ad maiorem Dei gloriam
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In 1923, the thirty-six year old Charles Edward Jeanneret, Swiss-born painter, sculptor, and architect, published a dynamic little book on architecture which astonished the majority, gained for him the open hostility of many, but which since has elevated him to the exalted position he now holds as one of the deans of mid-century architects. 1

Towards an Architecture, signed with an old family name, Le Corbusier, is revolutionary in that it distinguishes between style and architecture. Style is to architecture what a feather is to a woman’s head. Essentially, architecture is "the masterly, correct, and magnificent placing of masses, brought together in light. Our eyes are made to see forms in light. Cubes, cones, spheres, cylinders, or pyramids are the great primary forms which light reveals to advantage." Another theory found in this book, and evident in all of Le Corbusier's architecture, is, "a problem well stated finds its solution." Analyze your difficulty. Reduce your building to its basic elements and functions, and here you have the best foundation on which to begin building. In this small volume we also find the dictum almost synonymous with the name, Le Corbusier, "a house is a machine for living in." In this theory and dictum we find the seed of that residential unit on the Boulevard Michelet in the outskirts of Marseilles which stands as a beacon, boldly pointing out the line of conduct for tomorrow's architecture.

In 1947, Le Corbusier accepted the challenge of the French Minister of Interior to help relieve the post-war housing shortage. In 1952 he delivered a town of 337 private homes, shopping centre, nursery, and
recreational facilities for both children and adults in an attractive package of unfinished, reinforced poured concrete and glass, 450 ft. long and 80 ft. deep, rising seventeen stories on thirty concrete pillars, the Marseilles Block. Let us take a closer look at this "pace setter" and see how the theory, "a problem well stated finds its solution," and the dictum, "a house is a machine for living in," are carried out in practice.

Taking his cue from Nature, Le Corbusier realized that a body is only as healthy as its individual cells are. A healthy, spirited society will organically evolve from a healthy family. The family is the primary cell of the society. He therefore saw that his first obligation was to offer the family, through his architecture, the atmosphere and conditions for functioning as a unit, a family. What else is this but stating in other words, "a machine for living in"? Well, what about this "machine"? How did he go about constructing it?

Le Corbusier disliked the phrase, "hearth and home." "The hearth is," he insists, "the home." For proof, he appeals to history. Of old, people spoke of a village of twenty fires. It was the center, where the members would gather after the day's work to share their food, relaxation, joys, and sorrow, together, as a family. Our beloved predecessors of the last two centuries shattered this atmosphere by removing the hearth to one dark corner of the house, the dining room to another, and an equally artificial sitting room to a third. Being unable to support the horde of servants such a setup entails, we of the twentieth century find the mother of the family sweating over a hot stove, while the other members are equally isolated from each other at the very time when they should be gathered together for the primate function of domestic life, the family meal, one of the few symbols of family unity still remaining in our century.

Therefore, Le Corbusier's design for the communal part of the family dwelling of the Marseilles Block is one single unit, unimpeded by unnecessary, restraining walls and centered around the hearth. The kitchen flows organically into the dining area which, in turn, is but a part of the general "living" room, which is terminated by a two-story sliding glass wall through which the family can step to enjoy its open air terrace. This glass wall permits plenty of natural light to penetrate the entire "living" area and gives mother a breath-taking panorama of the surrounding landscape while she peels the potatoes.
But Le Corbusier saw another facet of healthy family life. He realized that the family consists of individuals, each requiring "a machine for private living," a place, free from the distraction and interference of the others, a place where he may attend to his work, bodily care, and such personal activities as reading, creating, putting around, or just thinking. Nor can this place be merely a walled-off allotment of floor space where the individual must shift for himself. Le Corbusier insists that it must be a container with ready access to fresh air, sunlight, and running water for bodily health, and a moderate amount of quiet and seclusion necessary for mental soundness. We therefore find in a typical unit of the Marseilles Block that the private rooms and baths are on a different level from the communal unit. The children's rooms (a sliding wall converts them into one for an extended play area) are terminated, like the "living" area, by a glass wall which opens onto an open-air balcony. The parents' room, being a balcony over part of the communal unit, shares its spectacular view through the two-story glass wall. Between the parents' and children's quarters, we find ample bath, toilet, and storage facilities.

We have thus far seen that each individual unit of the Marseilles Block resembles more a private dwelling than an ordinary apartment. Each unit is two stories high. Each stretches across the complete width of the building, thus receiving cross ventilation and views both to the east and west. An inspection of the structural skeleton would reveal the fact that each unit is completely independent of the others. It is inserted, so to speak, into the reinforced concrete framework without touching its neighbors, like a wine bottle, to use Le Corbusier's own expression, in a wine bin. It seems as though you could remove any one of the units from its slot and place it anywhere in the world. Why didn't he, therefore, design a conventional town with his units dotting winding lanes through wooded glades? An interesting question! Its answer involves the theory, "a problem well stated finds its solution."
The problem: every man desires green lawns, handsome trees, and safe play-facilities for the children.

The analysis: Le Corbusier realized that we don't live in a Utopia where each family can be allotted a wooded acre. "Man believes in liberty and claims to think for himself. But if he wants the fruits of independence, he must be prepared to collaborate with others."

The solution: Collaboration which gave the definite shape to the Marseilles Block. Collaboration here means that each family can look out to the east into les alpes maritimes or to the blue waters of the Riviera to the west. Directly below, the eye can rest on tree tops interspersed with red-tiled southern roofs. Collaboration means that on the central floor of the Block is an interior shopping street offering groceries, meat, laundry and cleaning services, hairdressers, newspaper stand, post office, cafeteria, and hotel rooms for the unexpected weekend guest. On the seventeenth floor is a nursery for one hundred and fifty children. From it runs a ramp to the roof terrace which is equipped to give the children a safe, supervised area for pouring out all their energy while filling their lungs with clean fresh air. They are even encouraged to decorate the poured concrete walls with their own murals. Another part of the roof terrace is designed for the social activities of the adults. There is an area for gymnastics, a solarium, and, at the north end, a large slab which acts both as a wind breaker and a back drop for open-air theatrical productions. On the grounds of the Marseilles Block are found other extensions of the home - garages, swimming pool, tennis courts, and playing fields. Schools are to be added as soon as funds are available.

