RED CEDAR REVIEW





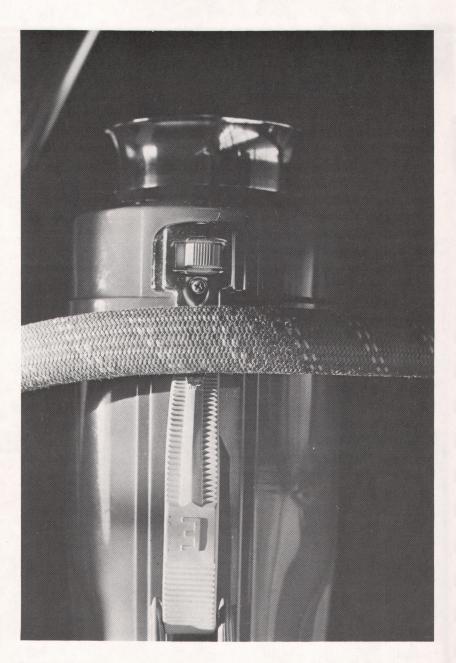
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Robert Turney

Postcard: The Market From Church Yard, Walsall

People are under green awnings.
People are continents under green awnings.
The theory of continental drift exists.
People are potential theories of continental drift.
Theories drift under green awnings.
The theories are multi-colored.
They are like confetti under green awnings.
The scattered confetti assumes the existence of people under green awnings.

Christine Stephens

Native Wealth

I had to stop them from shooting At the chickens again. For all my reason I was still hit on the back of the head. The vard is full of copper. Do what I can, and yet tomorrow They will be back, an inner-tube Cut into dozens of slingshots, pennies Carried in knapsacks strung like quivers Across their backs. The flat. Round money makes a poor projectile-Straining with air, drifting, a loss of power If landing flat, face down. Marbles are by far the better ammunition. Even from the stream bed, small pebbles Make more damage, pass better across distance. The place is littered with pennies And I hear the return of children, the metal Popping against the house, the like-to-like Clang on the shed's tin roof. Raking coin out of the garden, From the fields, the chicken pen, off The porch, we are becoming rich. Already the spare room and all the closets Are full. A box of the matter Is under the bed and soon that room Too will be filled. I do not know What to do with such wealth But there is an old tire in the barn.

We Are Not Serving

meals at the Hotel Lifshin not light beverages even no tea to wet vour lips before wet lips pull on you And then the wet lips there. No tea not even Lipton's certainly not the imported brands or herb tea with all the caffeine out of them so you can go back to your hot tub and bed to sleep better than ever having gotten what was boiling in you out while the hotel stays up all night turns over not having spit out what it wanted to when it had to since you were the guest

The House Is Full of Cats

a cloud of fur blurs what's between us like mold or fog Cats on the stoves where something should be cooking If i pick up a child or dog i pick them up like i would a cat. and press your fur to me want you to sleep across my neck all night I've heard your purr coming and waited for claws The cats you can't see see invisible bugs and scratch at the walls all night. Other cats come, all of them hungry And with all these cats i'm still waiting for the brown furry one planted under the plum to grow balls, furry apricot kittens long haired oranges

lyn lifshin

You're Like A

stick up in a town where any one could know my voice if I have to use it I'm walking down Main St with only pearls on in a town where sailors are docking after 7 years getting involved with you is like shop lifting 3 pair of glowing red wool pants under clear plastic jeans I forgot in the heady glow are transparent

lyn lifshin

How to Handle a Wife

My wife wants to get pregnant right now. She comes home from the stores with baby clothes, diapers, names. If it's a boy, Matthew; a girl, Meagan. I smile & laugh at her, thinking it's cute. Can we have a baby? she asks. Sure, I say, in five years; by then I might have a job. Of course, she gets depressed, breaks dishes & won't talk to me. But after a couple of days she starts coming in again with more clothes & bottles & baby food. Our spare room is nearly full. I smile & laugh about it. I do want kids, you know, someday. My wife walks around sticking her stomach out, asking me to pat it, to listen for a heartbeat. I smile & laugh. Last week I found all of my drawers stuffed with baby clothes. I tried a few things on, just for the fun of it. a little bonnet & some booties tied around my big toes. Every night now I dress up like this,

let my wife cuddle me.

I just smile about it all
when she opens her shirt
& drops a breast in my mouth.

David James



Robert Turney

Sleep

(A letter to Turney and some straight talk for the rest of you.)

Dear Robert, I've a system now for sleep, better than buttermilk, Beer or your woolen cap. You must fence In an area 20 x 20 with No.12 hog wire, And on bad nights put a pig in it, One you've left the nuts on. He'll be irritable, Fast, and have good wind. At 6 months Will weigh a hard 240. (If you add beef tallow While graining him.) Robert, get in the PEN. He'll go to the farthest corner And wait. He has good patience in danger And adores the dark. Have a plan. But be prudent, Don't commit too quickly. Robert, I want you To punish this pig. Manuever him, with a steady presence Into the open. Seize the hind legs, Get him over on his back and prepare the son-of-a-bitch For pain. Push your knee into his sternum for balance. From here you can go several ways. You may opt To break his back. This takes great upper body strength And to be honest I've never brought it off. You can Try for the neck. It's hard as a hydrant And no blow I know will break it. Beware of his mouth Robert, The bite is a crescent, takes weeks to heal And the scar's unspeakable. Twist His nuts into a knot. The squeal here is unnerving, the neighbors will talk, But it's satisfying and remains a personal favorite. Just below is his bum, The King-of-Clubs. Forget it. Buggery Is counterproductive. Besides you'll be exhausted.

Release the pig. Treat him. (Mangoes and beer are good.)
Clean up. And go to bed.
Even in the hardest cases, where you fall,
Sleep comes. And there are substantial
Side benefits. After a number of bouts
You'll find you dwell less on the deaf ends of aging,
Childhood, old loves, dead friends, embolism, success,
Madness, parents, oxygen debt, impotence, nerve gas, tits,
bridge,

Queers, a world view. Some madness will fall away. The bone

In your voice will pass.

There's a hitch however. The temptation to spend time With the pig. Lots of time. You'll wash him, dust for mites As you would a beloved. Feed him chocolate tortes. A slack bellied

Pet with no piss in his hide. Guard against this. Think of his skull

As a cookie bowl. When you wrestle

Mention plans to pickle his prick, gamble with his hams. Have

Him there when you kill his children, the sow. Remind him

daily

Of DINA AN DARAAN (the dread Filipino Blood Dish, recipe's enclosed).

Skip feedings. Hold back his water. Run him. All builds Desire in the PEN.

