

GAY SUNSHINE

A Newspaper of Gay Liberation

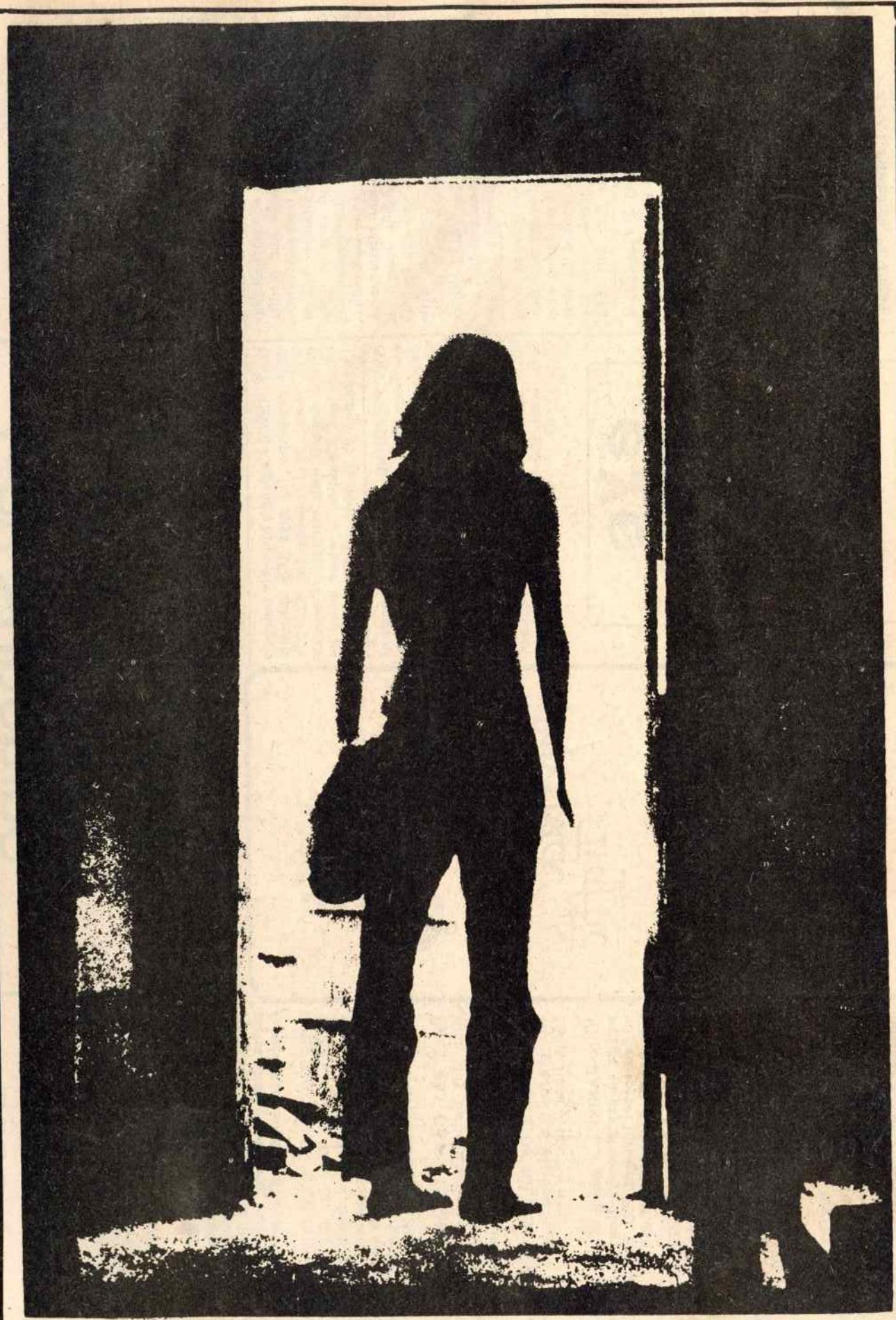


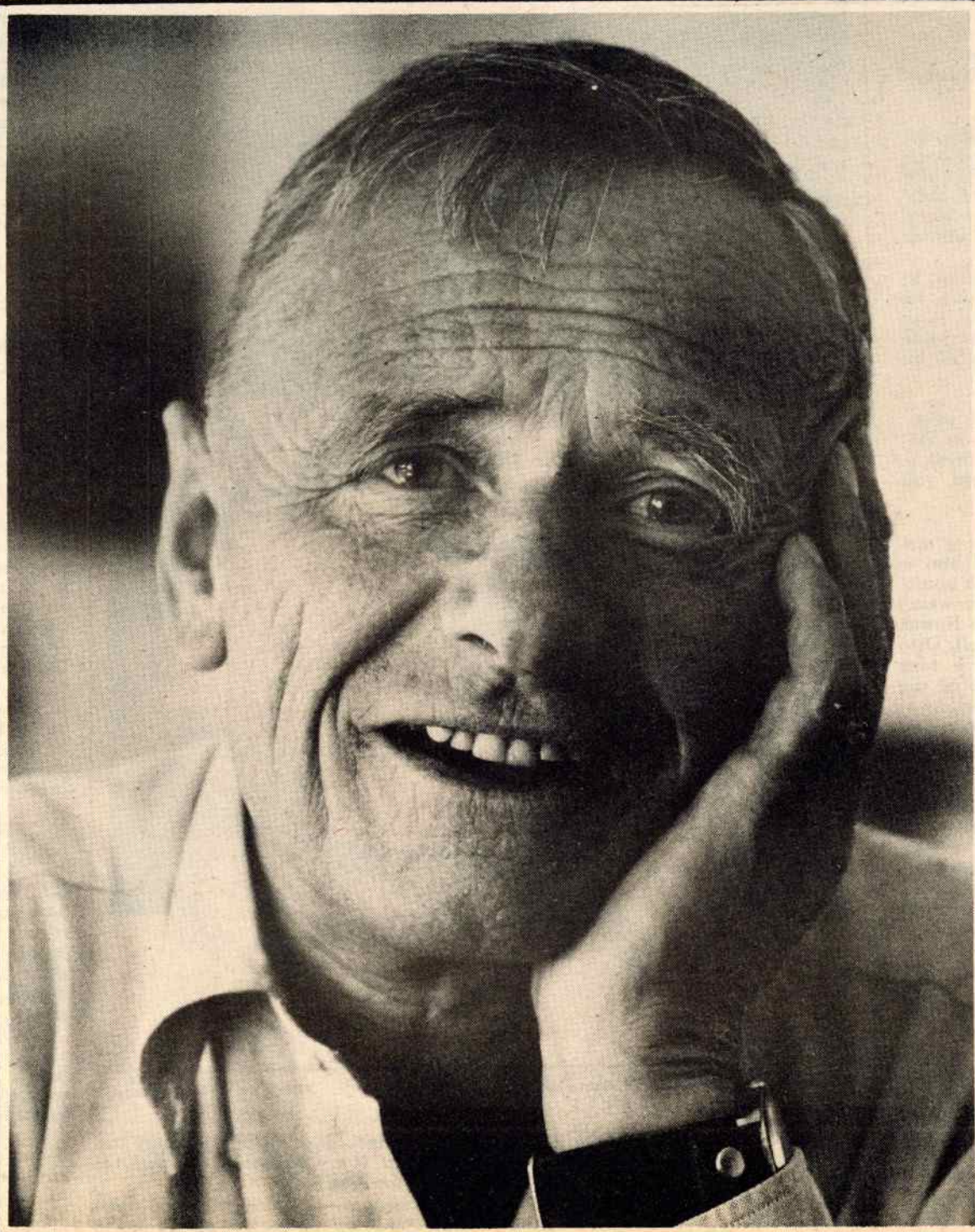
Pristine Condition, San Francisco 1972

Photo by Anthony Enton Friedkin

September · October 1973 No. 19
.35 Calif/.50 Elsewhere

Graphic: Gavin Dillard





Christopher Isherwood: An Interview

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD was born at High Lane, Cheshire, England, in 1904. He left Cambridge without graduating, tried to study medicine and in 1928 published *All The Conspirators*, an unsuccessful first novel. From 1928 onwards he lived mostly out of England: four years in Berlin, five in various European countries. His Berlin experiences produced two novels, *Mr. Norris Changes Trains* and *Goodbye to Berlin*, both written during the Thirties. [These novels are now available in a New Directions paperback, *The Berlin Stories*.] In 1951 John van Druten made a play out of parts of the latter book. It was called *I am a Camera* and was a hit both in New York and London, and also as a film and a musical called *Cabaret* (1972).

With W.H. Auden, a friend since their early schooldays, Mr. Isherwood wrote three plays and a travel book, *Journey to a War*, which describes China in 1938 during the Japanese invasion. In 1939 Christopher Isherwood moved to the United States. He worked with the American Friends Service Committee during part of the War. In 1946 he became a U.S. citizen. A few years later, he was elected to the U.S. National Institute of Arts and Letters.

Since living in America Christopher Isherwood has written five novels: *Prater Violet*, *The World in the Evening*, *Down There on a Visit*, *A Single Man* and *A Meeting by the River* (1967). A play with Don Bachardy, based on *Meeting by the River*, was first performed in 1972, and a film is being considered. He has also written a travel book about South America, *The Condor and the Cows*, and *Ramakrishna and His Disciples*, a biography of the great Indian mystic. In 1966, a collection of his stories, articles and verse was published under the title *Exhumations*. His most recent book, *Kathleen and Frank*, was published in 1971.

Christopher Isherwood lives with his lover, Don Bachardy, in Santa Monica, California. The present interview was taped at his home there by Winston Leyland, editor of *Gay Sunshine* since 1971.

No portion of this interview is to be reprinted without written permission.
No. 19: Copyright © Winston Leyland 1973

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

Interviewed by
WINSTON LEYLAND

W.L. In the Introduction to your *Berlin Stories*, you say that you destroyed your past and that the real Christopher Isherwood disappeared. What did you mean by that statement?

C.I. Well, that's a literary phrase. My religion, Vedanta, encourages me to believe that there isn't one single real Christopher Isherwood, in a personal sense. There are many, all equally real or unreal. When I started writing about Berlin, I found that the story would be more coherent and indeed truer if I fictionalized it to some degree. And so I started rewriting my life and therefore manufacturing a different Christopher. But the story never departs from my own essential experience. It's still Berlin as I saw it. I never gave my fictitious Christopher any characteristics or virtues or vices which I didn't have myself. I agree with Hemingway — one should only write what one knows.

Of course, the Berlin experience seemed different to me then. While I was there, it didn't seem as glamorous to me as it now does. As a matter of fact, there were long periods which were dull and quiet, when things went on much as usual. Nowadays, people often say to me: "Jesus, if only I had lived in those days! If only I'd been with you there!" I smile to myself, because I think how bored they'd have been a lot of the time. And yet, the funny thing is, I can look back at Berlin through their eyes — looking through the telescope of my stories, as it were — and see Berlin as they see it.

W.L. Don't you think that people are romanticizing the San Francisco Beat Period in the 50's in the same way?

C.I. Of course they are. But there are periods in one's life which one finds romantic at the time as well as afterwards. For instance, my trip to China with Auden in 1938 seemed just as romantic at the time as it does now. But Berlin — because I stayed there several years — be-

came simply a way of life. In the winter it was a very dark and drab city; heavy buildings. I gave English lessons, day after day. A boy friend would come by in the evenings and we'd go to the movies. It was enjoyable but certainly not a scintillating or brilliant period. It was appetizing, because I was young and full of life and tremendously happy to be away from all the restraints which England represented — above all, to feel completely free, sexually. Also, it was a great freedom to be able to speak a foreign language. I could say things in German which it would have still embarrassed me to say in English: things about love and sex, particularly. And that made me feel like a new person. Nevertheless, at the end of three and a half years, I had gotten pretty used to all that. It was no longer a thrill.

W.L. Were your characters in the *Berlin Stories* taken from real life?

C.I. Yes, certainly. No important character in the Berlin books is without a model from real life.

W.L. What about Baron Kuno von Prenzitz? He's almost a caricature of the Prussian homosexual.

C.I. The imaginary island where he lived with all the boys — I took that from another character, actually. This sort of baron — I mean, someone who put on the airs of being an aristocrat, even though his title was often invented by himself — was a stock figure in the Berlin homosexual bar-world.

I suppose I was always aware, in the back of my mind, of an intention to write about Berlin, even while I was there. That was why I kept a diary. It was very terse and fragmentary, but it helped me to remember a lot of things later.

When I started to write the novel about Mr. Norris in 1934, about a year after I'd left Berlin for good, I was very much under the spell of another experience I'd just had. In 1933, I got a job — the first of that kind — writing for the movies, in England. (That's all described in my story *Prater Violet*.) Because of this job, I became intensely cinema-minded. I had always been a

great movie fan, anyhow. Now I was in love with plotting, action, and trying to tell a story in visual terms. Even while writing this novel, I kept thinking how its scenes would look on the screen. That was good. But the effect of my plot-mindedness was that I put my portrait of Mr. Norris into a primitive pre-Eric Ambler story, with some absurd melodrama about espionage. I adore spy stories, both in books and on the screen; but in this case the two styles of storytelling didn't blend very well.

W.L. But the character of Mr. Norris certainly does come alive.

C.I. Yes, he has managed to exist independently, outside the book itself, as it were, in the minds of many readers. The original of Mr. Norris also existed independently — alas he's dead now — and often did things which I could never have invented in my wildest dreams. But he was very conscious of the fictitious Mr. Norris and even wrote a book called *Mr. Norris and I*. His real name was Gerald Hamilton.

I'm often asked if I regret that I didn't say outright in *The Berlin Stories* that I was homosexual. Yes, I wish I had. But I should have had to say it very casually, if I had said it; otherwise, I would have made the Christopher-character too odd, too remarkable, and that would have upset the balance between him and the other characters. Christopher is the narrator; so he mustn't stand out too prominently. To have made him homosexual, in those days, would have been to feature him as someone eccentric. I would have made a star out of a supporting actor. That's a valid literary reason. But I must also frankly say that I would have been embarrassed, then, to create a homosexual character and give him my own name.

W.L. Do you think you could have gotten an explicitly homosexual book about yourself published in the 30's?

C.I. Oh yes, I could have got such a book published if I hadn't gone into too many details about homosexual lovemaking. But I must come back to what I've just been saying: in those days, people expected you to announce the theme of homosexuality with a flourish of trum-

pets. By the time I'd finished introducing and explaining and apologizing for Christopher the homosexual, there would have been no room in the book for my other characters. It would have overbalanced the boat.

W.L. It's difficult now to get interviews with some well known writers and poets who are gay in their private life but have never let the gay dimension into their writing. Some are uptight about being interviewed in a journal like *Gay Sunshine*.

C.I. If a writer doesn't want to admit to his homosexuality publicly, that's his affair. But to refuse specifically to do so in the gay magazines, that's sheer snobbery. That means he's ashamed of his brothers and sisters.

W.L. In the *Berlin Stories* you yourself came more to the surface in the Peter and Otto story. Did you have a affair with the boy Otto when you were in Germany?

C.I. Yes. In that story, I took a real person, a friend, and described him in the character of Peter, an English homosexual. As a matter of fact, it wasn't Peter who was living with Otto Nowak on Ruegen Island; it was I myself. Otto and I were lovers for quite a long period and lived together some of the time. Actually, there were only two boys who were really close to me during the whole time I was in Berlin. First Otto, then another boy who left Germany and traveled with me. To some degree, the other one is described as Waldemar, in *Down There on a Visit*.

Toward the end of my stay in Germany, I became much more conscious of the political situation. The Berlin books were written with a good deal of political hindsight — I couldn't resist posing as someone who had been deeply concerned with the fate of Germany right from the day of my arrival. That simply wasn't true. To begin with, I was both indifferent and ignorant. And even as late as 1932, I find that I wrote to my Mother and spelt Hitler's name wrong!

In the working class world of Berlin, every young attractive man was under economic pressure to become a hustler; nobody was getting enough to eat. These hustlers were apt to become gang-minded; they joined political parties which fought in gangs against other rival political gangs. These boys were pretty vague about the political part of it. They just wanted some action to relieve the frustration of their lives. They switched sides continually. Many of them, who had called themselves communists, became nazis when it was obvious who was going to win.

W.L. Were Spender and Auden in Berlin at that time?

C.I. Not nearly as much. Auden came before I did, to brush up on his German because he intended to become a schoolmaster. But he soon left. We were old friends — we'd met at school when he was seven and I was ten. We met again in our teens and I discovered to my amazement that he wrote poetry. Then we became really intimate. Later, Stephen Spender came to Berlin from Hamburg, where he had been living. (You can read all about that in his autobiography, *World Within World*, which is pretty frank about both our lives.)

W.L. There is an unfavorable mention in *The Berlin Stories* of the German Youth Councils of that period. What were your feelings behind that comment?

C.I. I don't like that passage and I don't know why I put it in. It strikes an insincere, rather puritanical note. I may have written like that because I felt that these people were in a fair way to becoming fascists. But that in itself has an unfair implication and a very dangerous one. I should have discussed the whole question fully or left it alone. Does homosexuality predispose you to join group movements of young men and hence, in certain historical circumstances, to become part of a totalitarian group? Maybe so. But that isn't the whole story. An awful lot of homosexuals who were conned into doing this in Germany later discovered to their cost how totalitarian regimes deal with homosexuals. At the time of the Roehm scandals in 1934, there was an out and out attack on homosexuals as such, although the real reason for the liquidation of Roehm was entirely political. And in Soviet Russia, about the same time, homosexuals were being denounced as fascists. Both communists and nazis regarded them as potential traitors.

W.L. And, of course, gay people ended up in Nazi concentration camps. We had a short article on this in *Gay Sunshine* No. 18. A lot of people associate homosexuality in Germany in the early 30's with Roehm's S.A. gang. A caricature of homosexuals has been built up, as exemplified in the movie *The Damned*.