Le Corbusier, as well as everybody else, realized that the Marseilles Block was a daring experiment in the plastic sense, in its very skillful use of rough concrete surfaces proudly displaying the herring-bone pattern of the narrow boards that composed the wooden form work, or the use of strong bright colors on the side walls of the balconies, not on the front. In this way, they are made to gleam like vivid colors through gauze. Yet the Marseilles Block is an even more daring experiment in the sphere of social imagination. This we have tried to point out above. There is no doubt that this building is already exerting an enormous influence on architects, town planners, and conscientious families who are re-evaluating their present living quarters, according to their efficiency as "machines for living in." It is greatly helping to liberate the mind of the architect and planner from the conception of housing as a simple addition of single units. Housing, if it is to fulfill its purpose, must harmoniously meet all the needs of man for his physical as well as "spiritual" well-being and growth.
Footnote:

1 Le Corbusier has his office in the Jesuit house at 35 Rue de Sèvres, Paris, where the review, Christus, is published.

Bibliography:


NOVEMBER DAY

Before dawn, the grey pond was rising in mist
And the grass was white with frost.
But the morning came clear and blue through the pines
As a sunbright flutter of gulls skimmed the river.
In the end, the sun fell and reddened the hills,
And the wind keened colder in the creaking oaks
And now the night of winter howls.

LES FEMMES FATALES

FOR M.C.R.

I. Cleopatra...
Within the grasp
Of Roman justice,
Grasped an asp
To spite Augustus.

II. Helen

Burning walls glare -
Midst Trojan shrieks,
She fixed her hair
And joined the Greeks.

III. Dido

Poor old Dido,
Cruelly spurned,
A suicide-o.
(She was burned.)

IV. Envoi

Say what you may
For such ladies,
I think they
Belong in Hades.
ELEISON

It's time for slumber now. My room is dark
And very drowsy - still. I sit and muse
O'er seas of crowded - quiet - thoughts... A lark,
A nest a-building near the meadow, brews
A troop of checkered fancies for my whim -
Bemused whim.

But then my candle flares.
It flickers, twists and winds and then coils - dim.
It springs again to seize me unawares.
Seize me it does, but more - not me alone.
For racing, reeling-racing, 'round the glow
And splendor of that dusk-withstanding zone
Of light, now restless-wheeling two moths go.
Behold! For all their flitter, they their light
Seek, fickle constancies.

Lord, that I mine might.

\[signature\]

OF CONSTANCY I SING

So fair and fresh and strong - a rose at dawn.
A few soft petals and a bead of dew
Stand high and proud until day's shade is drawn.
As day is dying rose is dying too.

So fair and fresh and mine - a little girl.
A tiny little girl - and what a smile -
Run riot in my heart till hours unfurl.
My little girl has wandered off the while.

So fair and fresh and great - the works of man.
A modern city and some child of thought
Careen along for just a second's span.
They tumble down and slip away to naught.

Can nothing stand? Can nothing fill my heart?
So listens God with hands spread far apart.
BOCA DE CANGREJOS, 5 A.M.

Vago soñoliento y arrugado
por la playa despoblada

hundiendo los talones en la arena fría
en la luz rosada

que ahuyenta la noche que deja
una estela tras de sí anacarada.

Caracoles a millares yacen rotos,
fastos adornos de sirena

que reflejan en sus conchas como espejos
los destellos rojos en la arena.

Ya el mar echa al aire sus salobres respiros
que con sosegada calma transporta el viento;

Las olas tranquilas lamen la orilla despierta
que con húmedos labios devuelve su beso...

...me siento...

y contemplo la belleza de un milagro,
de un prodigio que no abarca el pensamiento.

Salvador Antonetti, S.J.

BLACK MAGIC

What darkness lies out there?
It permeates the crystal air,
Enveloping the rolling hills
And river, factories and mills,
Transforming into fantasies
The softly shadowed leafless trees,
Presenting as a glittering array
What is a cold grey bridge by day.
It's over, under, in, around,
And still it never makes a sound
As hushed of foot it settles down
And then unnoticed steals away.

John J. Holland, S.J.
The first two generations of the nineteenth century were a period of rapid expansion along the frontiers of American civilization. Explorers, pioneers, and railroad construction workers etched paths of progress into the western wilderness beyond the Mississippi — ever curious, ever searching, ever moving. And yet, the greatest effect of America's growing pains at this period were felt not in the grassy plains of Nebraska nor in the beckoning regions of California, but in the tangled, wooded valleys of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. The South — a sleeping wilderness in 1800 — sixty years later was a dynamic force threatening the very life of the nation.

During the first half of the century a striking metamorphosis had occurred in the South. From a frontier environment of savage Indians and wild animals, Dixie had grown to assume an influential place in the economic and political life of the country. The secret of her story was the rich, black soil concealed beneath her untamed forests. Once the treasure was discovered, the resulting fever was automatic. A fire had caught in the wilderness, and in fifty years the nation would be aflame.

The history of the South during these decades is a most interesting one from the economic and political aspect. From rags to riches in two generations. But, socially, the story of the South is
even more fascinating - an aristocratic civilization with no aristocrats; a rich, thriving society three fourths of whose components were poor; a semi-feudal empire in which the exploited never realized the injustice being done them.

Prior to the invention of the cotton gin in 1793, there had never been a distinction of classes in the South, except in Virginia where a few thousand thoroughbred aristocrats led a luxurious and leisurely existence. The South in general at the turn of the century was still to a large extent wilderness, inhabited only by a hardy race of frontiersmen fighting for their lives against the elements and the aborigines. These simple, hard-working individuals carved out small plots of land in woodland districts and began to till the soil with crude instruments.

Slowly, however, civilization progressed, and with it came new and improved methods of agriculture. By 1820 the cotton gin had made its debut in the South, and its arrival in a land where there was rich soil and cheap land, enkindled enthusiasm in ambitious hearts. Within a decade modest farms of ten to twenty acres had expanded to two-hundred-acre plantations mass producing cotton. An honest man with foresight and planning in the span of a generation could build up a small farm to a booming plantation, sprawled about a white pillared manor and worked by one hundred or more strapping Negroes. A shrewd and unscrupulous individual could attain twice as much in the same time.

Ulrich Phillips, commenting on this period of agricultural explosion in the South, remarks: "In each interior district as a rule the first influx was of small farmers, all of them to grow cotton for sale at an equal price, pound for pound, grade for grade. But some chanced upon rich lands, others upon poor; some were near navigation, others were far; some were expert, vigorous, frugal, far-sighted, others were slack, spendthrift or merely perhaps unlucky. Profits from efficiency and good fortune enabled some to buy slaves and then to buy neighboring lands and attain eventually the rank of planters." Hence it was that as cotton became more plentiful, so also did the wealth of those who monopolized its production. Ingenuity, rich soil, and chance combined to elevate some, who had previously been simple farmers, to the status of plantation lords.