And that's it Robert. Sincerely.

Norman Hindley



Robert Turney

Some Personal Notes of a Modern American Intellectual on Wed. 12th, 1980, with reflections on Socrates, The Development of Ethical Man, Vonnegut's Breakfast of Champions, East West Journal and The Disintegration of Standards and Principles of Western Civilization related to the Necessity to Give In

I did everything today I should not do. I am not happy about it, Epicurus, but I am not sad either, Sally.

I had breakfast with clumps of cholestrols.
I misspelled cholestreal in the poem and did not check Webster for correction.
I had a huge califerious luncheon though Webster does not scantion califerious.

I loved lunch.
With desert. Thick. Wads of whipped cream.
Blobs of it. Thick. Heaping and I had a second helping.

I had dinner. Two desserts. Evening snacks. Junk. Potatoe chips, four martinis.

I wallowed all day like the BadAss in one of Dante's lowest mires.

Loved it.
I used whatever words I wanted with four letters.
More; I even lusted to the best of my sagging ability.

I did not smile at students.

I did not help my elderly mother find her glasses

or hand her her pills.

I did not take vitamins with iron or give the cat cream. I did not bathe or powder or perfume; I seldom brush and I did not watch public tv.

Did in fact watch Real People and some other sodom-gomorrahish sit-com.

I cannot learn to be wholly happy about this, Epicurus but I am not so sad about it either, Sally.

Jean Battlo

From the Scattered Poems of Esterhazy

1. Family Picnic. Hungary, 1929.

I've heard that the dead make no noise. Father was like that until today,

but now he talks even to Sasha the frog who's buried in a bowl of potato salad to escape the July heat.

Father talks to keep from hearing Sandor Nagy who tells of being attacked the other day in the Black Forest by Nibelungen.

Father says he'd like to have a spear, creep beneath that loudmouth Nagy, thrust it into his ass hair.
Who invited Nagy anyhow?

Paprika's getting into Sasha's eyes, he springs from the bowl, scatters salad like manna, the original of which, Father explicates, was only matzo meal.

Sandor leapfrogs after Sasha into Lake Balaton. The picnic goes on—
Aunt Malvin cuts more potatoes,
Aunt Josie grinds paprika fruit,
Uncle Oscar scours the lake
for frogs for frog soup,
Father sharpens a stick.
Silence settles in.

2. Chicago Office, 1965.

I look down at Prudential Building from the Esterhazy Corporate Suite. Navy Pier's a toothpick on the lake. Something's in my bloodstream.

Agnes the new secretary comes in without knocking, startles my synaptic reflexes; my lips tremble, my toes grow numb, paralysis creeps on little spirochete feet into my diaphragm and chest muscles.

It's shellfish poison from butter clams, she says, it was on the envelopes you licked, in the New York strip you ate for lunch, even in your Listerine.

She starts to polish her nails.

3. After Hours, 1965

I pet Zoltan the piranha who playfully nips my hand.

Far below on Lake Michigan a smallcraft warning is in effect; a summer thunderstorm rages at the eightieth floor of the Corporate Parking Lot. I make a note to assemble a squall management team.

Agnes thumbs through my statistical analysis charts, a camera in her left breast photographs data

on improved alfalfa tolerance to salt stress on Roi Namur, replicated sudangrass hay in Texas, twenty-eight inch baby rainbow trout at the Esterhazy-Tennessee Hatcheries.

I take her into my observatory to mark Saturn's rings, squeeze her breast; the lens in her nipple clicks: she has an image of Esterhazy among the stars.

4. Domestic Felicity. 1965

Poppyseed bread bakes in the microwave oven for my breakfast with camomile tea. Agnes prepares head cheese and calf's foot jelly for Thanksgiving dinner; a golden butterball self-basting ptarmigan stuffed with kelp waits its turn.

Agnes makes avocado ice cream and cranberry parfaits as I check my electrolyte count.

She mops and scrubs, cleans my TV screens with Endust on a cheese cloth so from my king size water bed I get clearer pictures of the Hungary-Bulgaria soccer match.

She's an angel who sweeps through the suite with a broom from the Lions Club broom sale.

She feeds and grooms my Dobermans, drops mouth size pieces of barbecue into the tank for Zoltan, puts deer mice in the glassed-in garden for Mihaly the puff adder.

She arranges my pillows, brings me my bread and tea, bellydances as I eat and watch Hungary thrust home its winning goal.

5. A Smell of Cabbage. 1981.

In a pot on my credenza stuffed cabbage is warming. Where did you come from? I ask.

From the old country, says Nagy, can't you tell? After so many years in Chicago

can you remember grape pickers crowding a hillside in October?

I see only my property on Lake Shore Drive, I tell him, my buildings in the Loop.

Remember the taste of homemade plum brandy? he says. The feel of dancing all night to gypsy music?

Nagy, I reply, you're romantic and sentimental, that was another world.

Do you recall the wood carvings of the shepherds? Embroideries and homespuns of the village girls?

The cabbage smell tickles my nose. Want some? he says, serving me.

As I eat he makes palacsinta on my desk, hums a folk tune from Matyos.

I smell granaries, see summer houses and cave baths.

It's carnival time, men and women carry a yards-long horn to an icy lake,

blow until a blue forehead appears, and birds transform church towers into music boxes.

J. W. Rivers



The Flying Pigs of Altoona

Suddenly the swine barn Is a wind sock and you Hear the quick sound of buckets Kicked over. The pigs Are flying nosing the high Tassels of corn wheeling over Wheat in satisfied grunts. They move Into the sun and are dull colored lice Amok pointilist landscapes. They Have forgotten they are pigs and begin A steady climb through clouds Of insects. Hawks greet them And carve Poland China skin At the edge of forests. Made lacy they are mice Squealing in the twine of dusk.

It's Something Like the Smell of Chrysan

It's something like the smell of chrysan Themums that one tastes, minute fractions Of nerve toxins drifting in the air. Such Quantities are even too small to kill the two-Spotted spider mite as it leaves its web, or The people that prey on them from Rose Lake, Monroe, Collins, Klein, and Geneva. Time measured in generations confers Immunity, and we seed descendants of the Choicest toxin resistant strains, since It's always better to poison deliberately Than to rely on the gratuitous poison Of friends.

Dream of the Order Lepidoptera

A moth enters my side and begins laying
A white froth of eggs that are carried
By blood into the body's tissues. Soon
I can see light through my hands, not just
The red cats' tongues at noon or the light
Molded around the bones in my hands
But sunlight and clouds. Circular stitches can't
Keep this out. What should have been thrown
Out must remain.