Christopher Isherwood, 1946, Santa Monica

Photo by William Caskey

C.I. Yes, there's a strong suggestion in *The Damned* that homosexuality is a factor in the damnation. People ask me nowadays, "wasn't it kind of decadent there?", meaning, actually, homosexual. It's infuriating, it's such a vicious oversimplification to say that pre-Hitler Germany was decadent and that so a Sodom and Gomorrah punishment fell upon it through the Nazis, who, in their turn, of course, were decadent too. You end up by saying, "It's those Germans: they're all decadent anyway, whatever party they belong to!" [Laughter] As a matter of fact, I think Germans, when they're homosexual, make very good homosexuals. They're not in the least decadent, as far as my experience goes. They're simple and natural about it, and they have a strong natural capacity for tenderness and unashamed sentiment. I have often thought that I detected some of this same quality in Americans.

Sometimes I'm asked about my relationship with the girl who was the original of Sally Bowles in my stories — and of the Sally Bowles in the play and the film *I am a Camera* and in the musical play and film, *Cabaret*. My relationship with the real Sally Bowles was the simplest imaginable. She knew that I was fond of her like a sister and that I was a contented homosexual. We had no problems. Never were there any coy suggestions that I might be partly in love with her or secretly longing to go to bed with her. That's what I found a bit dirty about the film *Cabaret*. First the boy's supposed to be gay, and then he isn't, because he can make it with Sally, and then he is, after all, because he plays around with the Baron; and then he wants to marry her but she reminds him that he may lapse at some future date and run after boys again. His homosexuality is presented as a kind of indecent but ridiculous weakness to be snickered at, like bedwetting.

W.L. When did you first come to a realization of your own gayness?

C.I. Quite early — by the time I was ten or so, in the sense of being physically attracted to boys at school. I managed to have orgasms with them while we were wrestling and I guess some of them had orgasms too, but we never admitted to it. I fell in love a lot during my teens, but never did anything about it. I was very late in getting into an actual physical affair. That happened while I was in college. There was no question at all in my mind about my homosexuality. It was like a choice which my mind-body had definitely made. I was even willing to agree that I might have become heterosexual if I had decided to. I tried it a couple of times. It was quite workable. But I preferred boys and I already knew that I could fall in love with

them. I have been perfectly happy the way I am. If my Mother was responsible for it, I am grateful.

As I have said, coming to Germany was a psychological release for me. It was in Berlin that I first came in contact with an organized homosexual group. It was centered at the Institute for Sexual Science which was run by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld. He was a great pioneer and himself a homosexual. He had managed to re-educate the Berlin police and liberalize their attitudes to sex. He and his associates were deadly serious about their work in a typically German way which often seemed funny to a foreigner. I laughed at them often, then. Now I see them as heroic and noble. (Their Institute was later wrecked by the Nazis.) Many people came to see Hirschfeld from all over Europe.

I remember how Hirschfeld put on a special scientific demonstration for Andre Gide. Among other exhibits, they brought in a boy with two perfectly formed female breasts. Gide sat there judiciously holding his chin. He had a very pragmatic attitude toward the whole thing and didn't want to listen to a lot of theories. Gide liked very young boys. At the bar he visited (it was one of my regular hang-outs) they couldn't find anyone young enough for him, so they produced a boy who was actually about twenty three but looked fifteen. There were no complaints. Gide was rather grand and gracious, with a cape. He liked to be called maitre. I didn't appreciate his greatness then as I do now. I thought him a snob — but then I thought anybody was a snob who didn't live in the slums.

W.L. Isn't that an upper class English romanticism: an idealization of the lower classes and a desire to associate with them?

C.I. Typically upper-class, yes. My own snobbery was simply inverted. Upper-class homosexuality in England tended to fixate on working-class boys. I didn't really recover from that state of mind until I began to live in America. When I found myself living in the working-class section of Berlin I felt I had transposed images and was playing the role of my own lover, so to speak. I had enough money to live in a more respectable part of town if I had wanted to, and I did, later. I moved into a slum tenement because of this boy Otto. I lived with him and his family.

W.L. What was the attitude of your contemporaries in England to homosexuality?

C.I. Most of my friends were either homosexual themselves or very relaxed in their attitude toward it. They had been to upper-class schools and were therefore

quite accustomed to it. But then, I instinctively avoided people who I thought might disapprove of me. I never allowed anyone I knew intimately to be under any misunderstanding about my own homosexuality.

I came to the United States to live in 1939. I was very drawn to the Quakers because of their pacifism. And, more recently, they have put out an admirably positive statement about homosexuality. It was maybe a little condescending in places but it did say flatly that homosexual love can be, under certain circumstances, just as worthy of respect as heterosexual love.

W.L. Were they idealizing monogamous gay love in a typically liberal approach?

C.I. That's probably so. I agree that it's very dangerous to equate a homosexual relationship with heterosexual marriage. You drag in the whole bourgeois system of obligations and the concept of ownership.

I would very much like to write a novel about gay life itself, but it's terribly hard to do so. I have never written much about homosexual relationships — just some references to them in *The World in the Evening* and *A Single Man* — although I myself have lived much of my life in a series of quite long relationships. In my diaries I've tried to examine my fantasies about sex and how they relate to the kind of relationships I've had. One of them is incestuous, the desire for a brother who is also a lover. A younger brother.

W.L. Have most of your relationships followed this pattern?

C.I. Yes. All the relationships I've had have been with people younger than myself. I say "brother" rather than "son" because I don't like to think of the person I love as being a reproduction of myself. The idea of a brother suggests a greater polarity between us.

In my novel *A Meeting by the River*, and even more explicitly in the play which Don Bachardy and I have made out of it, there is a good deal of metaphor surrounding the two brothers who are the principal characters. One of them becomes a monk in a monastery in India and therefore has "brother" monks. The other, a married man, takes up with a California boy because he yearns for an ideal brother who is also a lover — a sort of Walt Whitman camarado. The two actual brothers have a love-hate relationship which binds them in spite of themselves until it is resolved at the end of the story.

W.L. Do you think that the deep relationships you've had during your life have been satisfactory and fulfilling?

C.I. Fulfilling, yes. I'm a bit shy of the word "satisfactory." It suggests that something has been delivered as ordered, according to specifications. It suggests the phrase "fit and forget," as applied to something absolutely reliable and predictable; you install it and it functions from then on, no need to worry. With love, there ought to be a need to worry, every moment. Love isn't an insurance policy. Love is tension. What I value in a relationship is constant tension, in the sense of never being under the illusion that one understands the other person. When you fall in love, you feel you've discovered the bird of paradise, the magic person from the Other Land. You suddenly see a human being in all his magic extraordinariness. And you know that you can never understand him, never take him for granted. He's eternally unpredictable — and so are you to him, if he loves you. And that's the tension. That's what you hope will never end.

In my novel *A Meeting by the River* the married brother's romantic feelings go out to men; he regards his marriage as a kind of fortress. He sallies forth from the fortress to have adventures. Then he rushes back into it and his male lover is left standing outside in the cold. This kind of bi-sexual interests me a great deal. I have met many of them during my life. I describe another of them in *The World in the Evening*, but the one in *Meeting* is far more convincing, I think.

W.L. Do you feel that such people are really bisexual or basically homosexual?

C.I. It seems to me that the real clue to your sex-orientation lies in your romantic feelings rather than in your sexual feelings. If you are really gay, you are able to fall in love with a man, not just enjoy having sex with him. That's the test I would apply to such people.

W.L. In the gay world a dichotomy is often set up between the sexual and the romantic resulting in the one-night-stand syndrome. It's very hard (but very important) to integrate friendship and sex.

C.I. Yes, that's true. Some people I've talked to have been very amazed when

I told them I have sometimes been to bed with friends. Auden says somewhere in his writings: "Awareness of likeness — kindness; awareness of difference — love." Friends have this awareness of likeness. The combination of sex and friendship can be beautiful, but it's apt to be short-lived because excitement doesn't last when you feel the awareness of likeness. The love remains, but it's a love without tension, a different kind of love. How could you fall in love with someone about whom you could say, "He's exactly like me?" That would be sheer narcissism. Once, when I was in my early forties, I met a boy who was at least fifteen years younger than I was. Everybody noticed how alike we were physically. "He could be your younger brother," they said. And I found him wildly attractive! He didn't take the slightest interest in me.

W.L. When did you first feel the need for this creative tension?

C.I. When I was young, I didn't philosophize about it, but the need was undoubtedly there. When there was no tension, I wasn't really in love. But sometimes I tried to kid myself that I was, because the person I'd met was so "suitable" in every other way. I mean, he was somebody who would have done exactly what I wanted and never interfered with my work and waited for me when I went out and stayed home with me when I wanted to stay home. That was one side of my character, and it demanded a kind of chauvinistic marriage relationship. The other side of me knew it had to wait for the magic person, who would awake real love and consequently tension and the destruction of convenience.

W.L. You were tempted to isolate yourself from relationships by devoting yourself to writing?

C.I. Yes. When I was young in Berlin and apparently engaged in sowing my wild

oats, I was terribly sensible about working. I got up early in the morning and wrote. At night I did go round to bars, but I always returned home early, with or without company, and managed to have a good night's sleep, sex or no sex.

W.L. Have you been able to maintain this discipline?

C.I. Yes. I do keep at it. The important thing is that you do something every day, no matter how little. If you form the habit of work when you're young, it makes things easier later.

W.L. Was the character of George in your novel, *A Single Man*, autobiographical?

C.I. Yes, to a large extent. But there are important differences. Unlike poor George, I've never had a lover who has died on me. Then again, George is a stoic and an agnostic, without any religious faith to help him through his life. He defies fate. He fights with bared teeth up to the last moment. I'm not a bit like that.

Again, George is a professional college professor. When I lecture at a college, I do so as a guest speaker. Therefore I can allow myself a great deal of freedom in what I say. I am expected to behave like a celebrity, not a professor, to amuse rather than instruct. The things I make George say in the classroom are the things that I would say. Coming from him, they are a bit out of character. But I feel *A Single Man* is the best thing I have ever written. This was the only time when I succeeded, very nearly, in saying exactly what I wanted to say.

W.L. In his book, *Homosexual Oppression and Liberation*, Dennis Altman quotes you talking about the "annihilation by blandness" which liberals adopt towards gays. To what extent have you been exposed to this in your own life.

C.I. Well, I've never been annihilated by it. But I've been very conscious that I was being exposed to it. At one campus where I was lecturing, I asked a friend,

"How many of my colleagues know I'm gay?" He answered, "All of them." I wasn't surprised. But, just the same, it was kind of spooky, because not one of them had ever given the faintest sign that he or she knew. If I had spoken about it myself, most of them would have felt it was in bad taste.

I suppose my own role as a gay is to try and get people out of their closets. When you're elderly and well-known, closet types are apt to approve of you. Your books encourage their fantasies of freedom.

W.L. What was the attitude of your parents to your gayness?

C.I. I've written about my parents extensively in my recent book, *Kathleen and Frank*. I always felt that my Mother had a built in defence against the whole idea of homosexuality. She was unable to believe that a relationship without a woman in it could be serious, under any circumstances. She thought it was a sort of pose, a mental game that I played. I told her that I was gay, very soon after I grew up. She appeared to accept the situation. She was always polite to the young men I brought to the house and, in one or two cases she genuinely liked them. But I believe her imagination refused to accept the fact that I was actually having sex with them. Sometimes my Mother's attitude made me furious. I think it even helped to confirm me in my homosexuality. I had to prove to her that there really is such a thing as a homosexual! But, since she lived to be 91, I had time to outgrow my antagonism; we ended by accepting our misunderstandings.

I think it would have been much harder for me to tell my Father that I was gay. But that crisis never arose, because he was killed in World War I, when I was ten years old. I realize now that I was sexually attracted to my Father, in my childhood. I used to go into his dressing-room in the morning while he was doing physical exercises almost naked, in his undershorts. I can still remember liking the hardness of his muscles and the smell

of his body.

I had a gay uncle with whom I had an amusing relationship after I grew up. He used to invite me to dinner at his flat and we would talk about boys. At the end of the evening, I would get a kiss from him which was rather too warm and searching for any nephew, even one's favorite.

When I started to write *Kathleen and Frank*, it was obvious to me that I couldn't tell their story without making my own gayness absolutely clear. So I kept stating the fact throughout the book. And this led naturally to similar statements on television, in public talks and in press interviews. So now I have officially "come out." Those who have always known that I was gay can now no longer pretend that they don't know. Those who have been prejudiced against me as a homosexual will now be confirmed in their prejudice. My fellow gays will mostly say "so what?" I don't risk being fired from a job, or sent to prison, or run out of town. Society can afford to overlook the deviant behavior of an elderly, otherwise respectable literary man who has sufficient savings in the bank. It may be that what I have done will inject a little courage into the souls of a few timid brothers. If so, good. If not, also good, because I at least feel a certain satisfaction.

About 80% of my friends have always been gay, and I feel curiously ill at ease when I have been away from gay people for long; it's a feeling almost like a lack of oxygen.

Many of my brothers have suffered terrible guilt because of their nature. Many more have been made to suffer because of it, by others. My life has been extremely lucky. To quote from *Kathleen and Frank*: "Despite the humiliations of living under a heterosexual dictatorship and the fury he has often felt against it, Christopher has never regretted being as he is. He is now quite certain that heterosexuality wouldn't have suited him; it would have fatally cramped his style."

Cuban Gay Boy

Cuban gay boy
I love you
Even though you won't cut cane
Why should you?
They want to cut off your
beautiful long brown hair
And if they had their secret wish
they'd cut off your cock
Your faggot's cock, pinga de maricon
cock of a Cuban gay boy
Cock I have tasted and want to taste again.

Cuban gay boy
I love you
more than I love Fidel
Who cuts cane
Who taught me a lot
How to struggle
How to hate the enemy

Cubans cut cane to defeat the enemy
Don't you care about defeating the enemy?
Disease
Illiteracy
Hunger
Millions with no home, no work, no love.

Sexism is the enemy too.
What is Fidel doing to fight that?

Hunger?
You feel it now.
Scanty rations aren't enough.
What do you know about babies
who starved of malnutrition when
you were still a baby?
When your father
who owned a store
who didn't have to cut cane
Gave you enough to eat?

This is the Cuban Revolution:
Tough guys who kick the imperialists' ass
A few women in the army is ok,
but soldiering is a man's job, they say in
Havana now.

Machismo is fascism, as the sisters of the
Young Lords Party have said.
Can our favorite socialist nation
be run by fascists?
How can a revolution be both revolutionary
and counter-revolutionary
at the same time?

Defeat disease, hunger, illiteracy
Give people dreams of a new way
but
not all is new
Sex roles must be maintained
"Homosexuality is a degeneration.
We want our future generations to be free
of this plague."

Sorry, fellows, hate to disappoint you.
My beautiful gay sisters and brothers
And more plentiful than ever
fourteen year olds, sixteen year olds
Proud rebellious queens who pose

elegantly
for the cameras of the Ministry of the Interior.

Cuban gay boy
What should we do?
How can I be faithful to you?
And you to me?

Should you cut cane to prove you're not
a petit bourgeois racist?

Should I denounce Cuba to prove
I won't support a government that wants
to destroy my people?

If you cut cane, you'll have to do it
alongside people who would just as soon use
their machete
on you.

If I denounce Cuba, I'll have to do it
alongside Nixon whose legions would just
as soon kill
me or you or Fidel.

The North Koreans don't know what
"homosexual" means.
This is what some Cuban pigs want, I think,
and it hurts to use the word "pigs"
for these brave communist soldiers.

But you are braver still
Cuban gay boy
You fight for your survival
And you are my mind and my soul and my
my body
And I cannot betray you

There are people here in Havana who want
to throw you
in a well filled with oil
and set your afire.

Enough of us
have burned.

Our revolution must fight for gay people,
but it cannot
help the enemy who is the enemy of all.

But I will always be with you
Cuban gay boy.

Christopher Street is La Rampa
When I walk there,
among my people
I will think of your pain
and our love.
And I will be strong
And I will fight
So that the strength of our people
Will shatter their hatred.

Our time has come.
Maricon and faggot.
Cuban gay boy and North American gay boy
Together
Somehow

We must find a way.

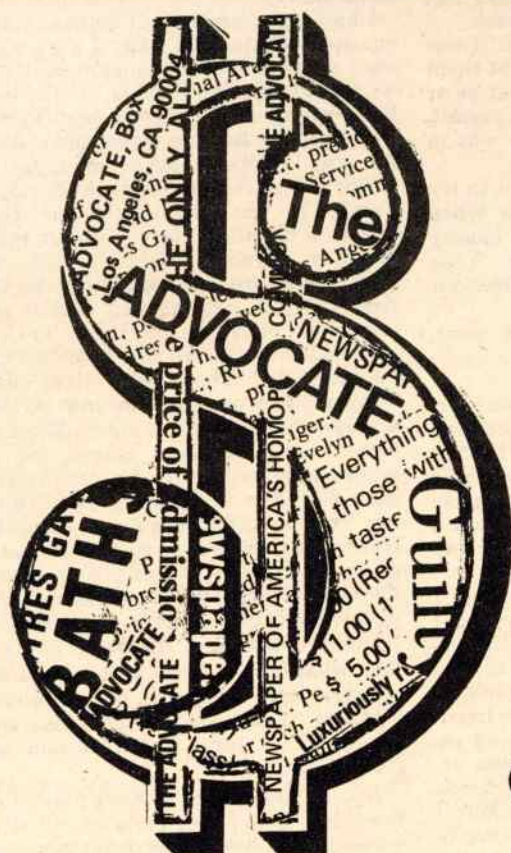
—Allen Young
Havana, Jan. 1971

Paraiso de Amor

PARAISO DE AMOR (Oda a Los Homosexuales)

Y El dijo: amaos los unos a los otros
Y yo los he amado con algo parecido al odio
cuando me pidieron con dedos que gritaban cansados de soledad
un hijo para salvarse
Yo los he amado
con sus margaritas en las orejas
acorrallados entre sirenas y bastonazos de policias
que interrumpieron sus fiestas de pantalones desesperados
me he hundido en sus melenas
en sus dias de camisetas lilas
en sus ruidos de menajes
en sus risas de señoritas extenuadas
he admirado sus rostros castigados para que no tengan años
en fotografías cuando se parecían al papá
(caballero de honor, campeón moralista de provincia)
cuando se parecían a la pureza de sus madres solteras
(que se hacían llamar tías)
los he buscado con sus nombres de floripondios
de medias lunas
mientras se dejaron amar hasta por árboles
agonizando en ciudades reflejadas
en el brillo de una uña
Los que es despertarse y saber
que no tendrán lugar en el día habitado
por familias de monstruos respetables
por criminales con sombrero
sentados en los ministerios
que hundirán esta sangre universal sin poesia
en cárceles donde se recoge el vómito de perros viudos
ye se sirve en mesas de prisioneros
cubiertas con manteles de ojos mudos
ahí donde serán apaleados hasta doblarlos
en noches donde se ahoga la bondad
porqué
si ellos siguiendo Sus palabras buscaron los caminos que llevan a Dios
fueron atrapados en la burla del universo
porqué
no se encuentra ninguna oración
para la misa siniestra de estos fieles
Padre negro, si es que estás en alguna parte de los cielos
baja un poco
sopla angelito esta vida
para que no sea una desgracia existir
baila un spiritual tamboreado por tus santos
sobre nuestras cabezas
por que tambien nosotros somos tus santos de paciencia
ya es tiempo que venga el tiempo del amor
no los dejes más solos devorandose entre ellos
no les dejes estallar sus pulmones de vidrios de colores
en trabajos al aire libre, al sol vulgar
que no sean olvidados de Tu mano
en cada una de sus secretas caricias
que vayan Contigo ahora. Los dejo en este canto
mientras me voy de incógnito al fondo de la existencia
con mi rostro al hombro
y ellos ni me recuerden
en su furor de vivir.