But these were exceptions. Only a comparatively few Southerners attained the wealth and distinction identified with plantation ownership. The majority of the inhabitants - the less ingenious, the not-so-ambitious, and the downright unfortunate - were lost in the feverish race for land. Some succeeded in establishing themselves as marginal farmers, tilling modest tracts of inferior soil; others ("white trash" as the Negroes called them) never progressed beyond the rudiments of frontier existence - a dilapidated, one-room log cabin, a hunting mongrel and a jug or two of "bust head" (home brew whiskey). These were the individuals who comprised the marrow of the South's living organ-
ism, "for whom ... there was no hope; who had no place in Southern polity or society; who aimed at nothing because there was nothing to aim at."  

A nouveau riche minority composed of the leading planters was surging ahead, capitalizing on every opportunity for economic and political dominance. As the nineteenth century approached its mid-point, every aspect of Southern society was controlled by these cotton kings. The poor white man had been forgotten and had very little opportunity for social and economic advance. The money pouring into Dixie seldom found its way into his pocket.  

All the choice property had been swallowed up by the nouveaux, thus relegating the yeoman farmers to lands unfit for cotton. These were usually districts furthest from the main arteries of transportation, and, rather than use capital in constructing a system of roads, the rich planters preferred to obtain their needed goods from the North. The small farmers found no ready market for their grain and wheat in the South and, cut off from all contact with the outside world, their crops could only be used for self subsistence. The yeoman farmer was operating a frustrating treadmill, doomed to stagnation in his lonely existence.  

Politically, his situation was just as hopeless. "It was a disfranchised population," remarks F. E. Chadwick, "almost as fully as the Negro in so far as any part in the higher and directive life of the country was concerned." Less than eight thousand white men - owning five hundred slaves or more - were the dominant force in Southern politics in the 1850's, formulating governmental policies with a view to their own needs and desires. The master class considered their interests best for all and were regulating the pulse of society as they saw fit.  

These were the objective facts, unbelievable as we view them in retrospect, but calmly accepted by contemporaries of the period. Granted, docile resignation to reality was not unanimous, but periodically, when a fanatic, bent on social reform, did appear, he was not taken seriously. In 1857 one such zealot by the name of Hinton Helper published his Impending Crisis of the South, denouncing the injustice suffered by the masses at the hands of the "depraved" slave holders. He cried out to the underprivileged: "Non-slaveholders of the South! ... we take this occasion to assure you that the slaveholders, the arrogant demagogues ... have hoodwinked you, trifled with you, and used you as mere tools for the consummation of their wicked designs. They have ... by moulding your passions and prejudices to suit themselves, induced you to act in direct opposition to your dearest rights and interests. Now as one of your number, we appeal to you to join us in our patriotic endeavors to rescue the generous soil of the South from the usurped and desolating control of these political vampires." Helper was wasting his time and type, as he failed to reach his intended audience - the poor, illiterate man at the center - and only
enraged the slave oligarchy. Even if the forgotten man had the opportu-

nity and intelligence to read literature of this sort, it is most

improbable that he would have been fazed in the least. The most as-
tounding truth about the plight of the poor white was the fact that on
the whole he accepted his position with no ill will towards the ruling
class.

Prior to the Civil War, class awareness had never been an "inte-
gral part of Southern thinking." A Southerner's primary approach to
his world - whether he were an affluent planter or an indigent farmer -
was not through the aspect of social status. The recognition that he
was either rich or poor was closer to theoretical assent than to a
real acknowledgment of fact. Class distinction - and friction - never
really penetrated the Southern mind.

One reason for this was the relatively high degree of consanguin-
ity which existed in the white component of Southern society. Through-
out the early decades of the century intermarriage was an accepted
practice among the comparatively small number of whites, and though
the fortunes of some increased rapidly as the years progressed, many
of the nouveaux continued to marry daughters of yeoman farmers. Thus,
by the 1850's there were several plantation owners whose brothers-in-
law or second cousins were among the small farmers or even "white
trash."

Even when marital and blood relationships did not exist, there
still was another force acting to prevent the full realization of
class distinction in the Southern mind. It was the community of origin
shared by nearly every member of the white population. The plantation
lords and marginal farmers alike traced their ancestry to the hardy
stock of frontiersmen who, only a generation before, had cleared and
settled the wilderness which was now a civilization. Basically, the
Southern white man of the 1850's was a simple, rustic individual,
whether a thriving planter or indigent farmer.

The concept of an aristocratic ruling class stemming directly
from the European nobility of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
was a myth. The handful of blue-blood aristocrats who inhabited the
Virginia tobacco plantations were hardly willing or able to tame the
elements of the Southern frontier in the early part of the century.
They never ventured beyond the confines of their own self-established
circle, leaving the wilds of the deep South for more calloused hands
than theirs. No, the man at the center of Southern society in the
years preceding the war had frontier blood still fresh in his veins.
And it required more than a generation of money and prosperity to
change radically his view of his contemporaries and his approach to
society. Rich and poor had sprung from the same environment.

Though he was a man of wealth and prestige, a plantation master
often broke out his finest liquor for a few of his life-long acquain-
tances - poor, log-cabin farmers - men with whom he had grown up and
with whom he had learned to ride and hunt. These latter looked up to him, not as their better nor as one destined by fate to dominate them, but as a primum inter pares, as a discerning leader, as a paragon of all that they held sacred in Southern life.

Furthermore, the marginal farmer on his part not only respected his richer counterpart, but also identified himself with the wealthy slave master as someone together with himself forming the only dominant class - the white component of society. So long as the Negro remained a slave, all whites enjoyed in various degrees the prestige of superiority. Whether one himself owned any of the "inferior" blacks was irrelevant. "The South is a white man's country, boy, and those niggers ain't got no business but to pull cotton." Such was the mentality of the average Southerner, slave master or no.

As long as slavery flourished, then, the poor whites and even "white trash" theoretically were considered superior to the slaves in view of their color - though very often they enjoyed a lower standard of living than a good many Negroes. But there was little pressure applied to the ruling circle from below, slavery providing the anodyne for all the ills of the poorer whites. No substantial resentment took root in the hearts of the "middle man" in society. They were assured that their estate would not grow worse, as the Negro occupied the bottom level of the social structure. And as for the planter oligarchy above them - provided they treated their less fortunate brothers civilly, provided they humored and patronized them - there was no sense of injustice, no urge for retaliation, and Southern blood continued to run thicker than Southern money.

Although the plantation system and the "new rich" had been responsible for his economic and political eclipse, yet the position of the poor white was unique in that his independence was virtually unimpaired. He remained free and self sufficient, not suffering directly the penalty of economic failure. He still owned and tilled his small plot of soil and managed his own affairs. He was left to himself - economically ignored - "parked, as it were, and left to go to the devil in the absolute enjoyment of his own liberty."6 To him, the Negro alone was the slave.