Other moths enter my side and larvae
Hatch, delicately eat along the pericardial
Wall of the heart leaving deposits of pure glass,
Emerge out wrists depositing more glass
Which my skin tries to hide. Leopard frogs
Stare through the holes in my wrists, palms, and feet
And are burned by light condensed in lumps of glass.

Oh mother of pearl in fishnet stockings
Stockings that press redly into your thighs,
Let me see your fireflies and moths without
The suffocation of skin cells eaten to glass, that will,
Too slowly, darken to lavender in sunlight. Let me carve
With cats' tongues the shell in your thighs
So that flesh can remain. Dissolve glass
And I can breathe and hide from sunlight.

Any Motion Is an Offense Against the Inner Ear

We cut bait for Bluefish, chum the Water until the bait is spit back, then Use long white strips of indestructible Squid, tinctured and hanging from treble Hooks. It's soon all the same with me Too close to clouds falling away to the next Swell wishing for the leisurely sway of Weeds where the madrigals of ovsters are In the movements of stems so fine and leafy, Dipping in plankton, that only its green Florescence reminds you of breathing in soft Scrapes on rough green shells We twist open with fat handled knives that Hold easily rusted blades. This air is too thin Father when you twist strands of wire for Bluefish leader or push blades into the seam Of oysters. It's too thin watching the tilt of Break waters wanting to forget the easy Regurgitation you tell me is Latin for what The movement of Bluefish is through the shifting Schools of menhaden.

The Spirit That Moves Us

Back of the church is the tiniest ball field you ever saw. Without Hennebaker I'd of never seen anything like it. Wait till the GM hears, the little pink flowers crowding the fence, the kids—must be fifty of them swarming on the field, and me to see it all.

The GM didn't know he had anything in Hennebaker when it started. When you pick up Hennebaker's kind you don't figure you get much. It was Vaughn we were after. We wanted somebody that'd kill himself for a ground ball, belly whop on razor blades and busted glass and come up throwing and we got him in Vaughn. We also got Hennebaker.

The GM calls utility infielders the alfalfa of the game. You don't really use them, you just plant new ones every year and then plow them under. You don't need them but a few times each year and sitting around rots them. When we got Hennebaker we figured we'd throw him under in a year or two and nobody would notice. A spindly kid with blue eyes like campaign buttons and curly blonde hair that popped out under his hat, Shirley Temple in a batting helmet. Hit .230 in Triple A the year before, and could sort of handle short, second, and third, which was his qualifications, so to speak. All we wanted was something that sat and didn't cause trouble and got up when we needed it. I asked. I remember at that time I asked what was the boy's temperament, and the GM said sweet, a regular peacemaker. Didn't bother nobody, just read about God. A quieting influence, I believe the GM said, meaning I suppose not like Corbello or Wheat, and that was okay, a quieting influence. Nothing else worked, why not God.

Early on I had nothing to complain of. In May Hennebaker filled in for Dingley, who'd had the ball crack off his forehead running into second on a double play, just the kind of thing you figure your own second baseman could stay out of. Hennebaker was around .180 for two weeks, but like I say, nothing to complain of. I didn't mind the other business either, hanging around the clubhouse, trying to get the boys to read the Good Book. Nobody listened, not even Murillo who wanted everybody to love him and listened to everything. Nobody listened, because if spare parts infielders were giving out good advice, they wouldn't be spare parts. What I am complaining of started in August.

Wheat and Barber and Bosford had been throwing good and we'd been right up with the front runners in June, first time for the club in six years. The GM croaked like a frog in a pond of flies. In July, six games back and on the way down, the croak got raspy. We had a game on National TV and he wanted to boom out in the worst way. It was one of those blue sky Saturdays made for baseball. Barber was on the mound, smooth and hard and getting everything out of his six-foot-five, looked like a big broom sweeping off the plate. We hadn't had a win for a couple days, we were due. Vaughn was in the dirt twice at third, once left and once right, and each time he got his man. Crowd loved it. Vaughn was down on every play, down with his nose in the dirt, screaming hit it by me. In the dugout there was horsing and preening for the camera. Wheat and Corbello even talked to one another. Wheat put his arm around Corbello when he came back after a flyout to center that gave us the lead. Hennebaker was up and down the bench telling everybody how great they were and quoting Second Corinthians. Bosford wanted to know if he could let his tarantula loose, the folks on TV would love it, and I said it stayed in the box. I knew it had the stinger out, but I didn't want one of the boys up to pinch-hit in the ninth reaching into the bat rack and finding it. Bosford said it would just sit on a helmet on the edge of the dugout and watch, but I told him a foul might kill it. Damn starters should stay in the bullpen the whole game, who cares what they do there.

A broken-bat liner led off the seventh. It died out to left—Barber jammed the man, didn't let him get good wood on it. The next pitch was a fat-headed changeup going in, frozen rope going

out. Men on first and second, nobody out. Barber looked like he ate little baby apples. Two pitches into the seventh and I never thought about getting Weinstein up. No sense doing it then, time Weinstein was ready Barber would gas the fire on his own. Maybe if nobody got up Barber would think I believed in him. I couldn't think straight anyway, Hennebaker was on a steady stream about Whom He Will Choose. It had nothing to do with the game.

The next man was their right fielder, a black kid up just a week. They said he hit the hard one like a ramrod, so we'd just been showing him that one outside and then junk in and out. The first time up he'd struck out on one at his ankles and the next he piddled down the line to Corbello at first, so we'd handled him okay. Vaughn was screaming and the black kid cranked the bat like he didn't remember anything Barber'd done to him. I got Weinstein up and went out.

"You can go back," Barber said. He was a foot taller than me, even bigger up on the hill. He flapped his glove and pawed the back of the mound. "I got him easy."

I reminded him what we were throwing. He stayed busy with the dirt, not listening. Dillard didn't say much, he just liked the mask on his head, so he could breathe and see better. I asked Barber what was he going to throw and he said he don't know, it'll come to him. The GM started this new thing, an inspiration program, and they're all like that now, they say it'll come to them, they got to be positive, they got to challenge. The curve I reminded him, the curve was going good, wasn't it, and I looked at Dillard, who remembered he was in the conversation and said yes, the curve was going good. I got back and it started again, Barber staring in, the kid cranking up, Vaughn with his nose in the dirt. It wasn't the curve that Barber threw, he brought it in there, his head full of that stuff about challenge them, and he did, he challenged the kid right down the middle and it went out to the seats just like the scouts said, a ramrod, at least there was that, the scouts were right, and it was 3-3. Hennebaker fell quiet, the Lord having shown Whom He Will Choose.