Raquel Jodorowsky
Lima, Peru



Gay Lib vs. Gay Business

This article uses the *Advocate* (the national gay newspaper headquartered in Los Angeles) as a focus. But it is really about the irreconcilable differences between Gay Lib and the Gay business, or homophile movement, as it was called before it was deserted by the working class. This article is about reformism vs. radical change.

I focused on the *Advocate* because I believe it is responsible for reinforcing the conservative dogmatism of the Gay capitalists. I don't hate Gay businessmen. For years I was a real estate broker and land owner. I was one of them. If they are stingy with their employees and gouge their customers and tenants, it is because of their insecurities. Inwardly most of them know how precarious their situation is: an arrest or a license revocation and off they go to the welfare line, jail or worse.

If the *Advocate* is to be believed, all is well with the Gay movement. "We are making progress, slow but sure," *Advocate* editor Dick Michaels once told me. The *Advocate* regularly reports "victories" in the courts, religious reforms, and here and there, sweeping law reforms. SIR and other reformist groups are thriving and making tremendous progress, or so the *Advocate* informs us.

But are things really going that well? Employment exclusion is growing, even in cities like San Francisco, where it is legally prohibited. The arrest rate is soaring, even in states like Colorado, where the Gay movement was given the law reform it sought. In places where public awareness of homosexuality is high, there is growing housing discrimination.

The *Advocate's* "objective" news hang-up — as I shall illustrate — has caused Gay leaders to believe that reformism is working. As a result of misguidance by the *Advocate* and other gay reformist publications, Gay leaders have made errors in judgement and wasted vast efforts on programs that won't succeed.

The *Advocate* has deceived its readers and itself with its objective reporting. Objective reporting is a sacred cow to conservatives because it presents a distorted view of reality that confirms conservative dogma. "It's just the plain facts," they say. And indeed it is just the facts: certain selected facts that fit the objective reporting mould and the rules of newsworthiness.

The slow-but-sure-progress illusion is a product of following the rules of objective reporting. Back in 1865 Blacks were told that a Constitutional amendment had given them full equality. And objective reporting advocates really believed that it was so, because to them the law books, pronouncements of public officials and the like are everything; the private experiences and impressions of individuals, nothing.

A few Blacks had a vague feeling that something wasn't right. But the objective press went right on quoting the law books and the pronouncements of public officials who insisted that Blacks had been granted full equality. It took Blacks a long time to realize that "progress" had been an illusion. The paradox is that no progress could be made so long as Blacks believed progress was being made. It is a known fact of mass behavior that minorities make progress only when the minority is militant, and minority groups become militant only when they view their status as deteriorating. Conservatives are aware of this. Their classic trick has been to prevent militancy, and thus progress, by creating the illusion that progress is being made.

Gays too must become more militant to make any progress, but they will not become more militant so long as they believe that the Gay movement is advancing. The reformist approach, espoused by the *Advocate* and other publications and groups, has anesthetized Gays with the illusion that progress is being made.

For a time I acted as the *Advocate's* correspondent in San Francisco. I quit when I realized that I was deceiving readers. Not that I reported purposeful untruth, or even that the stories I wrote were not precisely correct; it is rather that the total impression given the reader was incorrect.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT A MYTH

The *Advocate* has reported extensively on the legislation and legal, administrative actions toward equal employment in San Francisco. The reportage, much of it written by myself, included many optimistic statements of public officials and victory proclamations by Gay leaders. Readers have been left with the impression that employment exclusion is lessening. Yet Gay job seekers know that such optimism is without real foundation.

The truth experienced by Gay job seekers is that employment discrimination is worsening. The Human Rights Commission, much praised by the *Advocate*, is the cause of much of the deterioration in Gay job opportunities.

Known San Francisco Gays are virtually excluded from employment. There are no statistics, no statements from public officials, no legal documents, and no lofty pronouncements by Gay "leaders." Yet I know it is true. How can I be so sure? Because of my subjective observations and experiences. I can pick out the many Gays in the long lines at St. Anthony's Dining room and the Salvation Army. I chat and compare experiences with many of the growing hordes of homeless street Gays that inhabit the Tenderloin area. I've compared notes with brothers in employment offices and per-

sonnel department waiting rooms. I've been to the civil service, to many city contractors, to the state and private employment offices. They all told me, in one way or another, "there are no jobs for queers."

The almost universal attitude that I, and other Gay job seekers have encountered at the civil service and city contractors is something like: "We don't discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, but we can't hire any white males until we bring our percentage of minority group employees up to a certain percentage. There are plenty of other firms that are not bound by affirmative hiring contracts. Go apply at one of them."

I did go to a city contractor who has not yet signed an affirmative action contract. "We don't discriminate against homosexuals," the personnel officer told me, "but we hire only family men, and there aren't very many homosexuals with a wife and house full of kiddies, are there?" He laughed. I walked out in anger.

I went to a few firms that are not city contractors. All have policies that one way or another exclude known homosexuals. Some assert that their bonding company won't permit them to hire homosexuals, despite the fact that many gay businesses use bonding companies. Other firms hide behind the married-men only subterfuge. Quite a few say blatantly, "We don't employ homosexuals."

It should be mentioned that there are two levels of anti-Gay employment discrimination. The homosexual who has not been branded by credit bureaus, police or former employers, experiences discrimination based on marital status and other things connected with the Gay life style. Most San Francisco employers are very aware of homosexuality and exclude Gays by married-men-only policies and in other subtle ways.

The homosexual who has been branded as such by the all pervasive credit spies, police computers and former employers is virtually excluded from all employment.

One understanding woman counselor at the state employment office had the courage to tell me the truth: "You are virtually unemployable," she said. "Almost all employers make police or credit checks now-a-days. Your only chance is with some very small employer and in a low paying dead-end job. Have you been down to the Department of Social Services to apply for welfare?"

PRISONS

The *Advocate's* prison coverage (some of it written by myself) has misconstrued the Gay prison situation. This misconstruing results from a failure to report personal experiences and observations and its narrow scope. Although the *Advocate* has published many stories about those arrested on sex charges, it has largely ignored the vast majority of homosexual prisoners who are imprisoned mostly for crimes against property — embezzlement, bad checks, fraud, burglary and robbery. Many Gays feel that by being homosexuals they have already crossed the line into criminal activities — if you suck cocks, you might just as well steal; both are criminal and the penalty for stealing is less. Furthermore, many known Gays can't find jobs. They must steal to survive, since General Assistance welfare and food stamps are insufficient. California prison authorities insist that 70% of California prison inmates were practicing homosexuals before they were incarcerated. (Clinton Duffy, warden of San Quentin in his book *Sex and Crime*). This figure is undoubtedly exaggerated. Nonetheless, gay reformist publications have refused to admit a connection between homosexuality and crime in the sense that some gay people must steal to survive.

The atrocities, the neglect, the abuse of Gay prison inmates does occur. The reports in the *Advocate*, *Gay Sunshine* and other publications have been factual. But this is not the total picture. Many homosexuals like the masculine charged atmosphere of prisons; they like the camaraderie, the regimentation, the escape from decision making, the lack of any struggle or doubts in getting the necessities of life. One street gay re-

cently told me, "I'm going to stand down on Market Street and panhandle until I get thrown in jail. The rainy season is starting and I don't have any place to stay. I always have a good time in jail, and I'll get more to eat than I can manage to get living on the street."

The aggressive homosexual, often of lower class origin, found frequently in prison, is portrayed in the gay press as a heterosexual who rapes homosexuals. Very often the aggressive homosexual identifies as Gay and his victim as straight. The Gay press, including the *Advocate*, should, in fairness, show a little more sympathy for the Gay brother, who, in the prison situation, sees his opportunity to wreak vengeance on heterosexual society (which has oppressed him) by raping straight boys. I'll never forget the jocker in prison who said to me: "I'm homosexual, but I'm all man, a top man, jocker, a stud and proud of it. And if any heterosexual doesn't like it, I'll beat the shit out of him, fuck him, and turn him out. Wham-bam, no more heterosexuals. I can't understand you, mother, why do you side with the straights against your brothers? Instead of protecting the little straight boys, you ought to be setting them up so the jockers can rip 'em off. It's us against them, and the more of them we can turn out, the better."

GAY LIB VS HOMOPHILES

Back in 1966 San Francisco commenced a pogrom against homosexuals. The arrest rate, which had been about 120 per year (almost entirely in Gay bars, soared to 2,000 per year (very few in Gay bars). In effect, the police drove Gays off the streets, parks, T-rooms and beaches and into Gay bars. The number of Gay bars in the City increased from 20 to over 100. Bar owners have found all this very profitable indeed. But alcoholism and general frustration has increased proportionately among the gay population at large.

In addition to bar owners, the Gay business community includes gay attorneys. While some of these have been very unselfish in helping gays arrested on sex crimes, others have a vested interest in the status quo. Then there are bath house owners, restaurateurs and theater owners (who regularly charge \$5 admission). Many of these firms employ Gays who would not be employable elsewhere — often for lower wages (e.g. \$1.65/hour) than similar straight firms pay their employees. Such firms, too, often have a vested interest in the status quo. If oppression of gays ends, they will be more likely to lose their cheap labor supply.

What's good for General Motors is not good for the U.S.A., and what's good for the Gay business community is not necessarily good for the individual Gay.

"The Gay movement moves on a sea of money," the *Advocate's* publisher once told me. And so it does. At least one of the Gay movements does. But there are two Gay movements: the movement of Gay businessmen and Gay Liberation. Their goals are in conflict; the businessmen are concerned only with profits while Gay Lib is concerned with ending all oppression, including the types of oppression on which many Gay businesses thrive. In speaking here of Gay businesses, I mean largely the full scale entrepreneurs and not the gay people who own small businesses such as boutiques, bookshops, photo stores, reasonably priced restaurants and so forth. Many of the gay people who run such businesses are in essential agreement with the goals of gay liberation. They are essentially working class gays.

By implicitly narrowing its scope to the Gay middle-class, the *Advocate* has pleased its advertisers (who are not interested in non-buying readers), but it has paid a price in the form of limiting its circulation. The Gay middle-class is small and getting smaller because Gays are a downwardly mobile minority on account of employment and licensing discrimination. Until the *Advocate's* values change, we will have to put up with a few good news items buried in news of arrests in Gay bath houses, ineffectual law reforms and similar material.

In fairness, it must be admitted that the *Advocate* has little choice in all this. It is a business and must rely on Gay businessmen for its advertising revenue in order to survive. This is in contrast to publications such as *Fag Rag* and *Gay Sunshine* which put gay liberation and aesthetic quality first and accept a minimum of advertisements (though even papers like these have to occasionally accept ads to survive). Conservative though the *Advocate* is, it is not conservative enough for Gay businessmen. Many of them have deserted the *Advocate* to give their advertising dollars to publications that carry mainly silly bar gossip. The *Advocate* has been at times courageous in ignoring the demands of these advertisers. I think it has been about as liberal as it can be and still retain enough advertisers to make the publication feasible.

When will homophiles learn that the capitalist class will never accept homosexuality? It cannot. Gay Liberation is incompatible with capitalism, because the marketing of surplus production is an essential feature of capitalism. The surplus, or profits, requires an ever growing market. In the past, the surplus production was largely exported. But with increased competition in the foreign market it is necessary to find more and more customers at home. The most important commodity, in the view of the capitalist governing class, that must be produced is future consumers and workers. If homosexuality increases drastically, the birth-rate will drop and capitalism will be

seriously threatened. Nor is traditional socialism the answer, since gays are severely persecuted in socialist countries such as the Soviet Union and Cuba.

THE BOURGEOIS CRAMP

Although the *Advocate* claims to be a paper for all factions of the Gay Community, it is largely a paper of, by, about and for middle-class homosexuals. Almost completely ignored is news about lower-class Gays. When do we read articles about the numerous Gay residents of Southern poor houses and farms, or about the thousands of gay nomads who wander from place to place staying in Salvation Armies and missions?

Far more important than a few arrests in bars is the fact that many Gays, because they are Gay and excluded from employment, must steal to live. Bourgeois superstition holds that poverty is caused by personality defects in the individual rather than by social injustice and an economic system that just doesn't work. The vast number of Gays who turn to drugs as an escape from oppression are dismissed by the *Advocate* as "not a Gay issue." If a few more middle-class Gays got arrested for drugs, I'm sure this approach would change. Middle-class Gays take dope, too, but they rarely get arrested because they can afford to get their dope from safe sources.

The *Advocate's* distaste for those who have sex in toilets and bushes is also a

class issue. Unlike middle-class Gays, the poor cannot afford private apartments and expensive hotel rooms. Poor Gays, if they have any home at all, live in cheap hotels that often don't permit visitors, or in shared apartments. Besides, there's nothing in public sex for gay advertisers who seem to feel that Gays should be happy to pay them for the privilege of meeting a sex partner.

"The press," Jack London said, "is a parasitic growth that batters on the capitalist class. Its function is to serve the established by moulding public opinion, and right well it serves it."

The problem, in a nutshell, is that a nationally circulated Gay weekly or fortnightly is economically feasible only if it is willing to support and promote the large scale Gay business class.

Most gay publications and institutions support the Gay business world which is making millions of dollars off Gay people and not giving proportionately in return. Bleak as the situation is, people's alternatives have made a good start. Groups such as the Gay Community Services Center in Los Angeles (see *Gay Sunshine* No. 17) are providing social alternatives. Publications such as *Gay Liberator*, *Fag Rag* and *Gay Sunshine* are printing in-depth, catalytic material that the Gay establishment press will not handle. The consciousness of gay people is gradually evolving — away from the ghetto mentality.

—Don Jackson

[The author of this article is a gay journalist who has written extensively for the gay press during the past few years. He pioneered the area of oppression of gay prisoners by a series of articles in *Gay Sunshine* and elsewhere. He invites comments from readers on this article. He can be contacted in care of *Gay Sunshine*.]

[Editorial Note: Readers of the above article will perhaps wonder why *Gay Sunshine* itself has not printed more in-depth news articles of the type which the author laments as missing from the pages of the *Advocate*. The chief reason we have not done so is due to lack of resources. *Gay Sunshine* is basically a non-commercial paper without a regular, full-time paid staff. We have neither the people nor the financial resources to do the kind of in-depth investigative news reporting that is needed. Instead we have concentrated our energy in other areas (exploring gay interpersonal relationships, for example; giving space to gay poets and artists).

Since we have little income coming in from ads, we are largely dependent on the generosity of our readers to survive and expand our coverage. If you believe in the kind of gay journalism we are doing, please help us to deepen it by sending in a regular or supporting subscription, by pledging a little money each month, and/or submitting writing, graphic work of your own.]



Methaqualone is one of the great success stories of the American drug industry. First introduced to the American public in 1965 by William H. Rorer, Inc., under the trade name of "Quaalude", it has skyrocketed to a position as the sixth most popular sedative-hypnotic on the market. In 1972 alone, Quaalude sales increased 360%. Other drug companies have sought their share of this lucrative pie by marketing methaqualone under their own trade names — "Sopor" (Arnar-Stone), "Parest" (Parke-Davis), "Optimil" (Wallace), "Somnafac" (Smith, Miller & Patch), and in England, "Mandrax."

The major selling point was that methaqualone was alleged to be a non-addicting sedative-hypnotic which could be prescribed to anxious patients without fear of the deleterious side effects of the barbiturates. Recent experience with the widespread use of this drug has given the lie to these promotional claims. There have to date been more than twenty articles in the medical literature attesting to the addictive qualities of methaqualone and the sadly familiar symptoms of withdrawal. We now know that "Quaalude" has addictive properties similar to those of the barbiturates. Physical addiction can occur among moderate to heavy users within one or two months. There are great individual differences in proneness to addiction; six 300-mg. tabs a day for a month is enough to get most people hooked, but withdrawal symptoms have been observed after as little as two tabs a day for two weeks. Serious withdrawal

symptoms including convulsions similar to those caused by withdrawal from alcohol (delirium tremens) may occur. "Tolerance" is developed after any period of repeated use, that is, more and more of the drug is required to get the same effect. Quaaludes and barbiturates show cross-tolerance: a person tolerant to Quaalude is also tolerant to barbiturates.

Quaalude, thus, is another drug of the depressant or "downer" sort. Alcohol is another depressant. When alcohol and Quaaludes are taken together, the effect is much greater than either taken separately; a moderately heavy combined dosage is sufficient to cause a person to stumble, pass out, or stop breathing altogether. Thus Quaalude, unlike the true "soft" drugs such as marijuana and the psychedelics, can kill. But most Quaalude freaks who end up in the City Morgue do so because of ignorance of the powerful effect of the drug in combination with other depressants.