Thus it happened that the wrath of the abolitionists unleashed against the slavocracy met fierce opposition from a solid South. Both rich and poor alike stood firm in their opposition to emancipation; for the planter, slavery was a matter of livelihood, for the impoverished white, a matter of self-respect.

And so, in 1861 the call to arms was heeded by loyal Southerners from all levels of society. And, paradoxically, the majority who enlisted were the very ones who had been exploited by the system they were defending. Thus remarks F. E. Chadwick in commenting upon the irony of their plight: "That this body of 3/4 of the white men of the whole South should have fought stubbornly for four years to fasten
more completely the bonds which restricted them to every inferiority of life is one of the extraordinary facts of history." It was these men who constituted the military power of the South - men who never owned a slave nor hoped to own one; men who were passed over by the march of wealth and relegated to a stagnant, isolated corner in a pseudo-aristocratic society; loyal, disillusioned poor men who fought a rich man's war.

Footnotes:

1Ulrich B. Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South (Boston, 1929), p. 345.


3Ibid., 34.


5Wilbur J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York: Vintage, 1960), p. 36. This work was the author's major source, particularly chap. 1, "Of Time and Frontiers," and chap. 2, "Of the Man at the Center."

6Ibid., p. 38.

7F. E. Chadwick, op. cit., 34.
A CHILD SPEAKS

There lies behind a child’s peaceful sleep
A power of forgiveness all its own;
Each morning’s clear and cleansing breeze can sweep
Away the hate the day last past has sown.
But then the child begins to grow. The peace
Of one night’s sleep is not enough to quell
The wrongs of yesterday. The days increase –
A week of restless nights before all’s well.
Maturity at last. All petty strife
Is laid aside, and what remains no night
Or month or year shall heal. Through all his life
He’ll bear the scars of unforgiven spite.
How much the growing man desires to seek –
Yet never stops to hear the children speak.

Vincent P. Quayle, S.J.

UNSEEN, UNHEARD, UNLIVED

The distant mountains shroud earth’s sinking sun
While shadows steal from groves the golden light;
Persistent puffs of gray consume its warmth –
The day is dying, soon it will be night.
The songs of thrushes stirred the morning breeze
And challenged children’s laughter in the park,
But now all saunter home with weary limbs;
Refreshing silence fills the welcomed dark.
Another day slips secretly from sight,
Its beauty shuns the grasp of mortal man,
Who yields in hope of what tomorrow brings
Instead of clinging dearly while he can.
VOX DOMINI

The world is full of echoes, sounds we hear
And never doubt we know from where they came.
But things that seem beginnings to our ears
Are sounds so very old they have no name.
Every sound's an echo from afar,
Down through timeless reckonings of years,
Resounding through the void from star to star,
Or stirring softly in a child's tears.
The voices of the world are very old,
Repeating stories changed in but a word,
The ones that every age has always told
Which never lose their freshness when they're heard.

By a word begun so very long ago
That single sound has never ceased to grow.

WALLS IN THE WOODS

Who's been building walls out here?
From where I stand there's five or more
That run along the forest floor,
Then over hills and disappear.

How long ago he must have come!
For now there's just the trees - no more.
Someone's been out here before.
I wonder... but his walls are dumb.
SOMETHING PLANNED

I look across the river over there,
Across to hills and woods not far away.
Below, the river's flowing off somewhere,
But it comes back - a double course each day.
Face to face these cliffs exchange a stare,
Unbroken gazing for a million years
That wind and time have softened here and there
With a silent patient effort no one hears.
How was it made, that river down below,
Whose winding course has split my world in two?
What something in the earth moved long ago
That now two shores have each a grander view?

Another world I look to every day,
Across to hills and woods not far away.

DIE DÄMMERUNG

Dark and deep is the world
In the hush of settling day,
When cricket music creeps
In a mist of sound
Away
Up out of the earth,
Like breath from the ground.
While softness spreads through the trees
And deepness fills out the sky,
The stillness makes gentle the breeze,
Till it whispers peace like a sigh.

[Signature: William F. Wendel]
SNOWFALL

Entranced under lighted windows, looking high
I watch the silent swirl of the earliest snow
Against the deep, deep screen of the sky
Leap in the light, fall in the night below,
Plunge to a gentle touch and stop its play.
Yesterday gave us little besides its dry
Grey and shallow brown. But there's warmth in the way
Of the snow's close cover and even lie.
And, day once back from the east, this quiet white
Will give the morning depth. This new dimension
Dropped on the dark landscape during the night
Will draw to tired windows awake attention
From those who are always satisfied with seeming;
Confident morning puts a stop to dreaming.

A LITTLE ACHE

"Winter steals in like a snake," some say,
"Smooth and cautious. You need a skilled eye
And a sharp ear to catch her on the sly.
Fall one night and winter the following day."
Others draw the picture a different way:
"Leaps down like a lion out of the sky
With a lashing tail and a roar as she rides by."
Imagination. They've all gone astray.
The fact of the matter is simple, really, and clear.
Seasons are just a sadness and a cheer:
Behind most smiles there's something of an ache.
There's none of the leaping lion and stealing snake,
Coming and going. Both of them live here.
There's a little winter around all year.

Raoul J. Orceyne, S.J.
"They cannot be good poets who are not accustomed to argue well."

John Dryden

The great ratiocinative poem, The Hind and the Panther, is in one sense the most unusual work that flowed from the versatile pen of England's first official Poet Laureate. The poem is unique because it is primarily an argument. Others have written poems containing bits and snatches of reasoning or some incidental argumentation, but few, if any, have developed a complete argument in a poem, or perhaps more accurately, few have written a poem that is formal argumentation.

With regard to its genre, the poem is a satirical beast fable in the tradition of Chaucer's Nun's Priest's Tale. It takes the form of a debate on the relative merits of the Catholic and Anglican Churches, the former institution being represented by the Hind, the latter by the Panther. Other minor religious groups are likewise represented by animals, the Presbyterians by the Wolf, and the Baptists by the Boar. The advocacy of the Roman Catholic Church is the poem's unifying thread, the central fabric upon which Dryden had embroidered sundry topical debates and digressions on matters theological, political, and personal. He divided the poem into three parts: the first is largely narrative, the second a formal debate between the Hind and the Panther, and the third partly a continuation of this dialogue and partly the relation of two fables. In the formal debate of Part II, Dryden skillfully marshals a battery of arguments tending to the conclusion that the Roman Church is superior to the Anglican. Briefly, Dryden's reasoning is this: the Anglican Church is guilty of inconsistency or error in three very important matters - the doctrine of the Real Presence, the interpretation of Scripture, and Tradition. Therefore she has no real authority and is inferior to the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is the one true Church of Christ, the necessary and infallible living authority, because she alone has the four marks,
and is therefore superior to the Anglican Church.