By the time Weinstein was ready three more hitters drew the bead on Barber, Murillo booted one at short and Barber gave him the eye like it was Murillo's fault he was coming out and we were down 5-3, the fast ball had nothing to do with it. Bottom of the ninth Corbello hit Wheat with his glove on his way back to the bench, probably didn't mean it, but Wheat threw it back, I reminded them we were on National and all this would get picked up. There was distinctly less horsing around and chatter on the bench, except for Hennebaker, who was up again and telling everybody how great they were.

Corbello opened with a double. I was feeling more kindly toward him, but he stood on second like he just won the game, like it was over and we could all go home. He tugged on his golf gloves, called time, strutted around and stretched. I could imagine the little insert on the TV where he talked about his Mom's cooking and showed his white teeth. I could see it running through his brain. They taped it before the game and I'd have bet anything he knew they were showing it. The fat hairball left-hander who'd been in since the sixth tried to dust off Vaughn, came in behind him, and we emptied out and I picked Vaughn out of the hairball's face before he got himself thrown out. Nobody else was that hot about it, and the hairball had shame written all over him. He missed by a foot. I kept a clamp on Vaughn, wouldn't let him swing at the pitch either, and I guessed right, Hairball couldn't get it over anymore, we got two on. I sent in Carmichael for Dillard since Hairball had been coming sidearm on our left-handed hitters, and maybe old man Carmichael could still do it. He hit thirty homers one year in the American League, a lot of years at twenty pounds back, but he could still tear one up the middle. That's what we needed to tie it up.

I get Carmichael up there, and he's in the box, trying to remember what to do next, tap his cleats or rub the bat, it's been so long he can't remember, and their manager is up halfway to the mound waving his right hand. He hasn't looked at Carmichael and hasn't seen it's all we can do to keep Carmichael upright. Hennebaker is up on the edge of the bench like baby bird waiting for the

worm, and gets up swinging an imaginary bat to remind me he goes from the left. If he would have just sat down, I'd have told him he could go in. While their right-hander was loosening, I looked at Carmichael, trying to find his belt so he could hitch up his pants, and then I did tell Hennebaker to go up and do anything but take call strike three. Maybe the right-hander would be wilder than Hairball and we'd get lucky.

Hennebaker didn't fool around, didn't fuss over the bats, rub one into shape. He was in the box before Carmichael could get out, his gold curls squirting out from his helmet. I wanted him to hang back a little longer, give it some drama, it was the only thrill the crowd was going to get, unless their man put one on the screen. Hennebaker was up there waving the bat like he knew what to do with it, the little jerk, and the bench shook when Carmichael sat down.

As I remember, my head was in my hands and I was hoping the camera was on Hennebaker, when there was this roar. I looked back to the screen, but that's not where the ball was, Vaughn was jumping up and down on his way to home plate and there were people reaching and scrambling out in the right field seats. The little piss-ant hit one out. He'd never hit a home run for us before, maybe never in his life, and he all but passed Vaughn on the way home. We won 6-5, and then the next thing they were all over me, Vaughn wanted to carry me off the field, that was all I needed, a third baseman with a hernia. Hennebaker hugged me, his blonde locks on my chest. Probably thought I liked him now, would give him a regular job. "The Lord did it," he said. "God hit one out," and probably He did because there's no way Hennebaker could have done it himself. Sometimes the boys surprise you, and it ain't a half bad job, even if you're looking for another in October. Maybe this year we'd get past August and last into September. Maybe this was the year.

There were six men down from the Network with blue blazers and powder on their faces. They wanted Hennebaker on

the wrap-up, wanted to put a microphone under the little pecker and let him talk. Corbello thought it should be him on TV, thought his double started it all and he had an RBI and a single and played the whole game in the field and that ought to count for something. Next year he was going to play out his option and he was starting to get himself remembered. I was a little miffed, because I'd like the Network to talk to me. I was the one picked Hennebaker off the bench and put the bat in his hands. I could suck in my gut and wave to my grandchildren. The press came in and I told them I knew we weren't down even after the seventh. These boys had a lot of spirit, and the papers shouldn't forget to write about the job Corbello and Weinstein did, and Barber, he hung tough for six, and Hennebaker, well, that little guy was something else and we all had faith in him. It was a good thing the Network had Hennebaker back on the field all by himself for the interview, and away from the rest of them, Corbello, and Cokely, and Dillard, because it would have been a lot worse if they were there. It was a real embarrassment to National Television. The guy in his blazer with the big station medallion and a fist of papers and notes from somebody upstairs on Hennebaker's average, how he came here in the Vaughn deal, how this was his first big league home run. All the stuff they thought of to start a shy kid talking. But they didn't know about Hennebaker. They never know anything. They never ask, so it's their own fault when they get burned like that, Hennebaker telling all those little kids about the Holy Ghost and the Archangel Gabriel. They tell me some of those folks at the TV station wanted to cut him off and go to the ground crew rolling out the tarp, or maybe a good razor commercial, but they were stuck with him. If they cut him off they'd get letters from the Bible belt, and they needed those people, all those Cornflake eaters, so they let him go. He witnessed the Lord and thanked the Network for the opportunity and said if there was any out there that had felt turned to Him by His works that day--they say Hennebaker lifted up two bats like swords beat into ploughshares—he said they should write to him, Hennebaker, care of the ballclub, and he would see that there was a follow-up visit from the Lord.

They were mad then, those folks at the station. They thought Hennebaker had put them on. Thought it was one of those baseball jokes like Bosford's tarantula. After that the Network laid it pretty hard on the GM, told him no more games for the rest of the year whether we got rid of Hennebaker or not. I guess it griped them that God got all the free air time. That put the GM, as they say, between a rock and a hard place. He worked it out by having Hennebaker answer every letter that came in, but he wouldn't give him stamps in case the Network said the club was on Hennebaker's side. Hennebaker did it, and did it gladly. Said it was a task the Lord laid on him and he was grateful.

Wheat and Bosford and Barber and Dillard started breakfast prayer meetings. As far as I could see, it was nothing but Grace over pancakes, but they kept at it. There is something about pitchers that makes them crazier than other ballplayers. Maybe it's not keeping busy enough, playing only every fourth or fifth game. And catchers aren't a damn sight better. At first it didn't seem as if the rest of them cared about it, except for Murillo, who went to the meetings and started to read his Bible in Spanish. He got collared three straight games and was thrown out at second the one time he got on from being hit in the head, and then he gave up and went back to just crossing himself before he stepped in the box. The next day he got four straight hits and stole two bases. I figured he'd stop going to the meetings, but he did go back. He said Faith had many paths. It looked like he was going to walk down them all.