Like many other drugs of the "downer" type, Quaalude has acquired a reputation as something of an aphrodisiac. It is true that a person who is prone to anxiety in sexual situations may be better able to deal with things when moderately dosed with Quaalude — his fears and inhibitions are relaxed, and self consciousness is numbed. But the physiological effect of the drug is the opposite of a true aphrodisiac. Genital sensitivity is itself numbed, sexual arousal is less than normal, and males find an increased occurrence of the "can't get it up" phenomenon. Thus, the best that can be said about Quaalude's effect on one's sexuality is the same as that said about man's oldest downer, alcohol: "It increases the desire, but takes away from the performance."

Quaalude is particularly widely used in the young gay community. Its reputation as an aphrodisiac has a lot to do with this popularity. Most other downers, however, have possessed a similar reputation, for the reasons described above. Why should Quaalude, not really different from the other downers, have achieved such special popularity? Part of the explanation lies in the unusual high tide of suggestibility and "myth-hunger" that occurred among American youth in the late 1960's. Alcohol, barbiturates, and even Valium were all old hat by that time — their effects were understood by most drug-oriented people, their dangers were recognized, and they were pretty much in a state of "demythification."

Quaalude arrived on the scene at just that time, and it was just different enough: people could believe that here

was something special, something that really could work a magic transformation one's social self. Enthusiastic consumers praised the virtues of Quaalude, and use of the drug spread swiftly — gay bars along the Eastern Seaboard were areas of especially rapid contagion. Few noticed the peculiar way Quaalude lovers had of not being among the most together people around. In fact, they were often the same anxious types who a few years before would have sung paeans for Seconal. The effect of downers on such people is direct enough: they feel warm, relaxed, and more confident in social situations. They continue to feel this way as long as they keep taking the drug. When they stop, things are as bad as they were before. It is the old American solution: sell the public, at a price, something that relieves its malaise — temporarily.

Meanwhile, the Quaalude user who edges toward ever more intoxicating doses of the drug is re-enacting a now familiar scene. His inner experience is "trippy" in its downer way, but anxiety, tension, and oppression are being masked and not dealt with. He feels like he's being cool, but to others he appears a fool.

The point, obviously, is that we gays must recognize that our brothers' and sisters' hunger for Quaalude is a symptom of something deeper. When a friend uses this or any other downer excessively, he is in effect saying to us, "I have my own poignant passions and angers and hangups, and I'd like to bring it all out in a together way. But I'm too uptight/afraid/depressed, and I'm going to take some pills so I

won't care so much about my failure to live my life as fully as I could." If we maintain toward such friends a "do your own thing" attitude — always a tempting path of least resistance — we risk ignoring what could be a cry for help. Even the moderate use of Quaalude that so many indulge in (to soften the tensions of city life, to mask the unsatisfyingness of superficial gay relations, to be calmer during a time of craziness in the world) can create more problems than it solves. If we insist on chemically transporting ourselves to a mood of not-caring about the seamier scenes of our gay America, where will we get the revolutionary anger to transform these scenes — or at least to prevent them from getting yet tenser, or more unsatisfying, or crazier?

Use of downers by the gay community hampers the evolution of our alternative life-style: the sensitivity of individuals is numbed, the conflicts which keep people apart are blunted rather than being confronted and worked through, and the expressive style of our brothers and sisters becomes greyer and less animated. In short, we go limp — not just in bed, but in our whole way of responding to each other. Quaaludes are just another unconsciousness expanding drug at a time when we need our whole wits about us.

—John Newmeyer
Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic, S.F.



Expose Yourself to an Alternative. SUBSCRIBE!

GAY SUNSHINE
P.O. BOX 40397
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL. 94140

\$5/12 issues (\$7 overseas)
First Class: \$9
Sponsoring Sub.: \$25
Free to Prisoners

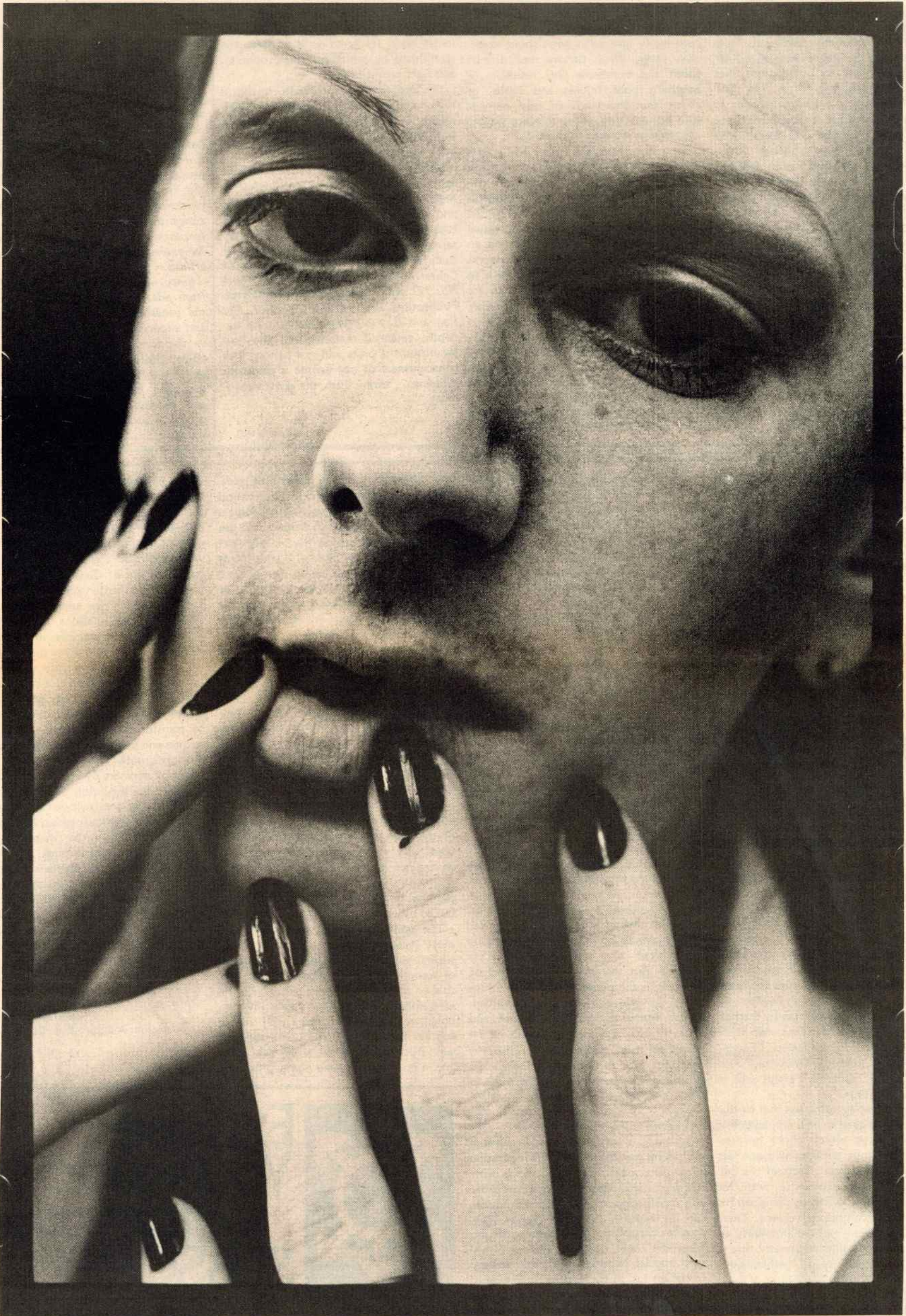
Please begin my subscription with (circle one) Issue No. 17 18 19 20

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

GAY A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY BY ANTHONY ENTON FRIEDKIN



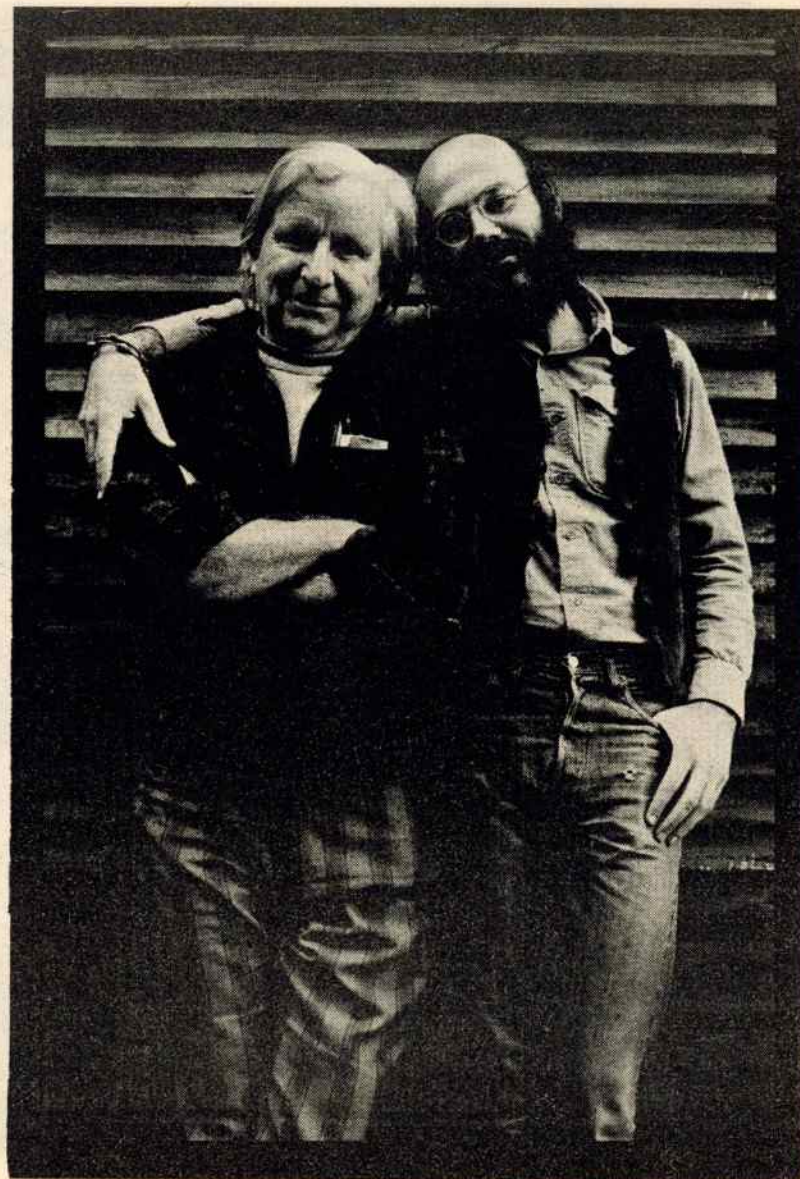
Brandy...Transsexual, Hollywood 1973

Anthony Friedkin is a photo-journalist working in Los Angeles. His photographs have been published internationally and shown in major photographic exhibitions. These photographs represent a por-

tion taken from his photo essay on gay life. Friedkin spent eighteen months completing the essay. He is twenty-four years old.



Bobby and Linda... Venice, Calif. 1972



Morris Kight and Don Kilhefner... Directors of the Gay Community Services Center, Los Angeles, 1972



Women at Gay Liberation Parade... Hollywood 1972



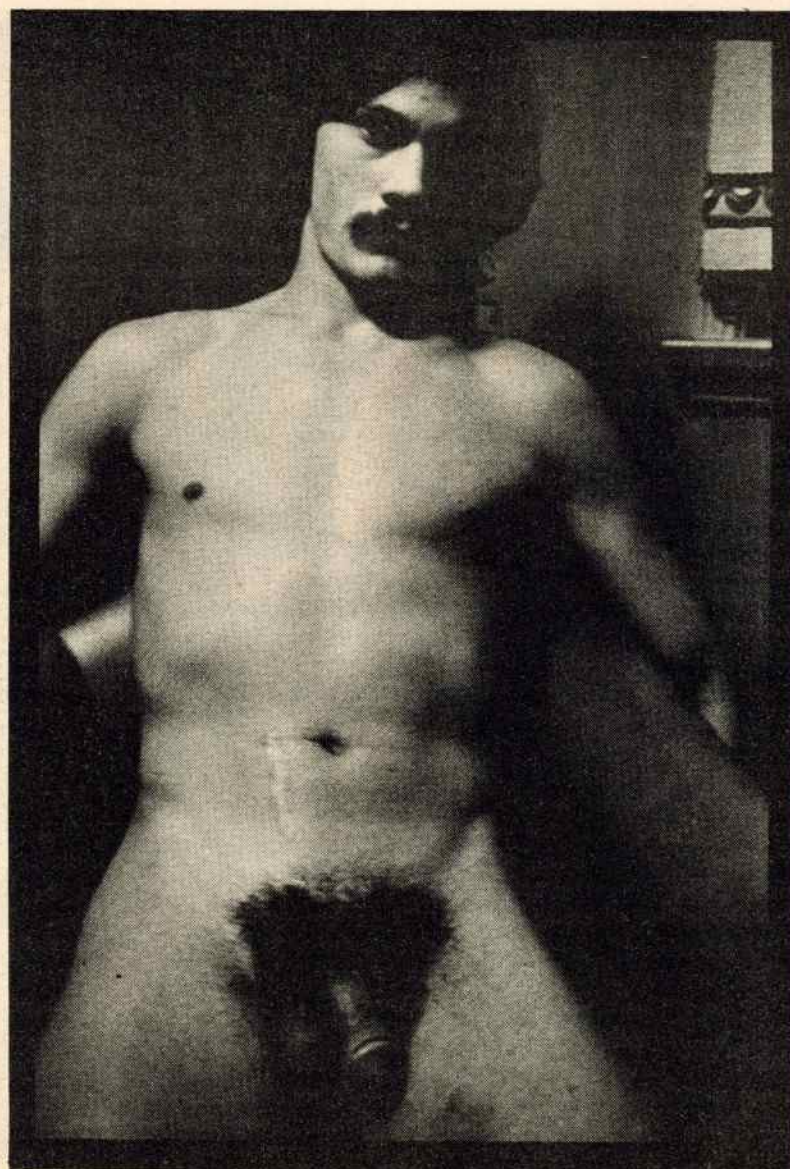
Lesbian Couple... Hollywood 1972



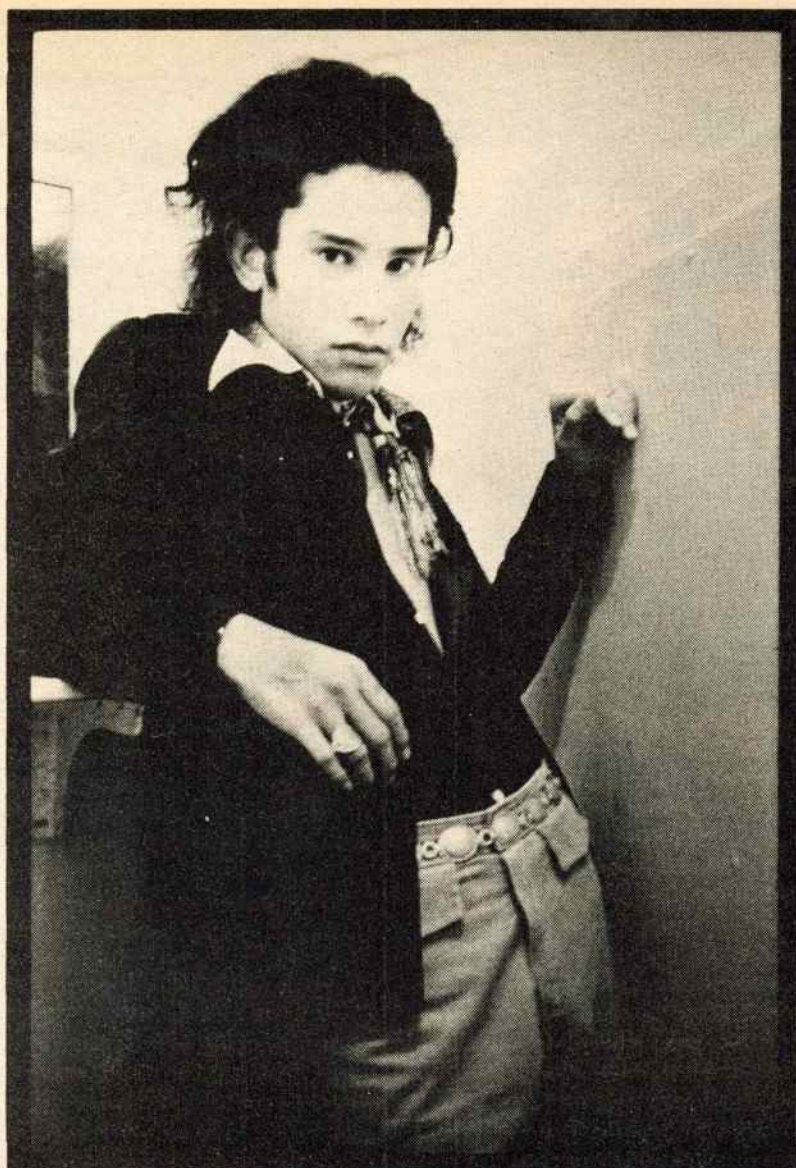
Hustlers, Selma Avenue, Hollywood 1972



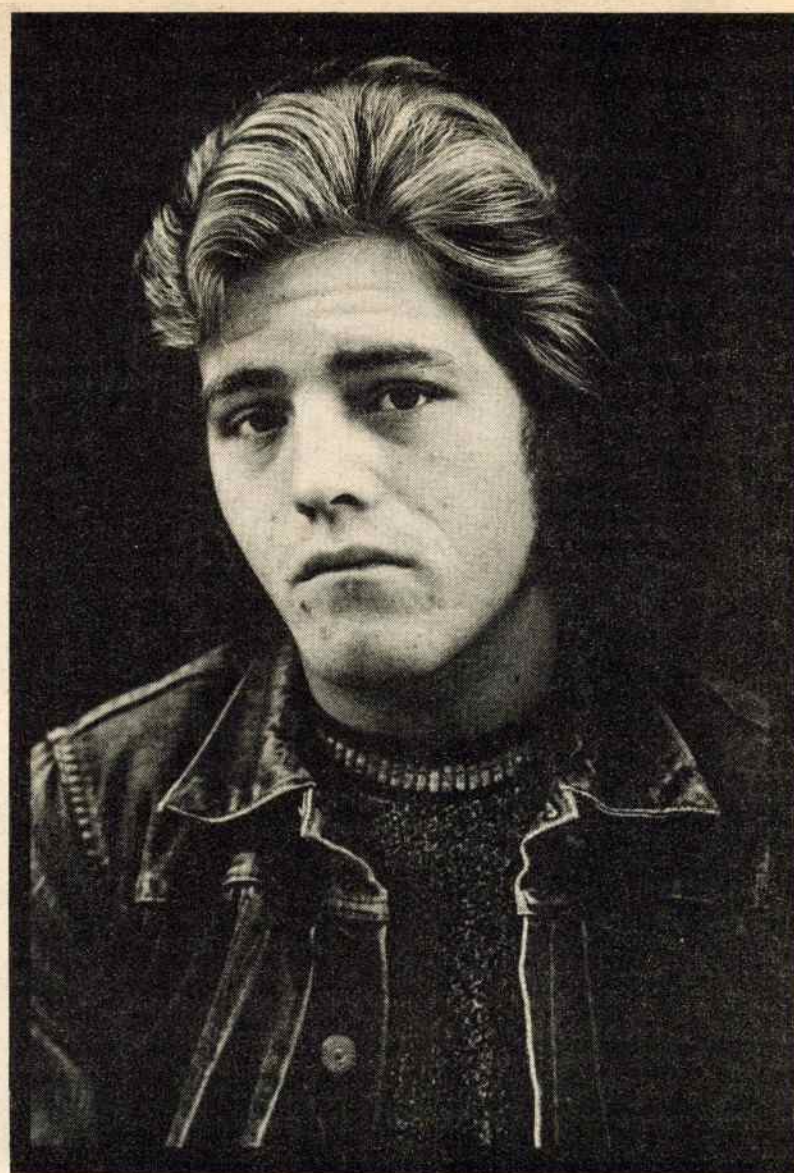
Michele... Female Impersonator, Hollywood 1972