It is necessary to realize at the outset that this is not serious controversy in the sense that Dryden is attempting to convert someone. This is primarily a literary effort. He takes great delight in the argument for itself, in the play of dialectic, in the rhetorical formulae themselves. Dilemma, retort, the argument from analogy, and other familiar tricks of the schoolmen occur throughout the poem. It must be admitted, too, that since Dryden is a Catholic, he has put into the mouth of the Panther some rather ineffectual arguments, while reinforcing the Hind's case with every literary device at his command.

A look at the progress of the debate will reveal how closely reasoned is Dryden's logic. After an opening exchange about the persecution of Catholics at the time of the Popish Plot, the Hind quickly takes the offensive, accusing the Panther of inconsistency on the question of the Real Presence. The point of the accusation is that no one can believe in a doctrine which changes every day. The Panther denies that she is at fault and states the Anglican position. A sample of the dialogue will disclose the Hind's neat refutation of the Panther's equivocal statement:

A real vertue we by faith receive,
And that we in the sacrament believe.
Then, said the Hind, as you the matter state,
Not only Jesuits can equivocate;
For real, as you now the word expound,
From solid substance dwindles to a sound (II,42-47).

Recovering quickly from this initial setback, the Panther, in an attempt to put the Hind on the defensive, challenges her to prove that the Roman Church is infallible and to indicate where this infallibility resides. The Hind deftly parries the thrust with an analogy:

Because philosophers may disagree
If sight b' emission or reception be,
Shall it be thence inferre'd, I do not see? (II,74-76)

The Hind next proceeds to demonstrate that, as a matter of fact, the infallibility resides in the Pope and general councils. Having established this point, she begins to knock all the props of authority out from under the Anglican Church, spotlighting her inconsistency in the matter of private judgment. To the Panther's assertion that the Bible is clear on all needful points, the Hind objects that the several Protestant Churches disagree on scriptural interpretation. Despite the rebuff, the Panther stubbornly clings to her opinion. Seeing her opponent's recalcitrance, the Hind does not attack the proposition directly, but points instead to the evil effects which have ensued from maintaining such a doctrine. The Arian heresy is cited as an example. Further, the Hind affirms that Tradition is necessary to uphold the truth of Scripture. The Panther now claims that she has never set
Tradition aside, but that she has always maintained it:

Provided still it were Apostolick (II, 171).

At this juncture the Hind charges the Panther with her third doctrinal inconsistency in the form of a carefully prepared dilemma:

Friend, said the Hind, you quit your former ground,
Where all your faith you did on scripture found;
Now 'tis tradition join'd with holy writ,
But thus your memory betrays your wit (II, 172-175).

In vain the Panther tries to escape the horns of the dilemma with the assertion that she tests the validity of Tradition by setting it against the Scriptures. The Hind in her rebuttal urges that the Councils try the Scriptures by Tradition - just the reverse process - and she insists upon the necessity of having an infallible judge to expound both Scripture and Tradition.

The rest of the debate is merely a series of concessions to the relentless logic of the Hind. The Panther feebly challenges the Hind to prove that Tradition is valid without the Scriptures. The Hind replies by throwing the burden of proof on the Panther. The Anglicans must produce plain evidence that Tradition has been forged. No answer is forthcoming; only a timorous objection: why did Christ provide the Scriptures if the Church needs a living authority? The Hind advances two reasons:

Before the Word was written, said the Hind,
Our Saviour preach'd his Faith to humane kind;
From his apostles the first age receiv'd
Eternal truth, and what they taught, believ'd
Thus by tradition faith was planted first,
Succeeding flocks succeeding pastors nurs'd (II, 305-310).

The second reason for the necessity of a living authority is that disputes do arise over the interpretation of Scripture:

The sense is intricate, 'tis only clear
What vowels and what consonants are there.
Therefore 'tis plain, its meaning must be try'd
Before some judge appointed to decide (II, 385-388).

The soundness of the Hind's position leaves the Panther no alternative but to challenge the Hind to produce this living authority. The brief reply is:

...she whom you seek am I (II, 398).

Before furnishing the proof of this statement, the Hind destroys the claim of every Protestant sect to this prerogative with another neat
dilemma:

Your brother prophets, who reform'd abroad,
Those able heads expound a wiser way,
That their own sheep their shepherd should obey.
But if you mean yourselves are only sound,
That doctrine turns the reformation round,
And all the rest are false reformers found (II, 431-436).

With the Protestants eliminated, the Hind turns her attention to proving that the Roman Church alone is this necessary living authority:

Then granting that unerring guide we want,
That such there is you stand obliged to grant:
Our Savior else were wanting to supply
Our needs, and obviate that necessity.
It then remains that church can only be
The guide, which owns unfailing certainty (II, 479-484).

Dryden could have ended the debate right here, but instead he allows the Hind to crown the apologia by observing that the Roman Church alone possesses the four marks of the Church found in the Nicene Creed:

One in herself, not rent by schism, but sound...(II,526)
As one in faith, so one in sanctity...(II, 532)
Thus one, thus pure, behold her largely spread...(II, 548)

The Hind interrupts the positive argument for a moment to let fly another barb at the Panther:

Thus, of three marks which in the creed we view,
Not one of all can be apply'd to you;
Much less the fourth; in vain alas you seek
Th' ambitious title of Apostolick (II, 576-579)

Again the burden of proof is on the Panther. She must demonstrate that she is the lawful successor of the Apostles, which, of course, she cannot do:

Despair at our foundation then to strike,
Till you can prove your faith Apostolick (II, 612-613).

To summarize the whole argument: the Catholic Church is the necessary, infallible authority, the one true Church of Christ, and therefore superior to the Anglican Church. The victorious Hind cannot resist gilding the lily a little by contrasting the absence of penitential practices in the Anglican Church with Roman austerity. On this anti-climactic note, the formal debate comes to a close.

Despite the predominantly rhetorical, ratiocinative flavor of the
work, Dryden has not suppressed the elements of poetry. He displays a remarkable wealth of imagery and allusion drawn from such disparate sources as the Bible, the Fathers, Virgil, the schoolmen, neo-platonic philosophy, the Koran, Aesop's fables, the Apocrypha, astrology, alchemy, navigation, and even the racy jargon of the street. His skillful blending of the poetical devices with the rhetorical lends force and clarity to the argumentation. Alliteration invests the reasoning with a certain coherence beyond the power of prose. The rhymed couplet by its parallelism reinforces the steps of the logic and makes more of an impression on the reader than the bald syllogism. Metaphor sharpens the point of a conclusion without slowing the thought development. Refrain and repetition both contribute to the cogency of the rational process. In this ability to make rhyme and reason dovetail, Dryden has few peers in the language.