The Breakfast Prayer Club didn't keep Bosford from his tarantula. One night he let it out and Carmichael came back from the water cooler and put his fat ass down without looking. That was it for the tarantula. It didn't have a stinger, so Carmichael came out of it all right. It was the first time he got his uniform dirty since we picked him up last September. The same

night Vaughn made it one backhand dive too many. Jammed his cup for what they call in the papers a groin injury, and was going to be out two, three weeks.

Didn't look like anything was going to go right again. We were ten games out, and the next night in St. Louis we were on the way to eleven. Wheat didn't last the fourth inning. Part of it was a ground ball Corbello took to his right. He waited for Wheat to cover, then decided to make it himself, then saw he couldn't get there and flipped to Wheat too late. That wasn't all that chased Wheat, but all he remembered was the ground ball to first base, and so instead of sweetening up with a shower, he hung around for Corbello to make another mistake. Corbello did (at least Wheat thought he did). He didn't dig out one of Murillo's throws and Wheat said something about Mother's cooking. Used to be the other bench rode you for that sort of thing, but we got it all on our own. We don't fine them anymore. The GM calls it enlightened management.

They waited till the game was over, I give them that. Then Corbello went for Wheat with his hair dryer. When we cleaned it up, Corbello had a broken dryer, one part of his right ear hung free, he needed a shot at the hospital, and Wheat banged up the middle finger on his pitching hand and would be out for at least a turn.

The papers made a lot of that. Corbello's fans wrote in for a piece of the ear (one fellow wanted a piece of Wheat's), and it looked for a while like the rest of the team was going to line up behind either Wheat or Corbello. I told the two of them they'd be stepping into their jocks side by side the next few years, because nobody wanted either of them in trade. Then Hennebaker had Corbello and Wheat kneel down together to pray and ask forgiveness. The two of them bawled and turned over new leaves and the media went on about what Hennebaker had done for us, but what they didn't know was the GM changed his enlightenment, and took a thousand from Corbello and a thousand from Wheat.

The GM didn't mind that Hennebaker got all the press for that. In fact, I believe he liked the cover, but he wanted, he says, the little fellow under wraps awhile. He had to take a good deal of heat from the stockholders on, he says, our image. I didn't feel there was a whole lot I could do. Everytime I called Hennebaker over, he'd give me another little green pocket-size Bible. I had five of them on my desk, and wasn't getting any closer to talking to him. The whole thing was kind of catching on, and the Breakfast Prayer Club took to meeting for dinners.

Out in Chicago a week later we were down 4-1 in the top of the seventh, and Barber was throwing like he had piles. They didn't have the tarp on in the morning when it rained, and Barber couldn't stand up on the mound. Vaughn was on the bench, he couldn't get comfortable, couldn't sit still and had to hold himself in private, but no, he suited up, he wouldn't stop suiting up. Next to him Corbello, out since the third inning with he says stomach problems, but he sat there holding himself like he'd caught something from Vaughn. It wasn't the Corbello I know, the one who spends all his time running his hand through his hair to check for grease. And Carmichael, he'd taken over for Corbello in the third and blew a pick-off, the ball went in the stands and that cost us one more run. Hennebaker brought himself to my attention, up on the edge of the bench, itching to get in, and pretty soon he was up and down on parade so I'd see him. He'd pinch hit twice since the homer, struck out one time and popped up the other. Left five men on. It must have gone out of him licking envelopes. I figured he'd turned the Lord away with all that talk on TV, but Hennebaker said it didn't matter when things went wrong. You had to trust the Lord. He would provide us part of His plan. This from Hennebaker who was still under .200.

Cokely, first man up, got a walk and Carmichael got hit in the tarantula killer. Dillard was due up next, but he'd jammed his ankle the night before, and I could see him legging out his standard one-hopper to third. Hennebaker stood in my face, smiling like he just heard his judgment decision. "Jesus Christ," I said,

forgetting myself, my finger in his chest, "you go up and you bunt." There wasn't going to be signals. Just move the runners around.

The first pitch he missed. Holding out the bat after a missed bunt is like standing over home with your pants down, but he backed up calm for the next one. This one he put in the air, a shade foul, the third baseman sliding on his belly, Cokely heading back to second with fifty feet to go, my heart down in my scrotum looking for company, and for a second the ball slides along in the mitt like a big scoop of vanilla, then flops out. The only way Hennebaker could bunt the next one was if we give him a canoe paddle, and they are not yet legal. I showed the hit sign.

He slipped his hands down to the nub, and I was about to get up when he started to crank on it, like he was throwing all of his weight into an axe. And in that second before he hit the ball, I wanted to go out, burn his ears, yank the bat from his hands. And then the bat makes that sound, the one you can pick out with fifty thousand screaming, and the ball rose. It landed in the tenth row in right. In the ninth we got two more and won it 6-4.

The papers showed him bat in one hand, the other with his fingers up like the Pope's. I didn't want to read it. The GM was in my office the next morning.

"I can't do nothing," I said. "I got no control of what comes out when his mouth opens."

"Isn't that," he said. "Isn't that." And then he got that look he had when he come up with the inspiration program. "How's Vaughn," he asked. He knew as well as I did. He heard what I heard.

"Limping somewhat," I said.

"I don't want to tell you what to do. What goes on between those white lines is all yours." The gesture here indicates the shape of the lines. He wanted to send back the kid we brought up to take over for Vaughn. Needed more seasoning. "Hennebaker played third a whole year in Appleton, Wisconsin," he said. This was no doubt five years ago and Class A, but I did not call him on it. Like everybody else then, he was wearing a smile.

"We can hardly, well, hardly keep him under a bushel basket," the GM says, very pleased with himself.

And that is how Hennebaker came to play third down the stretch.

By the middle of September we were three and a half back. Hennebaker got one or two hits every day and a couple he sent out again, and he flopped around third in his version of Vaughn, though three or four times the ball came up to Corbello on the bounce, and this is not considered good form in most of your major leagues. It was his bat carrying us. It picked up everybody, even Vaughn, who hopped around to show he was ready, though his little steps to the water cooler give him away.

The clubhouse was a different place altogether. Used to be Hennebaker went from locker to locker with his mouth at work, and fellows would brush themselves off like a fly was buzzing by. Now there was three or four scribes with pads to catch what dropped. It kind of quieted the kid, and sometimes he didn't want to do more than tie up his shoes. Corbello was a bit tweaked that the press was following the kid, and when Hennebaker comes dripping from the shower, he looked him over to see if it wasn't done with some new muscles, but the kid was just bones. He didn't seem to eat anymore, and he had this funny look like somebody ethered him.