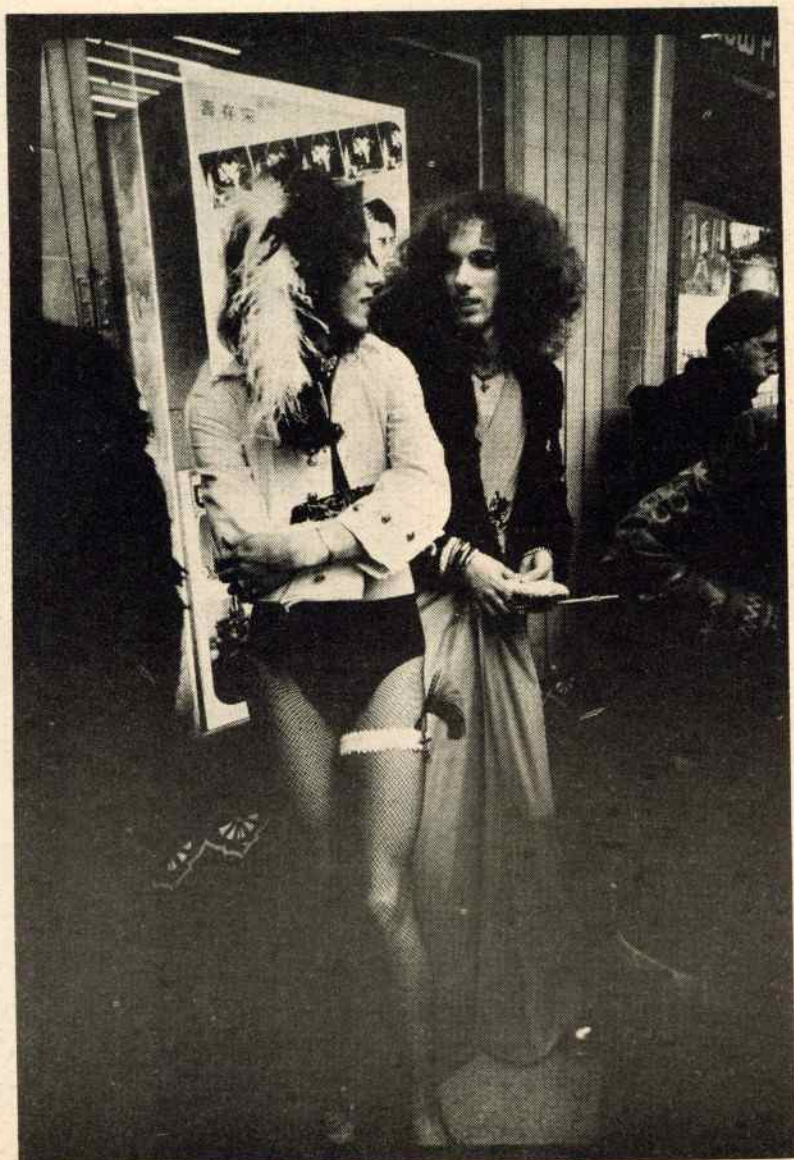
Jim, Hustler, Los Angeles 1972



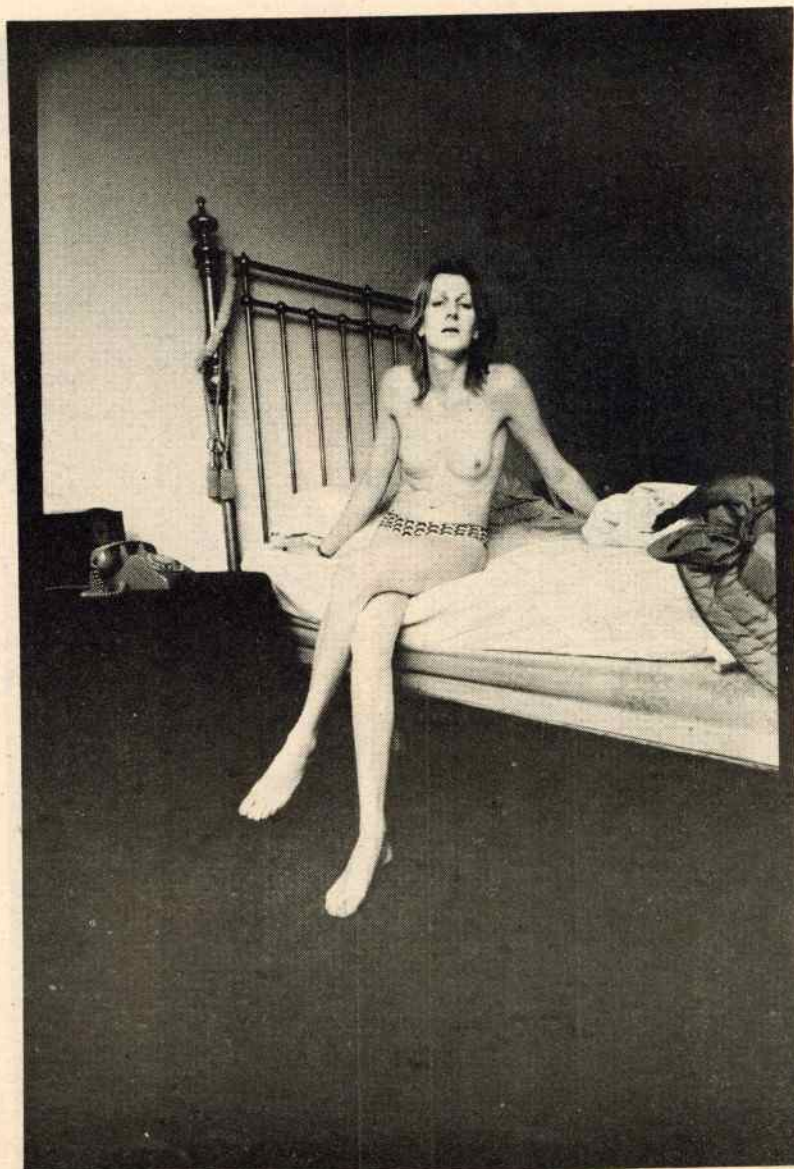
Restroom, Troupers Hall Dance, Hollywood 1972



Hustler, Selma Avenue, Hollywood 1972



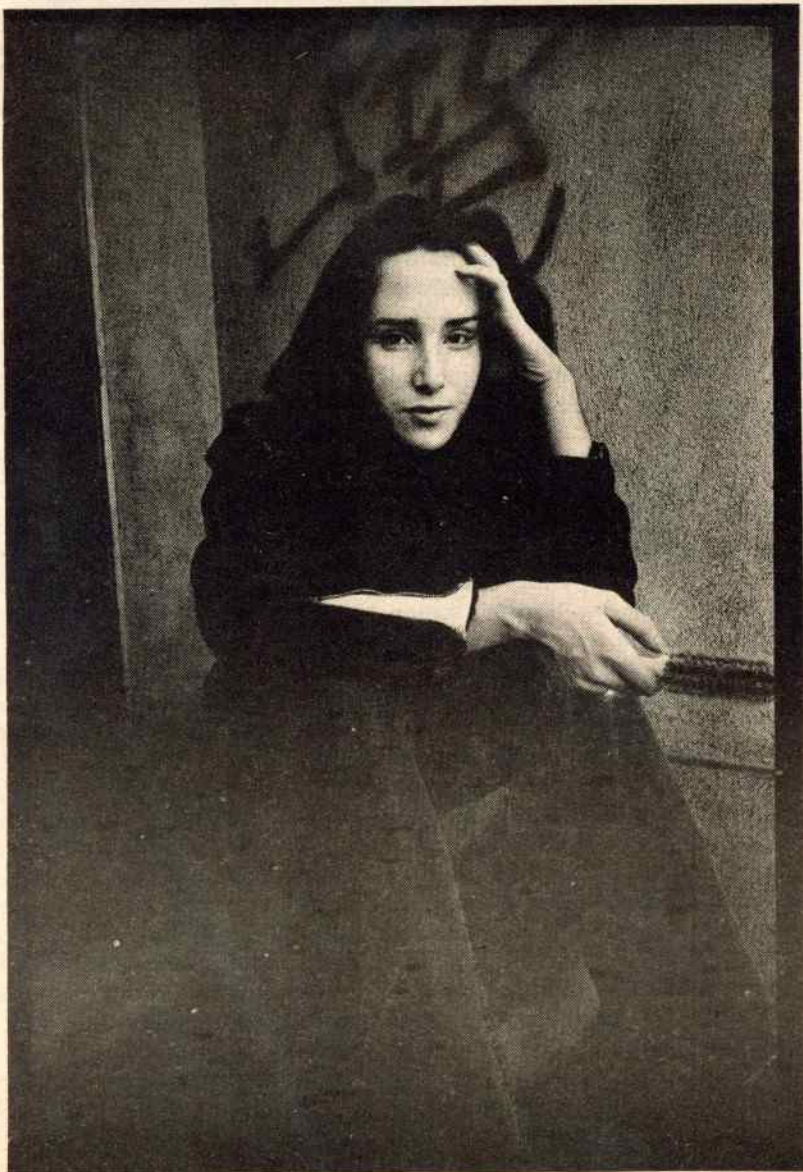
Men Waiting in line for Palace Theatre, San Francisco, 1972



Brandy... Transsexual, Hollywood 1972



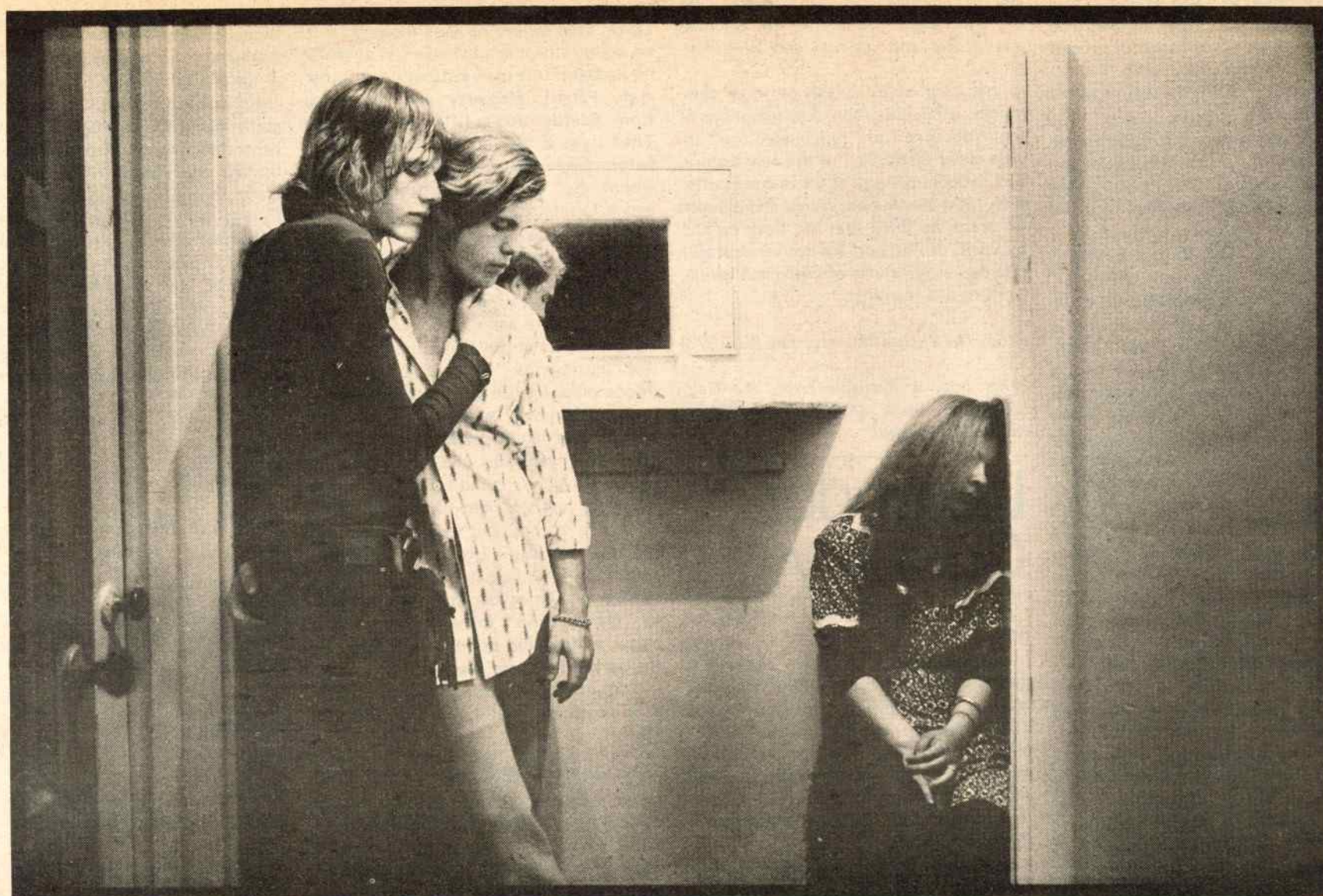
Jim and Mundo, East Los Angeles, 1972



Jim, East Los Angeles, 1972



Cyclona, East Los Angeles, 1972



Restroom, Troupers Hall Dance, Hollywood, 1972

REVIEWS

Great Gay...

Great Gay in the Morning! One Group's Approach to Communal Living and Sexual Politics. By The 25 to 6 Baking and Trucking Society. Times Change Press, N.J., 1972. \$1.75 paper. 95 pp.

Reviewed by Andrew Kopkind

When I went to live in a farm commune in Vermont, I had no inkling that the move to collectivize my living arrangements would profoundly change the way I identified myself as an individual, a social actor, a man. It took me a long while to see that communalism *logically* — not coincidentally — entails radical alterations of consciousness: how people see, treat and trust themselves and others. Struggles over work, authority and sex roles don't "just happen" in communes; the struggle to redefine ourselves in those categories is the very meaning of the collective process, *is* that process. The breakthroughs and barriers on the way are what make the communal experience so exhilarating — and depressing. Living in an intense collective atmosphere is like an acid trip only longer, like a psychotherapy session only more real; like a marriage only bigger; like a dance only slower.

If all that sounds very abstract, it's because the material of communalism seems too personal — too big and too small — to compress into words. At least that's what I've always thought as I've read or browsed through the babbling stream of books and articles on communes that have not stopped since the advent of the new commune "movement" five or so years ago. Commune books almost always fall victim to one or another of two literary diseases: the bucolic plague or the germane measles — that is, either "we eat berries and drink spring water and we are all one and life is an eternal magical moment; or "the history of communes in America begins in 1723 when I, II and III, sub A, B, sub 1..." What I know to be true about the joyous and painful process of living in a communal setting was entirely missing in both the karmicopera and the double Ph.D.-thesis versions.

But it is all there in a thin volume called *Great Gay in the Morning: One Group's Approach to Communal Living and Sexual Politics*, written, put together and — obviously — lived by a commune called "The 25 to 6 Baking & Trucking Society." (The name came when, in the course of the inevitable conversation about the tyranny of time, someone stopped the clocks — and it was 25 minutes to 6 ever after.) The 5.35 people evolved from a heterogeneous collection of young freaks into a small group of gay men and lesbian women. Their sexuality certainly defines their particular commune, but their description of the process of "communizing" is applicable to any collection of people. Here's how one of the writers (perhaps "scribes" is a better designation) describes his first entrance into the commune, on a weekend visit: "I entered a house with twenty other freaks who were just living in the country having a good time. I had never been in a situation like that before. When I walked in the door, a woman came up to me and kissed me hello... Another woman was painting very quietly in the living room with a very silent gaze. There were people dancing and laying out nude in the meadow behind the house. There were about twenty cats and a dog and lots of getting high on grass and hash and tripping on psychedelics. It was like a fantasy with everyone from different backgrounds, knowing very little about each other, living together in a huge house. To a large degree, people related with each other on a superficial level; being freaks and getting high were common elements. There were also several other communes in town and in the area. We all socialized and intermingled — at times there were forty or more people partying and/or eating in our living room. In spite of the

fluctuating number of people living in the house during the summer, there was a definite feeling of people who lived there and people who were visiting. There was a real feeling of family."

The fantasies soon vanished, even though a lot of the fun remained. Nothing was ever neatly resolved: conflicts about "shit work" and how it gets done surfaced at the beginning and were still raging after four years and several generations of communards had come and gone. Deeper tensions over male/female and homosexual/heterosexual roles were played out in more traumatic — but no more conclusive ways: the gay people at the core of the commune finally had to live together and the straight people split.