There is an objection likely to be advanced against Dryden which deserves brief consideration here. Some will deny the compatibility of reasoning and poetry, and will suggest that these ratiocinative works are not poems at all. I think the best solution to this perplexing question is the one offered by the eminent Dryden scholar, Mark Van Doren:

It is hardly worthwhile to become exercised over the question whether Dryden's ratiocinative poems are really poems. It has been denied that argument has any place in poetry. Whatever the truth may be, it remains that Dryden has achieved an effect of his own which has been achieved by no other writer in verse or in prose (John Dryden. N.Y.: 1946, p. 170).

Bibliography:


PECCADILLO

I saw the trees hahaaing in the breeze,
The hitherandthithering breeze.

I saw them twistyturning in the night,
the moonmad, silent night.

A supple sapling-bend they did
like slimy octopi or squid.

Dansmacbring in the howling wind
that on the branches violin'd.
They sinned. . .

But, chastened in the all-condoning dawn,
the crimson-dappled, kindly dawn,
they sway again softly on the lawn,
the plotted, mottle-mantled lawn.

Salvador Antonetti, S.J.
SOUVENIRS

To stand in the woods in autumn
is to stand between bleachers after a
football game.

On the ground are leaves, bright,
reminiscent of life, and
somehow sad.

Beneath the stands are wrappers, are cups,
are cigarette boxes, and a banner or two.
These are bright,
reminiscent of life, and
somehow sad.

CHILD'S PLAY

While she was skipping 'round a tree,
That little lady greeted me
With a great big smile and a little "Hello."
I wished I didn't have to go.

Charles F. Koch, S.J.

ON BOARD A FREIGHTER IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC

White peaks are jutting from the choppy blue below
As I go along alone through the valley of the sea,
While mountains made of sky are climbing around me.
As the cold surf's spray hits my wind-burned face,
I start and turn my head; then I wipe away the foam.
I must return now to the work I left undone;
But I will come back again; tomorrow I will come.
MITEMPFINDUNG

"Ich hatte nichts und doch genug, den Drang nach Wahrheit und die Lust am Trug."

Damit begann Faust zu ersinnen wo, wie, warum, und was er war; sich selbst zu kennen, selbst gewinnen versucht' er - nicht mit Glücke zwar. Wohl inn're Schwächeheit sich bewusst, ohnmächtig seinen Geist zu fassen, fast wider Willen strickt in Lust, wie Job zum Teufel überlassen. Von Marguerite bezaubert, "Ja!" schrie er, "Das ist's - ist Lieb'!!" Lieb'? oder nur Gefühl ist da? Begriff' er doch was ihn vortrieb!

Alles hab' ich mit Faust getan, Kampf ums Dasein durchgelebt, bin geworden mehr ein Mann weil ich selbst mit ihm gestrebt.

Durch deine Kunst, ich fühle mich in allen Gliedern, Goethe, gleich als hätte, statt des Doktors, ich gebaumelt zwischen Gott's und Teufels Reich.

John J. Godfrey, S.J.
The ferry had been almost empty. A Wednesday morning after a storm was not the best time for picnics or visits. Besides, the season had been over for about a week already. Only us hardy ones left now. I sat out the trip wedged in among shifting groceries.

That, of course, was why the dock was lined with negro maids with empty baby carriages. It looked like a line of chauffered Buicks waiting for the evening suburban train. It was good to be in a world where servants still set the tone. It made one sure of how things stood.

Briskly moving down the dock was the figure of a shirt-sleeved man, massive, and his face discolored with some sort of purple boil. He looked as though he knew his way around, but he obviously wasn't a resident. Just the perfect one to ask. As soon as he opened his mouth I smelled tobacco. Yeah, sure, he knew Old Man Proteus; right up the road and to the left — the modernistic house. He hustled on up the gangway and disappeared among the groceries and maids.

I turned to face the sand road between the two rows of dark-shingled summer homes. A boardwalk ran along one side

DONALD J.
SULLIVAN, S.J.
and stretched out to a gate across the sand road about a couple of hundred yards ahead. No fence, just that gate, securely locked between its two wooden posts. I decided to walk in the road, if you could call it that. After all, I was here for a vacation. As I started off between the Victorian ramshackle houses all set perilously on stone pillars, I realized that I was the sport of two children hiding behind one of those pillars. I smiled at them, and, as they drew back, giggling, I spotted my destination and plodded on, half regretting my decision to forsake the boardwalk, for my shoes were squelching with sand. The shadow of a baby carriage loomed behind me and glancing back I saw one of the maids pushing it along the slightly elevated walk beside me. On a once bright red leash she kept a check on a pert little Pekinese strutting along on his hind legs in obvious imitation of me. I nodded civilly to the maid and turned off toward my house. She and the dog followed.

Proteus’ place was modern, one of the few in that particular colony, though the style is fairly popular on the island. Raised off the dunes on cement arches, the pine wood frame extended in sweeping lines toward the ocean. The house was large and almost entirely enclosed in glass, roof and all. The steps were obviously an after-thought, just a couple of cement blocks. I went up the two steps and, since I knew that they would all be at the beach, reached up and opened the door. Stretching, I climbed up from the cement blocks to the door, went in and closed it.

The first impression was of the ocean; the height of the house gave an excellent view. The studio, which occupied all of the first floor except the kitchen complex, was very bare and set up as an atelier. In the left-hand corner against the kitchen wall was a rolling bamboo bar. I went over and had a drink. Now off to find my host.

The kitchen was unoccupied except by the maid who was putting away the groceries. In the center of the room a little collapsible wooden stairway ran down to the sand and disclosed the baby carriage. I smiled again and went down, fingerling my card from Mr. Proteus.

Scooping to pass under the beam at the other end of the house I stood up in the chill midday air. The sun shone clearly on the gray water that went out until it lost itself in the gray sky. The waves were high and broke on the hard sand with a dull steady crash. The beach behind the house was empty. I turned around into the face of the Pekinese who was sniffing at my hair through the glass. The maid saw me and pointed down the beach. The rest of the waterfront was cut off by a rise of dunes covered with beach grass, but there was a sign at the foot of the ridge so I set that as my first goal.