And then in Philadelphia we won 4-2, though Hennebaker booted one, and he got up in the clubhouse. Had an announcement. Wheat wanted to know if he had Word we'd make it to the playoffs, but Dillard shut him down. Hennebaker cleared his throat. Had a message, he said. Somebody tittered, I believe the press. The Lord had laid a new calling on him, Hennebaker said. Given him a new mission. In Japan. Tomorrow. His last paycheck was going to the missionaries. He stepped off the bench and there was this hole where he stood a minute before.

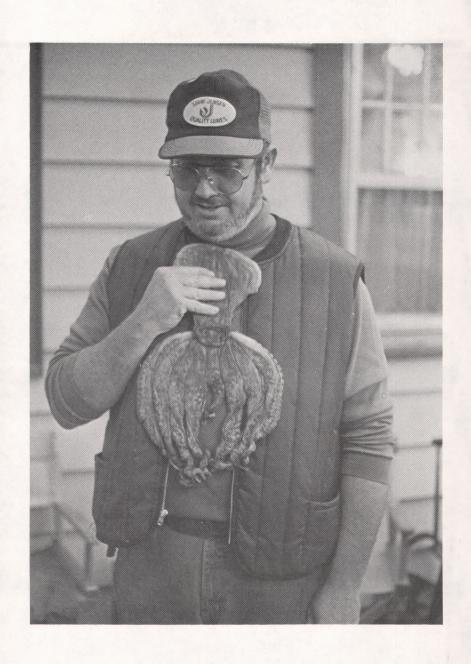
For the next week I never see the GM but with his mouth in the phone. He wanted an international blockade. He wanted to talk to Hennebaker face to face. Henebaker could write his own ticket for next year. What he didn't want for himself could go to the missions in Tanganyika. But it ended up, we did the rest on our own. In a way I was glad. Vaughn was about patched up, and if we made it to the playoffs I wanted to do it natural. I ask favors of nobody.

We dropped five of the next eight. The GM was still on the phone. People mostly thought he was after Hennebaker, but I know he was looking through Triple A, which had just closed up, to roust us an evangelical infielder. He got nothing. We finished third, eleven out.

Who's going to find Hennebaker, the GM wanted to know, but no one could. He did turn up a new one the next year, a quiet Methodist boy from Missouri who played a little second, sprayed the ball around, but he was gone by August. Which was one month longer than me.

And so it is I come to this little church. The woman at the desk speaks about as good English as I've heard in a month. The Japanese is as polite to questions as you'd want, but it is generally tough catching the answer. "The deacon is in the rear having a word with youth," she says. And he is. He's on the field of flowers, and fifty kids, they make him a circle at the plate and hush. He lifts the bat. It's Hennebaker, jabbering in tongues, waggling his hips, hefting the bat. Then he brings up one of the kids, gives the bat to him, bends over to guide his hands, and points to the arc of their phantom drive over the fence, past the flowers, over the roofs. The GM, well, maybe he don't need to hear any more about Hennebaker after all.

John Gerlach



Robert Turney

Catching Flounder: Self-Taught

(for Norman Hindley)

My father was a pilot out of Maxwell field.

He'd fly home in a yellow Ford convertible,
put me on the aquaplane between his legs.

His buddy Jim would tow us into the Gulf,
toss cans of beer from the boat
he'd reach up and catch with one hand.

I'd balance between his ankles,
suck wake-spray salt and beer foam from my hair,
sure some day I'd learn
to catch a can of beer like that one handed.

Afternoons we'd crab, tie chunks of beef bone to string, dangle them off the splintery dock. I'd lie face down, watching crabs creep at the meat from the black nowhere of the water until he scooped them with the net I never learned to use Nights in the right season. we'd dig for soft-shells, the lanterns fragile ash mantle I wanted to touch so making holes in the dark water, shining crabs like deer. so father could spear them escaping their shells But he never took me fishing.

Then he'd be gone, mother on the phone: bad check, bad debt, overdue loan. She'd lie on the chaise. long hair spread around her while I wrote alphabet letters on my slate, chalk soft in the ocean damp. I knew you could make a word out of these letters if only you could get the trick of it. I'd write letters and spell them out: "f r p What does that spell?" "s r d What does that spell?" And she'd call back from the porch, "Nothing. It doesn't spell anything." One day I spelled i o b. She cried and said it spelled Job. She'd lie there. prostrate beauty queen turned to prayer by j o b. It was boring as Sunday school, set me to fishing: clothes-pole, string, bent pin. I didn't think of using bait.

But one day I did catch a fish, something pulled against the pole, I screamed "help."
But no one came.
Somehow I dragged it onto the dock, a flounder must have hooked off the bottom by accident, both eyes looking cock-eyed up at me like someone smashed in the head but still gruesomely alive.

Norman,
this is where I want to start to lie,
to say I found a stone,
sharpened the edge,
slit the poor one-sided fish,
found sticks,
made fire,
cooked it,
demonstrated your fisher's skill.

slit the poor one-sided fish,
found sticks,
made fire,
cooked it,
demonstrated your fisher's skill.
I want to say it tasted delicious
but I don't remember what happened next.
The phone words were AWOL and prison,
we moved North,
my mother got a job at Harrison's
examining radiator holes.

My fish was never cleaned, never eaten, poor flattened bottom fish never made it to finnan haddie, just dragged off by someone's cat or simply rotted.

I didn't throw it back.

It didn't give me a wish.

But Norman, I did catch it, did pull it out of the water, learned that when people say, "It spells nothing," when you have no father to teach you how to fish, you grow fanatical for instruction yet miss the knack of taking it, start with a pole, a piece of string, a bent pin with no bait.

Leonora Anderson-Smith

The Florist's Wife Feasting

"Admit it,"

I want to say to the florist's wife,
"when you drank wine
from your boyfriend's patent leather shoe
and nibbled his boutonniere,
you kept a piece of the fluted petal
inside your lip like copenhagen,
not knowing you were starting a habit
you couldn't get rid of."

Since you've been saying these things to me,
I've been imagining a woman
so taken by the scent of a carnation,
the band playing "taste your lips of wine/
anytime night or day"
that taste and smell gang up on her,

the scents of flowers call her like ghosts
now quickly put each petal into your mouth.

The florist's wife
eats snapdragons like popcorn,
scrapes gardenias with her teeth
as if they were artichoke leaves.
She nibbles the edges of Queen Anne's lace
and her tongue is long and thin
from sticking it into calla lilies.
She puts bunches of lilacs into her mouth whole
like someone at an orgy
swallowing a bunch of grapes at one gulp

though I can't imagine them going down the throat just the waiting tongue the open mouth the purple French lilacs held over it.