There were "monogamous" couples within the commune, but there was an unspoken "incest taboo" against intra-communal sex — a common feature of many communes I've been in or known about. "I think one reason why so many of us here have been able to live together relatively peacefully is that our relations have not been genitally sexual," one of the 25-to-6 people wrote. "When the incest taboo goes, then the nuclear family will be finished and our new families will flourish. I've resited it because it seems like too much to handle. Living together and trying to love one another is hard enough (without) that sexual/possession/pain thing."

What makes the perceptions of the Bakers and Truckers (they love to cook, eat, dance and move around) so accurate and valuable is that they come from those insights which people in the process of liberation have, while those in oppressive or status-quo roles remain sightless. The women and gay men in the commune clearly saw the context of power relationships controlled by the straight men; how the straights used dope and hard rock music as an evasion or a bludgeon; how the heterosexuals "most insistently enunciated the doctrine of 'do your own thing' and 'it's all free' and 'don't tamper with the good vibes'...as a cover for privilege and power and laziness and irresponsibility."

That kind of thing goes on in all communes, rural and urban. And variations of that "doctrine" of "hippy ideology" invade every institution of the new culture. But the communards at 25-to-6 see better than most people how snared and deluded we are if we think that the freak culture, by itself, can support (or even encourage), non-oppressive styles of living and loving, working and learning.

(from *The Boston Phoenix*, Jan. 30, 1973)

[This book is available from the Gay Liberation Book Service, listing elsewhere in this issue]

Lavender Country

I grew up in a hillbilly neighborhood (called "Gobbler's Knob") and as long as I could remember my father listened to WCKY, "The L.B. Wilson Station, On-the-Air-Everywhere-Twenty-four-hours-a-day." Then a top country music station, WCKY carried sentimental love, corn and humor mixed with a little old time religion. (They offered a "genuine" plastic tablecloth with the Lord's Last Supper embossed in "real" color.)

As I grew up, country music came to symbolize everything I didn't want to be. Men screwing women, fighting, religion, cock-fighting (i.e. roosters killing each other; my relatives still fight cocks in 1973), white lightning, hunting. The only thing I could identify with were such lyrics as "It wasn't God who made honky-tonk angels, as they say in the words of the song, many a married man has caused a poor girl to go wrong." For awhile I thought I was an angel-faggot as my lover took me from honky tonk to

honky tonk and every once in awhile to the Nashville Grand Old Opry. He drank whisky from the bottle straight, drove ninety miles an hour, chased women, loved country music, and I loved him intensely for three or four years. After several arrests, he's now settled down with a wife and family.

While country music contains the worst parts of male, lily-white heterosexual society, it also has potential as a music from the "people". Feelings laid out raw and real; simple love of simple things. All the good possibilities in the singing of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Joan Ritchie, Woodie Guthrie or Pete Seeger. But all country singers, whether communist or reactionary, have been resolutely heterosexual. Bob Dylan, for instance, reached his sexist apogee when he recorded "Lay Lady Lay" in Nashville. And Tamy Wynette has tried to perfect a public image of the model wife — subservient, adoring and passive.

In the *Lavender Country* album, a hidden drama rests in the continuous struggle between the country music format and the gay liberation message. Country music has been resolutely silent on gayness. Listen to any country station, any singer or album and you would never know gay love existed. Gayness is as absent as Blackness. Yet travel anywhere in the South and you will find Black and Gay people. While Black people have for generations had a music, Gay people have been denied even that solace. We have had to get along with crumbs from heterosexuals: opera, blues (Billie Holiday) or show music (Judy Garland). We are now being offered "pervo" rock with Lou Reed or David Bowie, but this is more a celebration of decadence than of gay love. I can imagine a gay opera (Gertrude Stein-Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts* is a start) or gay blues or gay show tunes. But before *Lavender Country* I never dreamed there would be a gay country album. Now, here it is, and it's a success. *Lavender Country* triumphantly transforms country music into a gay playground.

The danger in such an enterprise is to be too campy and to become slick and inauthentic. Ed Sanders does this in his album *Truck Stop* where he uses music to shit on country people and make fun of them; he becomes one man putting down other men. Patrick Haggerty and his group from Seattle don't fall into this trap. They have a few questionable passages: before beginning the title song of the album, they have some chickens clucking and a farmer saying, "sure is hard to tell these days; used to be the chickens could tell..." This is corny and funny (in the best tradition of Minny Pearl and the Grand Old Opry) but it smacks of urbane slickness. There are also a few lines in the otherwise wonderful lyrics that stick out like "ingenue," or "squire of Avalon." And in one place Patrick pronounces "leisure" in an urban way while country people would more likely rhyme it with "pleasure." But generally the lyrics are unbelievably good, combining at different moments just the right amount of irony, corniness, pathos and love. "Sashay out and give our way a try...make yourselves to home..." has just the right ring. Occasionally the lyrics become sheer poetry: in "Gypsy John" there is "ice running rings/ around the pond" or in "Georgie Pie" there is "Your walls of cellophane/ Would crinkle up and fry your brain/ If I whispered that I love you, Georgie Pie."

The music itself is superb with just the right tone for the words. For sheer lyrical supremacy Eve's rendition of "To a Woman" is about a comprehensive statement of gay liberation as we will have for awhile. With a violin, acoustical guitar and piano, the group avoids the butch thumping of cock-rock that we are so used to. The bass line hardly figures. If the bass line is the man fucking women line — the base of a *Guitar Army* marching band of male supremacy — then it isn't very gay. Anyway *Lavender Country* has none of that.

The themes in the album take in about every topic imaginable in gay life (except Blackness and what it means to be Gay and Black). Cruising and fantasy appear,

particularly in "I can't shake the Stranger out of you," "Straight White Patterns," and "Gypsy John." "Waltzing Will Trilogy" and "Cryin these Cocksucking Tears" bring out our oppression: we are in hospitals ("They call it mental hygiene/ But I call it psychic rape!"), prisons, morgues. "Cryin' these Cocksucking Tears" lays down the gauntlet to straight white men: "...the battle's begun sir, I tell you I'm all done sir/ With crying these Cocksucking Tears." Sometimes there is contrapuntal irony as in "Back in the Closet Again" containing an analysis of the collapse of the New Left which is sung to Gene Autry's old theme song, "Back in the Saddle Again."

In *Lavender Country* Patrick Haggerty and his Seattle group do more than entertain. They mark out a whole new direction in gay liberation. That is to seize the culture, make it consciously ours, make it gay. And to use that culture to reach other gay people, make it an instrument of our liberation. Patrick has himself had long experience in the New Left, with the Seattle Liberation Front, with the Venceremos Brigade ("Out Out Damn Faggot"), and with gay liberation. Not everything we dreamed has come to pass and many have dropped out along the road when the way seemed long. Political rhetoric was hard to stomach at the hey day of the movement and has done nothing to help us in hard times. On the other hand, poetry, music, dance, pottery, gardening, singing, carpentry, nursing, cooking and similar concrete cultural actions have helped us to live liberated lives. Denied a culture, gay people have been creating one. This culture is not a "bourgeois superstructure" but has become the life of the movement while the ideologists have long ago become irrelevant superstars.

Culture and ideas, music and songs do come from our social practice. And the community of the *Lavender Country* people is an important part of the fabric of their work. The record was produced by gay people, is being distributed by them and they are reaping the "profits." ("We never seem to comprehend/ That love is not some dividend A plot to get more than we spend." — from "Straight White Patterns") While professional record companies are passing out money, dope, drugs and sex objects for their superstars, the Seattle *Lavender Country* group are going round the country in a dented gaily decorated Dodge distributing and publicizing the record. They go from gay group to gay group not from disc jockey to disc jockey. It'll be a long time before we'll hear any "Cocksucking Tears" over the FCC network. In fact, you probably won't be able to hear this record at all unless you write directly to Box 22228, Seattle, Washington 98122. The album costs \$4 plus 50 cents handling. Profits are recycled back into the gay community.

—Charley Shively

ANIMALS

For Boswell

"When I consider how my light is spent..."
—Milton

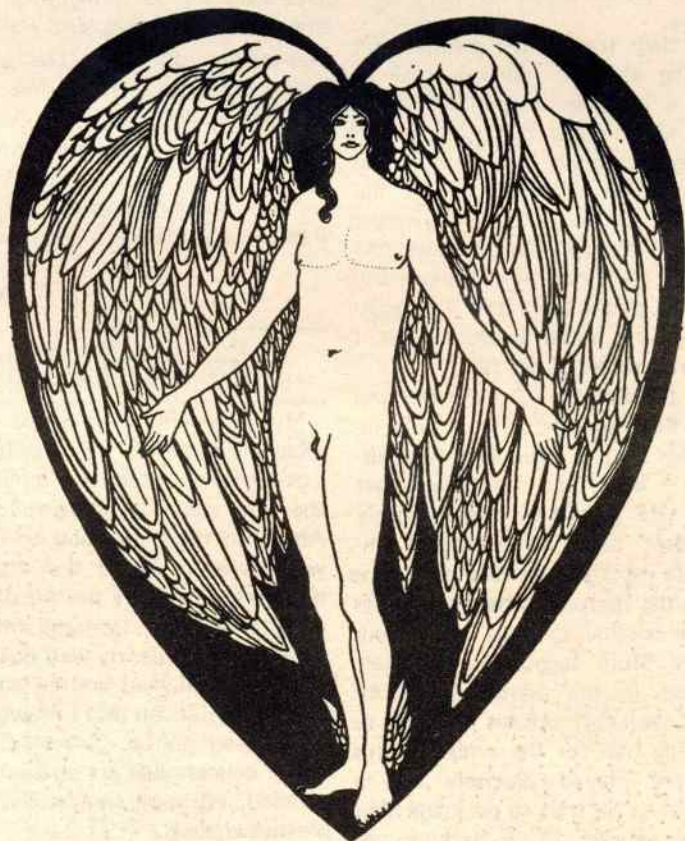
In Oceans-
ful of sharks
the shining bodies
my past

I see you
as a first fish
something to eat
to mull over

but you are more than that
you are more than a flat touch
a thing to steal
Though I walked an old road
My eyes were in my ears.

I hear you are riding your horse
into the hills
of your father's farm
& your arms are whips
& your ass is without a saddle
& it's been a hundred years
since I counted your little sighs
on my fingers
one at a time.

—William Barber



Aubrey Beardsley

MALE MUSE

The Male Muse: A Gay Anthology edited by Ian Young. The Crossing Press. Trumansburg, N.Y. 1973. \$3.95 paper, \$7.95 hardcover. 127 pages.

Reviewed by Andy Dvosin

This is manna for those of us who have wandered in the dry land of gay politics for the last several years. An anthology of gay male poetry, it is the first of its kind in history, and cause to cheer for that fact alone. The work of forty poets from five English-speaking countries is represented herein.

First general comments and animations, then a discussion of those poems I liked best. One notices first about this collection what a poor advertisement so many of its poems make for the ideals of gay liberation. I am talking about politics, not esthetics. Indeed, as one might expect, there are lousy poems espousing the most impeccably liberated sentiments, and conversely, poems with "low gay consciousness" are, as poems, often among the best in the volume.

I am discouraged by the thick procession of seventeen year old male virgins, tough but vulnerable hustlers and cab drivers, and blond, blue-eyes innocents in poem after poem throughout these pages. It is almost as if some homosexual equivalent of the male-female biological difference were necessary, so predicated is the attraction in so many of these gay love poems on a difference in age, wealth and status, cultural attainment or even, alas, "queerness" between the poet and the figure he addresses (the gratifying exceptions to this observation, those that also work as poems, will be discussed below).

Is it that gay poets lag behind the vanguard of the movement in degree of self-pride attained? Maybe. Or do poets in general, being over-complicated fellows themselves, need someone simpler, younger, even straighter, to love? I don't know the answer, but this is the kind of poem I have in mind:

*I am surprised you lust for a grayhead
like me...
Come, young man...I have come with
him for company
to his pounding heart. We are wet.
Wistfully
I play with his black hair while he falls
asleep
minute by minute, slowly, unlike my
restless life.*

That is from "Long Lines: Youth and Age" by Paul Goodman, to whom editor Ian Young dedicates the anthology. What

I get from this fine poem is precisely this sense of reassurance based on differences in love. Since their ages, values and backgrounds so differ, neither person can effectively judge the other, neither takes the other's estimate seriously. In such an arrangement, how close can people get to each other?

Goodman himself provides perhaps the only answer in his last published work: "...it is at peril that I resist what attracts me, however dangerous, unavailable, inappropriate or perverse I may judge it to be. I must love it and suffer rather than be bored and caged as the horizon closes in. I cannot choose my paradise to be convenient, moral or prudent." (*Little Prayers and Finite Experiences*, p. 101)

It is also striking how few poems of gay protest there are in what is, after all, a book whose whole impetus comes from the gay liberation movement. I suppose Kenneth Pitchford, even if he were asked, refused permission to reprint his poetry here.

Of course, protest poetry is a hard gig to write in any event. Of the handful of great political poems in English, it is significant that most were written by sympathetic outsiders, i.e. Milton ("On the Late Massacre in Piedmont") was not slaughtered for his beliefs, nor did Blake ("London," "Jerusalem") actually labor in those "dark Satanic mills."

As to those poems I liked best, the very first in the book (the order is alphabetical by author) is representative of the collection at its finest. Robert Adamson's "Action Would Kill It/ A Gamble" is a brilliant poem of frustration and a critique of its sexist culture. Two young men walk together down the length of a beach: cliffs, tide and darkness impinge upon them, bringing them closer, but to no avail. Particularly memorable in this poem is the narrator's revolutionary friend, discoursing fluently on political strategy and the best French brandies, but unable to express emotion except by kicking his feet bloody on the rocks. Both figures in the poem — New Left heavy and yearning but finally defeated narrator — have been taught well by their culture how to be men.

Robert Duncan's impressive "Sonnet 1" makes a dignified case for the homosexual who, believing his condition to be sick, nevertheless decides to make a go of it anyhow, and even derives a grim satisfaction from overcoming obstacles to fulfilled love which straights do not have to contend with.

"Now there is a Love of which Dante does not speak unkindly," Duncan's poem begins, taking us back to the encounter

with Brunetto Latini in Canto XV of the *Inferno*. The panorama conjured up by Dante of sodomists forced to run through eternal fire, their eyes staring at Dante through hardened, baked features suggests to Duncan its contemporary equivalent, a street at night on which gay men cruise, driven by fires of loneliness and lust:

*They try the eyes of other men
Towards that eye of the needle
Love has appointed there
For a joining that is not easy.*

Well now, who is going to tell me that cruising isn't a sort of hell? One can only say that hopefully, in time, gay liberation will render obsolete and in need of foot-noting the reality which this poem so powerfully documents.

Duncan's "Such is the Sickness of Many a Good Thing" has the hard-won splendor of language of his poetry at its best. Feeling love for someone, being unable to say it, and therefore finally not feeling it is its topic. Duncan's treatment is fully equal to Eliot's handling of the same subject in the "hyacinth girl" episode of *The Waste Land*. The words of this poem, stark and exalted, leap off the page at the reader.

Jim Eggeling's "Buying a Rose in San Antonio" describes a money offer for sex made by the narrator to a young florist's assistant. I am won over by the musical charm of the poem's dialogue and by its assured sensuality:

*Tyler's little buds have blown already.
but
This rose can stand a lot
more blowing. how
Much will you charge me for this BIG
one? I queried...
Thumping it like a melon.*

Thom Gunn's "The Feel of Hands" is a subtle and witty ode to the varieties of love. It propounds a syllogism between cats, hands and people and presents love first warm and gentle, then violent and masterful, both kinds emanating from a lover's hands, which first "explore tentatively...timid as kittens," but then

*plunge together in a full
formed single fury: they are grown
to cats, hunting without scruple;
They are expert but desperate.*

This poem exhibits in the most concrete sexual sense a gay sensibility; it could not I think, have been written by a straight male. Incidentally, I wish that Gunn's "Touch," one of the most beautiful gay poems ever written, had been included by the editor in this anthology.

Poetry and propaganda are a notoriously bad mix. For me, therefore, the find of the anthology is Ralph Pomeroy, who successfully pulls off a combination of the two. His work is (1) elegant as poetry, and (2) wonderfully moving as propaganda, precisely because of accomplishment.

Pomeroy's "A Tardy Epithalamium for E. and N." is written for two close friends who have been lovers for eight years, and who have him over regularly for dinner. Like a perfectly executed piano piece, this poem sounds and looks a whole lot easier than it actually is. It expresses thoughts all of have felt in similar situations, but with no straining for effect, no portentousness or cuteness — just the words themselves, and every word is right.

Pomeroy's "Gay Love and the Movies" considers the powerfully validating potential of art, and awaits impatiently a time when we gay people will have

*good longings
good works, good words,
to make into poems or plays or novels
or songs or movies
that will celebrate our realities*

(the reader may happily reflect that this book is a good start in that direction) Pomeroy imagines the day when we can go to the movies and see, not a "Boys in the Band" or a "Fortune and Men's Eyes," but

*like everybody else, those little true
crescendo-ridden technicolor fables
which begin by accident
as do all true love stories,
and end in death
as do all men's affairs.*

Editor Ian Young's own poetry is given generous space, compared to that allotted to his better-known (but not necessarily better) gay colleagues — Ginsberg, Duncan *et al.* Young's "Notes for our History" might have been subtitled "Beautiful Moments with my Lover Rick," but it works, partly because of the luminous understatement Young sustains throughout the poem, and also because enough "problems" are hinted at to make the thing seem real:

*Though I'm the older
it seems often
it's me that's the boy
clumsy, infatuated, too eager, and
thankful for love;
and you, the philosopher,
watching your plants,
washing a bowl,
teaching patiently
this ardent apprentice...*

There are many other fine poems here. Harold Norse's amusingly self-exasperated "Reading My Poems at Universities" is paired with his lovely and self-contained "Stratagems." James Kirkup's "Common Love" and both of Richard Taggett's poems have the immediate ring of authority which makes one sit up and take notice, although I barely understand them. Edward Field's "The Moving Man" blurs the distinction between poetry and pornography: it is the only poem I've ever read that got me sexually excited. Jonathan Williams' verbally tricky poems are pure delight, and there is a snappy and campy turn contributed by Christopher Isherwood.