Set in with meticulous care, the sign informed me that the beach grass had been imported from Bermuda and was not to be disturbed. If I were going to go exploring over sand dunes, I might as well do it in the right style. I planted one foot firmly in the sand and raised the
other to unlace my shoe. The sand under my left heel shifted and only by a hasty dance did I maintain my balance. Better sit down on the sign and then take off my shoes. I left them by the sign so I could find them on my return.

When I reached the top of the dune I saw the top of a large orange and white striped umbrella peering over the crest of the next ridge. No sense in just walking straight for it; besides, it might not be Proteus’ pavilion. Instead I turned toward the ocean and ran down the hill at full speed, sinking deep into the sand at each stride and setting off tiny avalanches in my wake. I’m afraid that I even buried some beach grass. The sand spurted out all around me as I sank down to my knees. I waited there half-kneeling and half-sitting until the sand grew quiet. The hard packed strand by the waterfront ran out to the breakers in rippled patterns. I jumped up, shook the sand out of my cuffs and rolled my trousers up over my knees into bulky rings that jostled with one another as I walked.

I was so intent on watching the flow of the waves on the beach as I walked toward the umbrella that I scarcely noticed the girl and her castle until I was upon them. She looked over her shoulder and tossing aside her wet sandy hair, stated, "You’re looking for Daddy."

"Yes, if you mean Mr. Proteus."

"Do you like my castle?"

The entire situation seemed most incongruous. A girl of perhaps nineteen, her thin body clothed in a light short dress, sitting on the beach making castles.

"Yes, very fine. Do you go to school, my dear?"

"Daddy mentioned that you would be coming today, so I decided to wait here for you."

"That’s very nice of you."

I crouched down, but painfully aware of my bony knees, decided to kneel. She had scooped up a bit of sand from the bottom of a pool of trapped sea water and slowly dribbled it on the battlements of the keep. The effect was grotesquely Gothic.

"You know, you won’t find what you’re looking for. I mean, if he does talk, he won’t say anything."

"Well, that’s what I want to find out; I can have a try at it anyway."

"When we were at Cannes everyone tried there too. But he just put them off, and they never realized it."
"You spend most of your time by the sea, do you?"

"Yes, Daddy likes the Ocean, and besides, he has to mind the seals."

"Did they bother the people at Cannes?"

"Oh no, they just ignored them."

"Well, it's getting on. Is that your father's umbrella over there - the orange and white one?"

"Yes - but he's in swimming now. And besides, you can't go up there like that."

"Oh."

"No, you'd better change; otherwise, you could never get through the rest to see Daddy. There's a row of old cabanas behind that sand bank."

"But, my dear, what's wrong with me as I am?"

"Well, nothing really, I guess. But, you see, nowadays everyone has to be a seal. It's either a seal or nothing.

"But you don't seem to be a seal."

"No, but then I'm his daughter."

"Surely you don't like the seals."

"Of course not. Why do you think I'm building sand castles?"

"Quite."

"Well, are you going back and catch the ferry, or pretend you're a seal?"

"I can't go back."

"Well, I'll see you at dinner."

With that she got up and walked down the beach toward the town. That left me sitting with the sand castle. I knocked off the spire on the top and got up. Either the old man would take me as I am, or not at all.

I walked slowly along the sand. The waves would come boiling up and hiss their way across the sand, spilling over my feet, and then hurry back, leaving behind a row of foamy bubbles. I turned to the right and plodded over the sand bank to the cabanas.
I simply didn't fancy myself as a seal. Just because the old coot is eccentric, I don't see why everyone else has to be too. Besides, I wasn't there as an associate or an apprentice, or whatever his protégés consider themselves. I am just a free-lance journalist; nothing special, Yale '57, but not likely to be a seal.

When I reached the top of the dune that overlooked the cove, I saw Proteus swimming in toward the beach. He was still out beyond the breakers, so I had plenty of time to get down to his blanket. The others were asleep, scattered here and there around the vicinity of the umbrella. All in their appropriate costumes. Well, at least I didn't feel too out of place now. I picked my way through them carefully to avoid waking them. The blanket seemed like an island of safety in the midst of the snoring sea. I lay down on my back and closed my eyes until only a thin streak of grayish light could squeeze between the lids. Pretty soon I heard him come puffing up, duly unconcerned about whom he might wake, and let himself down beside me. I peeked out of the corner of my eye and caught sight of his red wrinkled belly rising and falling against the sea. A puff of smoke floated down his body. Cigar smoke again.

I waited until the strained feeling in my stomach had begun to subside and my skin began to tingle with the sun's heat. I took a breath and pushed my shoulders back into the sand.

"Well, sir, thank you for your invitation; it was very good of you. After all, I am not very well known in the literary world as yet, and this may prove to be an immense help to me. To say nothing of the inspiration."

I paused. I was afraid I was being too effusive. He must have met such young writers of that type constantly. No, better to appear different: assured yet reserved. Not unusual, just that ordinary distinction of, say, the British. I glanced over to see if he were awake. A cloud of tobacco gently bumped its way toward me. Well, perhaps it wouldn't be too bad after all.

Relaxed now, I began to reminisce. "I recall, sir, that my first encounter with you took place in the field of art. At first I concentrated my delight on your subtle palette and superb sense of composition. The subtle shading of color planes and ... but then, sir, my attention was drawn to the large square of white in the center of the work. I recall vividly how it struck me at first as a defect, perhaps a trick of that hideous museum lighting. I anxiously jostled my way through the knot of admirers hoping to find you vindicated. I could scarcely believe my eyes; the center of the canvas was blank. Sir, only you could appreciate my state of depression as I began to take my leave of that picture. As I was making my way out of the throng I heard a woman's voice proclaiming the mastery of your brushwork. I continued on a few steps, and then it struck me. Rushing back, I peered closely at the supposed blank spot. Yes, it was a perfect
reproduction of canvas weave. The brushwork was of untold fineness. Sir, it revealed the touch of a master hand. Such realism."

I glanced over toward Proteus; I fancied that I could, through my misty eyes, see him smile thinly and answered him smile for smile.

"But, sir, it was not for some time that I realized the philosophical implications of your work. I remember, even now, with what glee I went about and studied each of your works. There was the famous composition in bronze that you created for the government plaza. There again people wondered and stared at the vast cubical hole in the center of the massive structure. But by now I, and others too, were beginning to realize that it was more than a hole, a void. No, rather it was like a Roc egg brooding over our Aladdin's lamp world."

I was growing too lyrical. I began to feel rather foolish and sick. I swallowed and glanced quickly over at Proteus. A thin waver ing stream of smoke was ascending to the dull metallic sky, like incense.