"I saw you," I want to say to her,
"at your grandmother's funeral,
picking the long hollow tubes off the pom-poms
and eating them like little bananas."

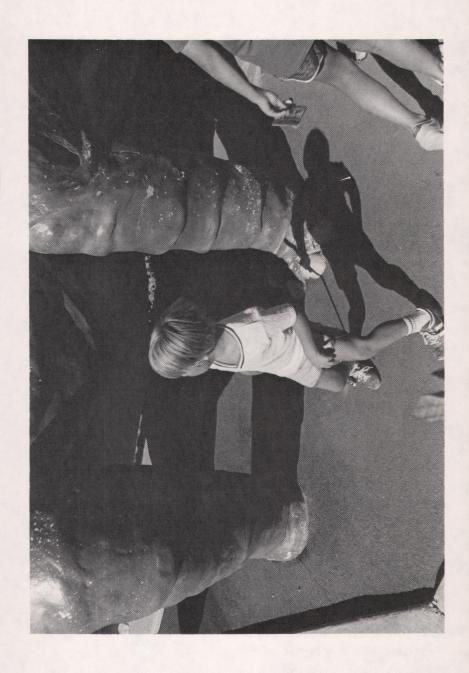
She marries the florist out of the worst motives. letting him think it's his moustache she loves, or maybe they are the only motives: hunger and wanting as much as she can get of what she wants. How shocked the florist is, and horror-stricken to find her stupified among geraniums, salmon petals dotting her lips. They go on like this for awhile like addicts of anything and their lovers or spouses. He tries to understand, 'this is a disease.' She buries half-gnawed stems in the compost heap. He helps her cut down to just one poppy a day, like a wife finally buying for her husband one pair of black panties from Frederick's of Hollywood after coming upon him trying to get into her lingerie. She slips out of bed to nibble symbidiums.

Then Mary comes to my house with lilacs, picks one flower at a time and sucks to get the syrup out, heaping the blooms in front of her, stems stacking up on my kitchen table like chicken bones. And she does this so ordinarily,

so differently from the florist's wife,

who in her final burst of flower eating, driven mad by an opening rose, slips the key to the walk-in from around the sleeping florist's neck and is found by him among pails that held gladiolas, buried in mangled leaves and snapped stems. hundreds of carnation boutonierres gone, flowers for six weddings and funerals devoured, leaving bits of green tape and the pearl headed pins from all the mother's corsages scattered like the skeletons of lilacs Mary left. that warn me how I'll gorge once I start to feast on flowers.

Leonora Anderson-Smith



Robert Turney

Peter Ivanovich, The Russian Sword Swallower

After the famous
Oriental singing poodles,
and the tramp who juggled
apples, saucers,
then burnt his wrists with lit candles,
after the youngest
of the Calmelli family
in scarlet leotards
tumbled one hundred feet
to the net
when his wire snapped,

we had our choice of freaks.

The tent with the half-man, half-woman swelled beside us, but I was afraid of the midget dribbling black spit into his handkerchief at the entrance, and my brother was afraid of what we would tell our parents.

Announcing his last show of the day, Peter Ivanovich, the Russian sword swallower, didn't look like a Russian, either; he looked like our father, unshaven, tight curls over his ears, and when he accepted our quarters, he smelled like our father did whenever he told our mother he'd forgotten the milk or he'd worked late or he must have lost the money.

The tent didn't fill.

An old woman who bulged through a sequined dress harangued for silence.

Strutting into a red spotlight,

Peter Ivanovich
lit a torch,
flipped it from hand to hand
in front of his shaggy beard,
behind his back,
then crouched
and jumped back and across the lowered flame,
his metal heels
clicking against the wooden floor.

Seconds later, as he balanced himself on his head, his skin taut around his gaping mouth, the fire hissing against his tongue. Staggering toward us, the torch bulging in his throat, he wanted me to rescue him, but when I rose, he removed it without flinching, and my brother said, "It's just a show."

Peter Ivanovich's eyes were like the garter snake's I kept in my aquarium, watching us, when he said, "Get the knives out."

The wrinkled woman handed him a velvet case with silver penknives, pearl-handled steak knives, a single gold carving knife.

As he swallowed them, singly and by pairs, my brother said, "They're too small.

We could do that."

Squinting through the light, Peter Ivanovich ordered swords. Refusing to caress them individually or display their jewels, he immediately chose a plain, military bayonet which didn't belong with the others. Clenching the handle with both fists. watching my face as I wanted to look skeptical, he thrust the bayonet down his throat, and his eyes grew large as he tumbled forward, grasping the air in front of me, gurgling a syllable like my name as a silver tip emerged from the back of his neck.

Lynn Domina

The Sky Goes Gray

Pigeons, though you don't know yet that is what they are called and call them robins, remembering the rented house in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin with the birds which nested in the cherry tree, and your mother does not tell you they are called pigeons in Cincinnati, Ohio where your father has a job,

perch on your window ledge.
Their eyes frighten you
as you tilt your head back
to rest your chin on the sill.
The boy with the missing tooth
who kicked your garbage can into the street
has just told you the truth
about Christmas,
but you don't know yet
whether it is the truth.

You believe if you could catch one pigeon, there would be enough food, and your mother's eyes would not look like the pigeon's eyes when you ask why St. Nicholas brought the other girl in the grocery store the prettier dress.

When your father enters the room, you try not to breathe

because he smells different now, and you can still see in your reflection the red silhouette of his hand on your cheek.

You notice the abandoned gray feather and imagine you are spinning three times as you recite the charm you dreamed last night.

You try all afternoon
as the sky goes gray,
but you don't get it right;
there is no pigeon in your palm,
no picnic basket of fruit from your own tree,
and you know this vision of yourself
hung in the window
will be between you and the world
the rest of your life.

Lynn Domina

Beatings

Passing a caravan
of cattle trucks,
I wince at the smell
of urine, hay,
the thought of spoiled milk
left in the barn.

the smell and thought
of your house
behind ours,
my father a farmer
whose callused hands
folded around mine
as he taught me to hold
a freshly-hatched chicken,
your father a drunk
who once set fire to your hair
and regularly cut your thighs
with the broken neck
of a liquor bottle.

After I touched the marks, still swollen with puss, my mother said your family wasn't nice; my father said I shouldn't tell anyone else.