The Male Muse is physically pleasing to look at, as a book about gay males should be, from its soberly handsome black and white cover to its democratic allotment of no more than four or five poems per author. (Another anthology of contemporary gay poetry, edited by Winston Leyland of *Gay Sunshine* and due in 1974, will, I understand, feature longer selections from many of the same poets, and will also include such well-known gay poets as Frank O'Hara and Jack Spicer, not represented here.)

Poetry has always secularly consecrated for each age new styles of living and loving — "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of mankind." The publication of *The Male Muse* may therefore be an event of some importance in the history of the world.

[This book is available from the Gay Liberation Book Service for \$3.95 post-paid. See address elsewhere in this issue]

GAY SUNSHINE NO. 19

Winston Leyland, Editor

Regular Contributors:

Jim Reed	Charley Shively
Jim Giancarlo	Don Jackson
Lee Atwell	Allen Young

If you are gay you have something beautiful to say. Submit an article, a poem, a letter, a drawing, a photograph. Add your energy to the community by letting the community in on your creativity. Deadline for the next issue (no. 20) is Oct. 20. Address all mail to GAY SUNSHINE, P.O. Box 40397, San Francisco, Ca. 94140 Please double space all MSS. We need creative gays to work with us on the paper. Call 824-3184.

Member of Liberation News Service
Underground Press Syndicate and
COSMEP.

U.S. ISSN 0046-550X

SCARECROW

Closet Cinema

After viewing *Scarecrow*, the American film that was recently awarded the Palm d'Or at Cannes, I seriously wondered if Europeans are not overreacting to this little Hemingwayesque tale of male camaraderie. Stylistically, *Scarecrow* resembles a carefully packaged blend of the "gutter magic" of *Midnight Cowboy* with the unvarnished realism of *Five Easy Pieces* and a strong flavor of Blake Edwards' male love story, *Wild Rovers*. Whatever their particular limitations, each of these films is aesthetically superior to *Scarecrow*.

I suppose there is something in the romance of the American dream embodied in the poetic spirit of Whitman ("We two boys together clinging/ One the other never leaving") that is permanently rooted in the American tradition of male bonding. Hemingway celebrated it without ever acknowledging the intimacy of its sexual origins. In innumerable westerns, comedies, gangster films and serious dramas, the cinema has promoted an idealization of male friendship — just pals, buddies, boys of the road — totally uncomplicated, of course, by the special closeness of eroticism. Director Jerry Schatzberg and writer Garry Michael White have once again enshrined the perennial male fraternity. But there is, in spite of some appealing performances and sensitive color photography, a basic unbelieveability about the relationship the film delineates and an absence of poetic creation that might have endowed this episodic yarn with some cinematic life.

Two outsiders, Max and Lion, beggars of life, meet by chance on a dusty country road, hitchhiking cross country from California. Squabbling and male competitiveness eventually subside to a truce, and lead to friendship that becomes a kind of Laurel and Hardy version of a heterosexual couple. Max (Gene Hackman) is an oafish, blustering, cigar-chewing ex-con just emerging from six years in San Quentin. He capitulates to the awkward, gentle charm of Lion (Al Pacino) who has just finished a five-year hitch in the Navy to confront an illegitimate child he fathered but has never seen. After settling a "fair and square" partnership in a planned car wash business with him, Max informs Lion that he doesn't trust or love anybody and he can "tear the ass off an elephant"; but this rampant aggressiveness is kept in check by the pacifying influence of the younger man.

The progress of their cross-country journey is filmed in an idyllic succession of images of camping and hitching rides, spiked only by clichés: a hippy van overburdened with noisy children, and an altercation with a dishwashing crew. Along the way, we are treated to some of the most unpleasant visual and spiritual aspects of provincial Americana. Perhaps European critics are reading more significance into these scenes of local color than they merit. White and Schatzberg really fail to engage us completely because they want to glorify this world rather than explore its limitations (as did *The Last Picture Show*). The movie's integrity cannot, unfortunately, be redeemed by the striking refinement of cameraman Vilmos Zsigmond, or by the impressive work of Hackman and Pacino, because its view of human relations is constricted, male chauvinist, and basically fixated at an adolescent level.

The most pertinent and cogent criticism of *Scarecrow's* underlying implications has been offered by Stephen Farber in *The New York Times* (May 13, 1973). Whatever Farber's particular sexual orientation, his recent writing has reflected a special concern with gay relationships (or incipient ones) in a positive and quasi-radical context. If I do not completely concur with his harsh evaluation of the film, I agree that it evades — though not as unconsciously as he believes — the real issues it raises in human terms.

As Farber notes, *Scarecrow* is "a movie filled with homosexual motifs — Max and Lion dancing together, Max referring to

Lion as 'my wife' etc. — that seem completely unconscious on the part of the writer and director. But the filmmakers go out of their way to deny the sexual undercurrents. The only purpose of a ridiculous, protracted, sensational prison episode — in which a sadistic homosexual attacks an astonished Lion — is to underscore the boyish innocence of Max and Lion's relationship. The filmmakers want to make absolutely certain that no one in the audience mistakes Max or Lion for a homosexual." Certainly the protest is evident; and the protest is against the fear of deep commitments and involvements that would undermine the thrust of male aggression and competitiveness that keep our society rolling along the path to spiritual bankruptcy. Farber suggests the movie actually placates these fears: "Of course, if the two buddies in these locker-room fantasies ever had a sexual relationship, the films would disturb and



Al Pacino rejects the jail trusty's advances

threaten all the men in the audience who despise homosexuals and yet secretly believe that their relationships with their fraternity brothers, drinking cronies, or bowling partners are the noblest in their lives, deeper and truer than any relationships they have with women."

Scarecrow's failure to debunk this masculine myth is why it is such an unsatisfying work. Whatever richness it manages to achieve lies in the sketching of two rather memorable characters. I don't think there is any indication that Max, with his hyper-aggressive, crusty, scatological stance, would ever achieve any dimension of gay awareness. Lion, on the other hand, is shy, sensitive, vulnerable, and surprisingly innocent, though we wonder how he

could have spent five years in the U.S. Navy without some homosexual encounter or awareness.

Early in their travels, the partners are seen ambling along a railroad track at dusk after a drunken encounter with a prostitute. Max muses that getting laid is one thing that really keeps him going, and Lion inquires, "There weren't any women in prison, Max. How did you get laid then?" Both men gaze quietly and somberly at each other for a moment and then move on down the tracks. The question is, of course, never answered, but it haunts the remainder of the film.

If we are touched by his sweetness and innocence, however, there are ample indications that Lion — who becomes a surrogate wife — is, in fact, repressing a part of himself. He is plainly a desperately lonely "closet case." The sexual implications are mostly subverted into campiness, as in the barroom where Max does his stripper routine to keep Lion from leaving him. More suggestive, however, is the scene in the prison dormitory where Max staunchly refuses to speak to Lion, blaming him for the arrest. Lion's entreaties are played precisely like a rejected lover as he tries to persuade Max to forgive and forget. In the background, observing all, is Jack, the young warden who eventually befriends Lion and tries unsuccessfully to make him, tuning in to the "lovers quarrel" more clearly than either Max or Lion.

When, after much common suffering, the partners identify themselves wryly as "scarecrows," there are moments of genuine warmth and tenderness, mostly initiated by Lion and resulting from a common pain or joy. If he is more in touch with his feelings than the hardened Max, Lion is unable to progress any further. A cruel ex-wife pretends their child died before birth and places the blame squarely on him. Lion, however, feigns ecstasy by flying to Max's arms shouting "It's a boy!" to which Max heartily responds "You're a man, now." Even though he knows nothing of the psychic stress that causes Lion's ultimate collapse into catatonia, he is visibly moved by the necessitated separation. Ironically, an emotion bond is broached just at the point at which it must be severed, again demonstrating the immature level at which the film's creators are operating.

The immense popularity of *Scarecrow* throughout the country suggests that American audiences are still not geared to a mature examination of male relationships — an area tentatively broached by Cassavetes' *Husbands*. The particular variety of hangup that Farber characterizes as "locker-room fantasies" is certainly a very male problem. But it is definitely not a

gay problem, at least not among those gays who are not hungup on a firm distinction between sex and love, failing to intermingle the two. The ambivalence that permeates movies like *Scarecrow* must be seen for what it is and replaced by a more total conception of relationships where honest feeling and commitment is possible between men, between women, and between men and women.

—Lee Atwell

...Visconti's Ludwig

My commentary on Visconti's *Ludwig* (*Gay Sunshine* No. 18) was based on the Los Angeles premiere screening, since the film was not previewed in its final American release version by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. I noted that the American distributor had cut the film by some 50 minutes already. Consequently, the narrative was frequently very uneven, leaving much unexplained and giving the unfortunate impression that Ludwig becomes unbalanced almost overnight. Visconti's filmic conceptions are always elaborately detailed; economy is not one of his expressive virtues.

I mentioned the fact that Ludwig's relationship with his brother, Prince Otto, was much stronger than historical record indicates. In the original European version, in the sequence where Otto returns from the battlefield to find the noncommittal Ludwig secluded in his bedroom at Linderhof, the action extends much further. As is briefly suggested in the American version, Ludwig continues pacifying Otto, then makes love to him. This explains the warm reception accorded to Otto later when Ludwig visits him in the asylum.

This bit of censorship — not to mention the large gaps in the filmic continuity — has since been pushed even further by the blundering Metro-Goldwyn-Manglers. Each of the scenes — which I described in some detail in my critique — have been carefully trimmed to avoid the direct homosexual connotations of Ludwig's relationships. Clearly the studio is squeamish about letting us witness frontal male nudity or an intermale kiss and had second thoughts.

It seems to me that a protest should be made over this act of blatant, anti-gay censorship, and secondly, that those concerned should make an effort to persuade an American distributor to release the complete European version in the U.S., even if in a limited engagement. The address of MGM is 10202 W. Washington Boulevard, Culver City, California 90230.

—Lee Atwell

GAY LIB BOOK SERVICE

Box 40397 S.F. Cal. 94140

GAY LIBERATION BOOKS

- ☐ OUT OF THE CLOSETS: VOICES OF GAY LIBERATION. Edited by Karla Jay & Allen Young. \$3.95 paper. Anthology of essays, interviews, manifestos. Highly recommended.
- ☐ THE GAY LIBERATION BOOK. Edited by L. Richmond and G. Noguera. 1973. \$3.95 paper. Anthology of articles, photos.
- ☐ HOMOSEXUAL OPPRESSION AND LIBERATION by Dennis Altman. Superb writing on the crystallization of gay liberation consciousness. \$1.65 paper.
- ☐ GREAT GAY IN THE MORNING. \$1.75 paper. One group's approach to communal living and sexual politics.
- ☐ LESBIAN/WOMAN by Del Martin & Phyllis Lyon. \$1.50 paper (and \$7.95 hardcover). Personal account by two founders of gay women's liberation movement.
- ☐ GMP by Gertrude Stein. 1st U.S. edition. Includes her "A Long Gay Book." Stein on homosexuality in her cubist style. \$3.45 paper.

POETRY

- ☐ WE ARE ALL LESBIANS, a gay women's poetry anthology. \$2 paper (just published).
- ☐ THE MALE MUSE A Gay Poetry Anthology, edited by Ian Young. 40 poets, including Ginsberg, Goodman, Wieners, Norse, Jonathan Williams etc. \$3.95 paper. Highly recommended.
- ☐ THE FALL OF AMERICA by Allen Ginsberg. Poems from 1966 on. \$2.50 paper.
- ☐ SELECTED POEMS by John Wieners. \$3.95 paper. Many gay poems incl. See review, *Gay Sunshine* No. 16.

- ☐ SELECTED POEMS by Larry Eigner. \$2.50 paper. Strong, open poetry.
- ☐ MANROOT No. 8 (Spring 1973) A special womanhood issue. Poetry \$1.50 paper.
- ☐ MANROOT No. 9. First rate poetry by various poets. \$1.50 paper.
- ☐ SAPPHO '71 by Harriette Frances. Collection of gay women's poetry & drawings. \$2.50 paper.
- ☐ ON AMPHETAMINE AND IN EUROPE. Vol. 3 of Taylor Mead's diary-poems. 1968 ed. \$5 paper.
- ☐ SOME GREEN MOTHS. Poems by Ian Young. \$2 paper.
- ☐ LOOKING AT WOMEN. Poems by Fran Winant. \$1 paper.
- ☐ THE HART CRANE VOYAGES by Hunce Voelcker. \$2 paper. Poetic translations of Crane's six love poems to Emil Opffer follow a survey of his earlier love affairs.
- ☐ SONGS FOR THE REVOLUTION by Hunce Voelcker. Sonnets. \$1.25 paper.
- ☐ LOGAN by Hunce Voelcker. \$1.50 paper. Poetic story of two boys, lovers, giving birth to a poetic son, a poem.

GAY LIBERATION PACKETS

- ☐ GAY LIB PACKET No. 1. Collection of individual articles, papers, etc. \$2.
- ☐ GAY SUNSHINE PACKET No. 1. Ten back issues of *Gay Sunshine* paper. (Nos. 8-17) \$5.
- ☐ GAY SUNSHINE PACKET No. 2. Five rare back issues of *Gay Sunshine* paper (Nos. 2,4-7). Only a few left. \$5

Cash with order please. California residents add 5% sales tax. Postage included. Please allow 2-5 weeks. Make check or money order payable to Gay Sunshine. Overseas orders: please add 50 cents per hard cover, 25 cents per soft cover for postage. Minimum mail order: \$3



GOD-CARRYING

In each gold bird-tipped box a humored god,
for each a troop of carriers who'll sweat,
the weight a burden they'll have set themselves,
species of god-play, not saintly fervor.
Willingly they assemble, wait, alter,
their stomach bands, work coats to a just fit,

then sober take the poles readily fit
shoulder to wood, think nothing of the god
they bear, think of the route that won't alter
year by year, past the same homes and shops. Sweat
starts (it's summer) and with that some fervor
for the task. "Oisha!" for custom, for themselves

by-play, jibes and laughter, finding themselves
first almost jokingly aroused, each fit
tightly to his fellow. That much fervor,
contagious, transfers to the hoisted god.
He then tilts his cabin, his bearers sweat
more, he now dominant makes them alter

poles' angle. Each drinking stop will alter
demeanor: rougher now they hurl themselves
against their burden, against companions' sweat
and road-stained bodies. Coats that before fit
constrain: they run near-naked with the god,
learning from touch loincloth-sack's added fervor,
up the temple steps with roiling fervor,
shouting, falling, dropping at the staid altar
with little ceremony an exhausted god.
Tardy amazement follows at themselves,
at what they've been, god-carriers though not fit.
Milling about they touch their bodies' sweat,

touch reddened shoulders, touch each other's sweat
and wipe it, wipe their own. Lessoned fervor
subsides, custom covers; yes, again they're fit
to carry gods and meet their own. Why alter,
perhaps distorting, how they see themselves;
why give a face to what's a faceless god?

Later they sweat the same, attach themselves
to the same chore, god-carrying from his altar.
And as is fit it's done with equal fervor.

— Edgar Austin

MATSURI (festival)

Through the long row of shops the cadenced shout,
"Oisha! Oisha!" Palanquin bearers spill
onto the temple compound in full rout.

This day the local gods are taken out
in gilt and tassel. Neighbors, waiting, mill
through the long row of shops. The cadenced shout

grows louder, closer; bodies erupt about
the carrying staves, acting the gods' will.
Onto the temple compound in full rout

they jostle, thunder/pelting rain after drought,
chanting "Oisha! Oisha!" One atop, agile,
through the long row of shops, the cadenced shout

echoed by his stance — headband, loincloth,
tattoo for dress — guides all with fan-flick skill
onto the temple compound in full rout.

Palanquin on palanquin, each street's god decked out,
each god's bearers pressed to staves until,
through the long row of shops, the cadenced shout,
onto the temple compound in full rout.