"However, sir, not to bore you with my first youthful enthusiasms, let me move on to the subject of my interview, the much discussed 'soap fable' in your book of philosophical essays. You recommend that one cut the centers out of soap bars to insure full use of the bars and to avoid the left-over chips. I wonder whether this means that the emptiness in life is an integral and valuable entity, that the void is not not, but a metamorphosis of being, a state of anti-matter that sustains life at its core. This is one of the problems that has led me to seek you, sir."

I started to look over toward him, but I could no longer smell his cigar smoke. Better not to look at all and plunge into what had been plaguing me all these days.

"And then, sir, there's the matter of the seals. I remember how excited we all were when you announced that you were forming a school. The Times compared it to the Promenade or the Academy. But, sir, look what you have chosen. Seals dressed in seals' clothing. Sycophants all! And, sir, do you actually claim to train them? I know these people who are busy snoring all around us. I know them. Empty, completely shallow and, well, just empty. I can picture them now, all trooping off to the water at the sound of a bell and marching solemnly into the sea, dressed in those absurd flippers. But excuse me, sir, I am too bold. I'm just carried away by my admiration for you, sir; I don't want to see you laughed at, sir."

I paused for breath and fumbled for a phrase to cover my confusion. I felt the blanket strain and the sand slide under me. He had rolled over and my left eye stared into his massive red face, wrinkled and heavy-jowled, blandly looking at me. My shoulder blades had dug deep furrows in the sand and my neck was pressed tensely
against the hard blanket. My knees were locked in tension. I did not stir, but lost myself gazing into his watery gray eyes. From very close I smelled that odor of wet cigars as he sighed and, with the voice of a cheated child, petulantly asked:

"But, my dear chap, aren't you a seal?"

5:08 P.M., DECEMBER 17th

A dusty, pink-streaked, icy atmosphere Compels my heaven-gaping eyes to sate Their passion viewing mud-splashed snow. And here And there a light or two might intimate Existence. Oh, but is it love or hate? Attach yourselves, my eyes, upon those geese That flee this soot-stained scene and find their peace.

John J. Podsiadlo, S.J.

JET PLANE REFLECTING SUNLIGHT

On my weary-at-evening eyes A new kind of star is smiling And the glow of a well-spent day Bends gratefully down to the dusk.

Christopher A. Conroy, S.J.
BITS AND PIECES, PIECES AND BITS AND PIECES

You songless singer,
Pale paradise,
Petty poet,

You weary world (poor packman) —
I'm tired of you,
Your almosts,
Nearlies,
Maybe,
Mites,
Bits and pieces, pieces and bits and pieces,
Dots...

We're through.

Gary R. Wiley, S.J.

A RUBÉN DARÍO

Darío, poeta del Austro;
tu, cóndor Andino
elevas con alas azules
tu vuelo Latino.

Rubén, bardo sureño;
tu, pavo real
de polífono canto
de carnaval.

Cóndor y pavo real,
¿de donde tus ritmos profanos,
de que fuente de cristal
arrancas tus cantos ufanos?

Salvador Antonetti, S. J.
They stood next to the park bench, talking to her grandmother. It wasn't in the park, though, but in one of those traffic islands they make with a little grass plot and a few trees and park benches.

"Well, have a nice time now."

"We will." She picked up her big, shapeless handbag and walked slowly back home.

They stood together looking up the avenue, as the late afternoon sun shed its warmth all over the old apartment houses and stores. The show windows shone with the reflection of the sun; an occasional car came down the avenue. It was Sunday.

"Well?" he said.

"There's nowhere to go right now," she said. "We have at least an hour and a half."

"Do you want to go to Barbara's?"

"Oh, why bother? It's much nicer here."

"O.K."

And they sat down.

The kids on the corner were playing this crazy game with beer cans and sticks in the gutter - it was a sidestreet, so there wasn't much traffic - with bases and everything just like baseball, only the cans instead of balls. I wonder if anybody ever gets hurt, he thought.

It was going to be a perfect evening.
Off away in the park beyond the roofs of the apartment buildings you could see the tallest trees swaying lightly in the breeze. Thank God for that; it's been hot as hell lately. And the sky was blue blue blue and made a sharp crisp outline against the white stone of the top story of the hotel way up the avenue.

They talked a while. It was amazingly quiet; after a while even the kids went away, and the usual evening crowd of mothers and baby carriages was somewhere else. Sometimes it gets that way in the city - you wonder where everybody's got to. So, gradually they slipped into the mood and tone of their surroundings and fell silent too.

He put his arm around her; she made a quick, soft movement away from him, but then took it back and sat closer to him. He felt her body tremble faintly like a young tree in a gentle wind. Somewhere, maybe on the bank's big clock far away the chimes rang out the time. Seven. The skirt of her bright summer dress fluttered up a bit, and she smoothed it out with her hand.

"We'll have to go pretty soon, if you want to get there on time," he said.

"Oh, yeah. I guess so." Then a pause. "Frank, how about phoning and telling them we're not coming. I just don't feel like it."

"Me neither. Maybe we could call it off...but you know how Barbara is. And the rest of them too. Once you've said yes, there's no backing out. Nohow."

"Yeah, that's for sure. O.K. We might as well go now." They hesitated a moment, then got up and started across the avenue in the direction of the subway. They passed by the funeral parlor, the pastry shop and the insurance company. Sometimes they passed clumps of men or old women sitting together on stoops or at storefronts, gabbing away, smoking. She knew them all and greeted them. He only smiled and nodded his head. They met her sisters, coming home from the beach, with sun-browned faces, their bathing suits wrapped up in towels, and the elder carrying a wallet and a large paper bag with the thermos and some uneaten food. They said hello.

They met an old nun from the parish convent; so they had to stop and talk for a few minutes.

"Maybe we'll never get there after all," she said; and they laughed. In the narrow street leading up to the subway entrance there was nobody to be seen, except a drunk sitting in a doorway half-asleep; a cat lay stretched out on the window sill, but alert and occasionally flicking her tail. The light was fading here, and it was so still and peaceful that they stopped and looked across the street at the old garment factory; they could see the yellowed walls with the paint peeling off and the outdated, grotesque metal gear. Soon it would get
dark and the kids would come back from their dinners and life would flow out into the quiet street. They waited a moment and then went down into the subway...

Hoboes

Hoboes along a bench,
Blind, blinking, vacant shades,
Sit and dully drum,
Fingers knocking knees.

Glances that sometime glowed
With hope, or hate, or what
Was onetime living man,
Flicker, then fade out.

Amperes of soul lacked ohms
Of life, there was a short;
Sparks sputtered, fizzled, then
Latent light went black.

Actless, inert, are these
Grey ghosts of person now.
Tapping time, they wait
Food, drink, warmth, a judge.

Richard P. Kane, S.J.