My father didn't drink.
His favorite tractor was a John Deere,
the green one,
greener than the frogs
in the irrigation ditches,

greener even, than young corn husks, and after he disengaged the plow, he would pull me to his lap, teaching me to steer, the evening light shattering on the hot green metal, teaching me to keep the tractor centered on the road unless the driver behind us wanted to pass, and to never, ever attempt to pass anyone myself,

but tonight the stench is too much,

the stench of your house,
the stench of our barn,
dark at twilight when my father
would help me steer the tractor in,
his hands over mine,
dark when he would keep me there,
dark so I couldn't see his fingers,
could only smell the soaked straw,
could only feel the pressure
against my unscarred thighs.

That first spring, he built the chicken coop, painted it green when I asked him to, bought me a bantam rooster, taught me to cradle the soft babies in my small hands.

That first spring, I named the brightest one after my father

and tucked it into my pocket when I walked to the fields to meet him for the drive home.

I should not have been surprised when you stole it, or when you returned it the next day, its down stained with blood from the one leg you had sliced off.

Have you ever forgiven me for the soft parts of my life, or the father who bought them to apologize for the way he loved me?

Lynn Domina

The Duck Woman of Walla Walla

In Walla Walla in front of the White Temple First Baptist Church with the sign board announcing that Reverend so-and-so next Sunday will deliver a sermon on "God's Style of Justice." I've seen an old woman every day this week. an old woman with a stick. There are ducks in the street, ducks that wander in the direction of the church from the pond which is across the street. The old woman looking rather like a duck if a duck wore a cap and sneakers, alternately chases the ducks and throws bread to them. Yesterday it was a small branch she held, lightweight and brittle like herself: today, it's a split log, a piece of firewood which she holds diffidentlynot like a club but dangling as if it were a handkerchief. There are stories that she feeds the ducks. then once in a while-pow. Untrue, of course. So what if once in a while

a duck disappears?
The way she holds her piece of wood lightly,
the way she chases the ducks
out of the way of cars,
you can tell she means to be kind and just.

Barbara Drake

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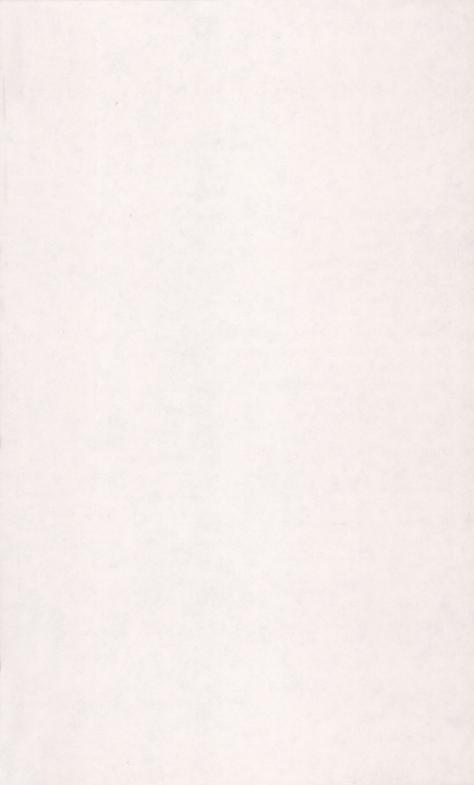
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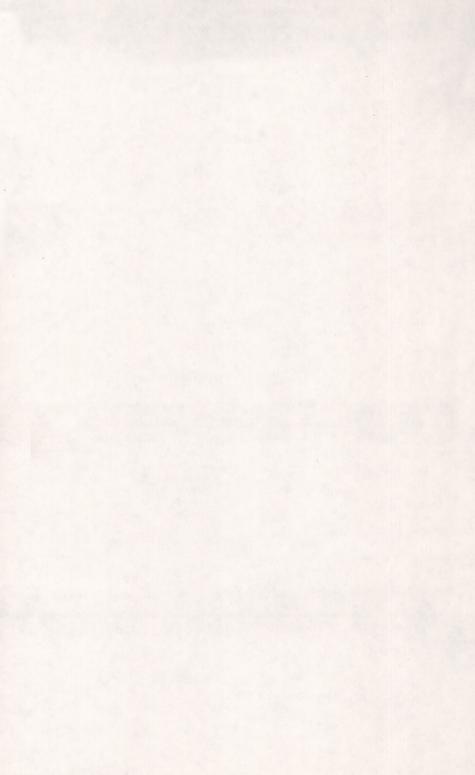
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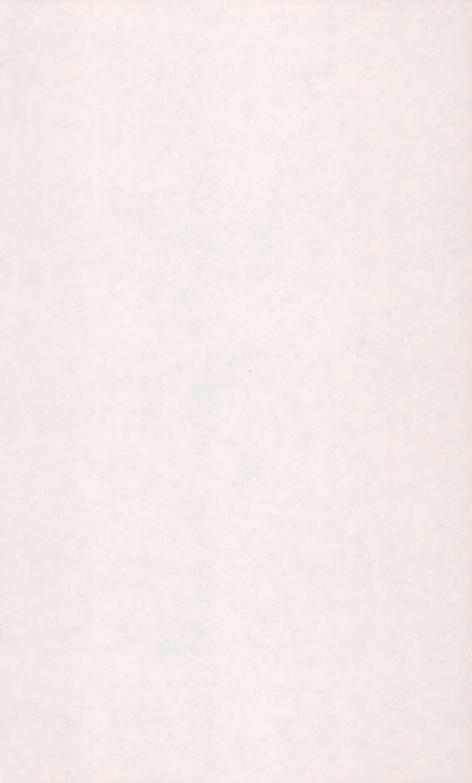
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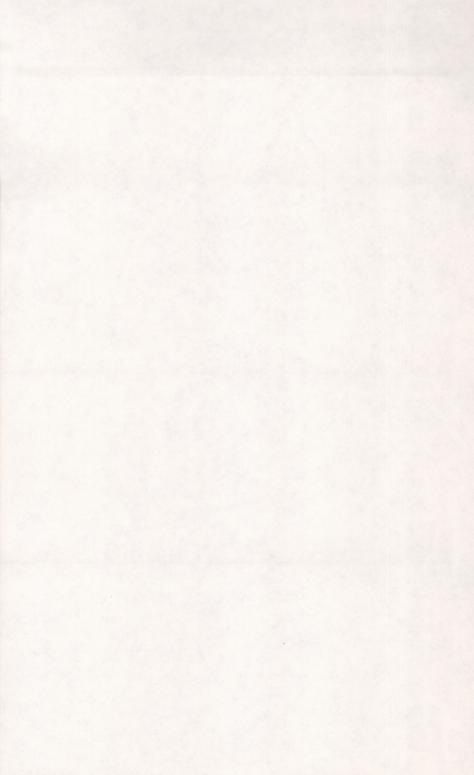
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Robert Turney