wading ever deeper in his rage.

A jaguar exhales his wrath in corner-nook,
His sultry jungle loaded in his look.

A boa-constrictor is convoluted with
The mystery it smuggled from a myth.

Monkeys and apes, defrauded of jungle places,
Are sorting different ages and varied faces.

What urge once gambled with matter in these creatures?
What impulse blundered in these different features?

What riddles are disguised in all of these
Metaphore of fantastic oddities?

louis ginsberg

i see that the waves are not connected
that the water is separate
that the waves are other than water in a group
that they are motion objects
that they are always the same
that they are always different
that they are not clear or green or blue or muddy
that they are no color
that they make me remember all colors
all music
that they were painted by jesus
and witches
and girls with gray eyes
that they are forever unrealistic
that they exist for something other than me
that they do not exist
that they are not connected
that they are separate

lee chapman
august 1966