— Edgar Austin



IREZUMI (tattoo)

On back and shoulders first design sketched thin
in sumi ink, secured with gouge and dye
for painful hour by hour of filling in

with color: petals red, borders blue, the skin
pricked-smarting-swelling. Some who try
on back and shoulders first design sketched thin,

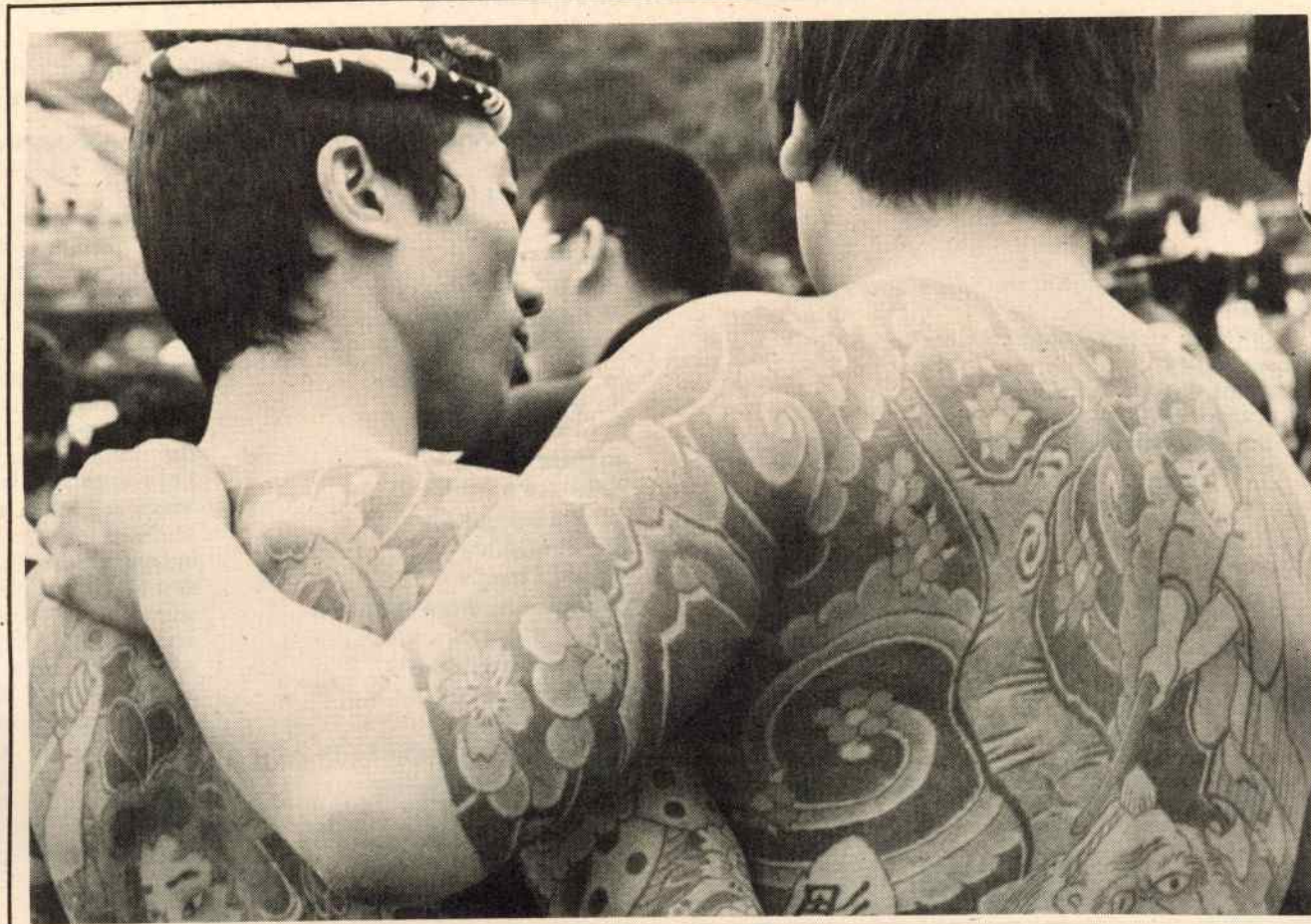
next fastened close (flowers, what's never been:
gods or other myth), to on, expose each thigh
for painful hour by hour of filling in:

thighs, buttocks, down the chest, so when
they bathe or walk near-naked among peers spy
on back and shoulders first design sketched thin

and left, they chide what they think half-made men.
Who are they, narcissists or masochists who'd like
for painful hour by hour of filling in?

By tradition carpenters, by extension then
workman gangsters whom tattooers ply
on back and shoulders first design sketched thin
for painful hour by hour of filling in.

— Edgar Austin



GANYMEDE IN RENAISSANCE LITERATURE



Italian, 16th century

Ganyমেদে, that darling of the gods, was raped sometime during the eleventh century, when the Church began its overzealous persecution of pagan religions and amoral deities. But as the Victorian poet George Gillet says, this aphrodisiacal demi-deity has been "in one fortress fostered, on one temple lord, / Banned elsewhere what matter, since with one accord / Artists through all ages have in soul adored." Ganyমেদে remained slain on the fields of Ida for some centuries, and fell into utter disrepute, until in 1563 the poet Barnabe Googe (as moralistic as his name) could, with utter impunity, advise his friend "to detest the Cryme, / Of wycked love, that Jove did use, in Ganymedes tyme," and to stop worshipping Jove, who "lyved in Heaven hye, / Embracing Boyes: (O fylthy thyng) in beastly Lecherye."

But in 1579 Edmund Spenser, father of English poetry, revived the homosexual pastoral tradition in *The Shepherdes Calender*, with Ganyমেদে figures such as Cupid, "a naked swayne, / With spotted winges like peacock's traine," and the tender shepherd's swain Colin Clout, with the "tressed locks" and "wanton heart" of a disdainful mistress. Gabriel Harvey (Hobbinol) and Spenser (Colin) lived together as unmarried students at Pembroke College for several years, and the literary homoerotic implications of their love stirred up some controversy. When Hobbinol says that Colin is "the ladde, whome long I loved so deare," the critic whom we know only by the initials E.K. argued that the "hint of disorderly love, which the learned call paederastice" is "gathered beside his meaning," and is an "abominable error." But another critic, William Webbe, in 1586 went so far as to suggest that Spenser learned of homosexual love "from

the Italians," who were notorious at that time for their sodomitical preferences. Ganyমেদে again reappears in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* — this time in the figure of a boy named Fancy: "like a lovely boy, / Of rare aspect and beauteie without peare, / Matchable to that ympe of Troy, / Whom Jove did love and chose his cup to beare."

In 1594 the homosexual poet Richard Barnfield, under the direct influence of Spenser, published *The Affectionate Shepherd*, in which a man named Daphnis falls in love with a fair lad named Ganyমেদে. "If it be sinne to love a sweet-fac'd Boy, / (Whose amber locks trussed up in golden tramels / Dangle adowne his lovely cheekes with joy, / When pearle and flowers his faire haire enamels) / If it be sinne to love a lovely Lad, / Oh then sinne I, for whom my soul is sad." Barnfield, alias, Daphnis is really sad only because Ganyমেদে spurns him: "O would to God (so I might have my fee) / My lips were honey, and thy mouth a Bee. / Then shouldst thou sucke my sweete and my faire flower / That now is ripe, and full of honey-berries. / Then shouldst thou be my Waspe or else my Bee, / I would thy hive, and thou my honey bee." I'm sure we catch the joke on his ripe flower filled with honey (to be sucked), and realize that the Waspe doth sting, though we might miss the meaning of "fee," a common Elizabethan pun on copulation. Barnfield, incidentally, may have influenced Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, and some scholars believe that his Ganyমেদে is identical with Shakespeare's sweet wag Master W.H., who played the part of Juliet.

Barnfield was also a good friend of the playwright Christopher Marlowe, whose *Hero and Leander* (1598) undoubtedly influenced him as well. Leander, perhaps modelled upon Marlowe's boyfriend Thomas Walsingham, is a satyr's wet-dream come true: "His dangling tresses that were never shorn, / Had they been cut and unto Colchos borne, / Would have allur'd the vent'rous youth of Greece / To hazard more than for the Golden Fleece." Not only is his hair beautiful, but also "his white belly" and "that heavenly path, with many a curious dint, / That runs along his back." While swimming naked in the Hellespont, Leander is nearly raped by Neptune, who mistakes him for Ganyমেদে: "the lusty god watch'd his arms, and, as they open'd wide, / At every stroke betwixt them would he slide, / And dive into the water, and there pry / Upon his breast, his thighs, and every limb, / And up again and close beside him swim, / And talk of love."

In an earlier work, *Dido Queen of Carthage*, Marlowe had portrayed Zeus playing with a petulant Ganyমেদে upon his knee, the jealousy of Venus being the cause of the entire Trojan War. And in his play *Edward II*, the king's minion Gaveston is another Ganyমেদে, who puts on an Italian masque with "a lovely Boy in

Diana's shape" who is chased down by men dressed like satyrs — no doubt a gentle rape. Marlowe, before his accidental death in a barroom brawl, perhaps a lovers' quarrel, was brought to trial for the heresy of suggesting that "Christ loved John in the ways of Sodom," and for the social impropriety of having said that "All they who love not Tobacco and Boyes are Fooles."

Ganyমেদে romps freely in Renaissance prose as well as poetry. In Robert Greene's novel *Menaphon* (1589) the heroine is ambiguously compared to Ganyমেদে, and the hero to Jove. They marry and beget a beauteous boy named Pleusidippus, who is subsequently abducted by a pirate: "there arrived on the strond a Thessalian Pirate named Eurilachus who espied this pretie infant, when gazing on his face as wanton Jove gazed on Phrygian Ganyমেদে in the fields of Ida, hee exhale into his eyes such deepe impression of his perfection, as that his thought never thirsted so much after any prey, as possession of this pretie Pleusidippus." Pretty Pleus is carried off to a foreign port, where King Agenor receives him as a gift in return for granting amnesty to Eurilachus. Meanwhile, Queen Eriphilia is left alone in her garden.

The major plot device in Thomas Lodge's novel *Rosalynde* (1590) — the source for Shakespeare's *As You Like It* — is the transvestism of the heroine Rosalind disguised as the shepherd Ganyমেদে, along with her girlfriend Alinda disguised as a knight. There is a mock transvestite marriage ceremony, and several cases of mistaken identity to keep the narrative rollicking along. Rosalind disguises herself as Endymion, Adonis, Diana, Paris, and is summed up by the author as "that amorous Girle-Boye," no doubt the sister of Shakespeare's "master-mistress."

In the seventeenth century a literary clique styling itself as "the School of Spenser" began pouring out interminable imitations of *The Faerie Queene*. The center of this circle was William Browne of Tavistock, whose *Brittania's Pastorals* (1613) has about a dozen different fawn-youths to complicate the plot and provide comic-erotic relief for the otherwise barren story-line. Doridon is "a lovely swain," as beautiful as Narcissus, with whom Apollo falls in love: "The chiefest cause the sun did condescend / To Phaetons' request [to use his chariot] was to this end, / That whilst the other did his horses rein, / He might slide from his sphere and court this swain, / Whose sparkling eyes vied lustre with the stars." Because of the numerous "pretty youths", "sweet-faced boys," and "pretty shepherd's boys" in Browne's work, the contemporary critic Sam Hardinge suggested that Browne ceased writing not because he had died, but because he had been enticed away from his Muse by an open-legged satyr lad.

Browne's "very good friend" the poet George Wither, in *The Shepherds Hunting*

(1622) tells the story of how their love continued even while Wither was politically imprisoned for writing an anti-government tract. Phineas Fletcher, another member of the same group, in *Brittain's Ida* (1628) sings of the Ganyমেদে Anchises: "His cheerful lookes and merry face would proove, / (If eyes the index be where thoughts are read) / A dainty play-fellow for naked Love," or Cupid. But Anchises is a scornful virgin: "Thousand boyes for him, thousand maidens dy'de, / Dye they that list, for such his rigorous pride, / He thousand boyes (ah foole) and thousand maids deni'd." That parentheses reveals much.

The Fletchers were a merry family. In his *Piscatorie Eclogues* (1628) Phineas speaks of his brother Giles' love for King James I (reigned 1603-25), who was so openly gay that he was called Queen James in the streets, and his own love for John Tomkin. Their cousin John Fletcher was the lover of Francis Beaumont, with whom he lived for many happy years and co-authored numerous plays. Beaumont in *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus* (1602) portrays Hermaphroditus as Apollo's boyfriend: "Phoebus so doted on this rosiat face, / That he hath oft stole secretly from his place, / Where he did lie by fayre Leucothoes side, / To dally with him in the vales of Ide."

In Giles Fletcher's *Christ's Victorie and Triumph* (1610), Ganyমেদে is fully resurrected, Christ, "his cheekes as snowie apples, sop't in wine," gloriously ascends into heaven just as Ganyমেদে ascended to Olympus. And in *Flowers of Sion* by William Drummond of Hawthornden, another member of the School of Spenser, Christ has become a rose-cheeked Youth with curled locks who "pours immortal nectar in a cup of gold" for the god of Christianity, now re-paganised as Zeus;

Thus we have come round about to where we began, with the "Page of Jove's sweetest-nectared carnival," the primordial Ganyমেদে of Strato's second-century *Muse of Boyhood*. The pastoral convention of Renaissance poetry rings false and much too delicate for our modern ears, but the pastoral mode was used during this period for even serious political debate. It was the best strategy of evasion whereby these writers could express their loves while the general public thought they were talking only about mythology. These Renaissance authors re-discovered a pagan genre filled with lyrical grace and could not pass it up. Happily, along with this genre came the cutest of tricks. Unhappily, nearly all the homoerotic works I've mentioned have been quite successfully censored from modern texts and anthologies by prudent scholars who would faint with the closet vapors if they saw the nimbus of this lovely lad radiating from a hustling New York City street urchin. He smiles at us knowingly, and forever passes on.

—Rictor Norton

First Poem for the New Year

I

Cruise up and down the major throughfare
There are in
different streets innocent faces
wandering
Third Avenue / Lexington
seeing the lovely boys.
But it is no use, the
wandering, the boys,
The feeling eats the tremble in the nerve.

II

I see an old lover who does not recognize me.
I do not believe my eyes.
His face is a million strokes.
He speaks of other matters.
The past is shut in the attic of his brain.
I move out into the cold heaving winter
cruise up and down the major throughfare.
There are: indifferent streets, innocent faces.
Nothing has changed the night.

Herbert Woodward Martin
(New York City 1/3/68)

RED CLOVER

red clover
arranged in fields
of awry perceptions
I wander in leaves
eating only flowers
my popper opened
to fifteen flies
arranged in sand
he looked my way
in total mosquitoes
dust for fanfare
we could hardly
remember nineteen seventeen
in a haze banjos
playing french horns
lying between belts
thirty feet of
yellow shoes dreaming
somewhere in shrubbery
Swedish underwear
screaming blue pimentos.

—Charley Shively, 7/3/73

W. Poem 1½

Desperation hangs the penis of fear
from men pursuing a thin occasion
tenuous as a spider's thread.
Thread that is dreaming persistence through the pupil,
of men confined in work flesh racing their walk the daily way
to love and be loved.
The eyes fix upon an interest.
They cruise a form that is urge.
The stomach quivers this entering.
the needles of a minute.
Love does not last here a day.
Vows are taken at the urinals, then flushed away.
Impermanence is the benediction upon the men you meet,
moving restlessly,
desiring from john to street,
what chance directs towards the path of their feet.
There is a bottom to that curious and violent room,
where men come
to relieve more than the stress of their bowels.
Waiting is: the sound of footfalls in a pace;
the sound of indistinguishable voices trysting.
A cough is the interest of caution in a separate stall.
The day dizzies down like water in a commode.
The summer birds outside are perfect musicians.
We are too distant from the pitch of their pleasure.
There is no innocence in denying as much love as possible.

—Herbert Woodward Martin

CONSTANTINE CAVAFY



Alexander the Great (founder of Alexandria) on a silver coin of Thrace (ca. 286 B.C.)

"Most readers know Constantine Cavafy only as a legend encountered in Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*." Peter Bien's statement, written nine years ago, is probably still true, in spite of the fact that a number of good English translations of his poems have been published. Yet Cavafy is slowly becoming one of the most widely read of foreign poets, perhaps because of the directness and economy of his writing, and its accessibility to translation.

He is a major figure in 20th century writing — and also in the history of gay literature. Though there have been many homosexual poets between the turn of the century and the present, only two have been major poets of homosexuality: the German poet Stefan George, and Cavafy.

A learned, well-travelled, cosmopolitan man, he had a great (though not uncritical) admiration for the Graeco-Roman and Byzantine civilizations and their heritage, and many of his poems are infused with a knowledge of the past. Some deal with historical figures or incidents. Others are more personal reflections of his own life. But the spirit of Greek love is never far away.

Cavafy was born in Constantinople in 1863, of a well-to-do Greek family; his father died when he was seven, and his mother took him and her other children to England, where they stayed for seven years and where the young Constantine began to read and love English and French literature. Later, as a teenager,

he lived again in Constantinople, and finally settled in Alexandria, Egypt at the age of twenty-two. Shortly afterwards, he began to write.

He was fortunate to find an older lover, Pericles Anastasiades, who was interested in his literary talents, encouraged him in his writing and accepted his frugal methods of distributing his work.

Though Cavafy published no books of poetry while he lived, preferring to distribute his works on broadsheets among his friends, he craved wider recognition, especially among the young. He collected around him a coterie of young disciples who met at his favorite cafe to read his works and enjoy his conversation. He described his situation in a poem ironically called "Very Seldom":

*An old man; bent up and exhausted
...he meditates
The holding he still has in youthfulness
Young men even now are repeating his verses
...Even now are moved by his revelations
of beauty*
(transl. J. Mavrogordato)

Something of a recluse, Cavafy worked by day as an official in the Ministry of Irrigation. At night and evening, he was a well-known figure in the streets and cafes of the city. His apartment at 10 Rue Lepsius became legendary: the dimly-lit rooms with their ornate, Byzantine furniture allowed the poet, always hyperconscious of his aging, to remain in shadow whenever a beautiful youth entered. In the light of those candles, one of his poems attains a secondary meaning:

*The days of the future stand in front of us
Like a line of candles all alight...
The days that are past are left behind,
A mournful row of candles that are out...
I look before me at my lighted candles.
I don't want to turn round and see with horror
How quickly the dark line is lengthening,
How quickly the candles multiply that have
been put out.*
(transl. J. Mavrogordato)

Whatever the settings of Cavafy's poems — the Ancient World or modern Alexandria — he focuses on particular small incidents or events and makes them not only evoke a particular time, place and state of mind, but also illuminate aspects of human experience and sensibility that have existed in any era or location. His poems sometimes seem like a series of glimpses into other worlds — and into our own: a telegraph boy's looking at himself in the mirror of a rich man's hall, a crowd silently assembling in a public square, the quiet interior of a Byzantine church, a painted wine-bowl, the memory of a night of love.

regret at opportunities lost, at brief encounters that will never come again:

*As I was going down the infamous stairs
you were coming through the door, and
for a second
I saw your unfamiliar face and you saw me...
Our bodies sensed and sought each other;
our blood and skin understood.
But we both hid ourselves, flustered.*
(transl. E. Keeley & G. Savidis)

Cavafy's romantic and sexual life was, by Alexandrian standards, discreet. While he never hid the fact of his homosexuality, his temperament did not impel him to be blatant. Yet he seems to have felt a very deep frustration at his own reticence, and at the social discrimination that encourages such reticence and isolates the homosexual from his fellows and his community. He wrote:

*At least let me now deceive myself with
illusions
so as not to feel my empty life.
And yet I came so close so many times.
And yet how paralyzed I was, how cowardly;
why did I keep my lips sealed
while my empty life wept inside me,
my desires dressed in black?
To have been so close so many times
to the eyes of love, the lips,
to the body dreamed of, loved.
So close, so many times.*
(transl. E. Keeley & G. Savidis)

Not all his opportunities were passed up:

TO REMAIN
*It must have been one o'clock in the morning,
or half past one. In a corner of the tavern;
behind the wooden partition.
Aside from the two of us the shop was
completely deserted.
A kerosene lamp scarcely lighted it.
Dozing, at the doorway, the waiter dead
for sleep.*

*No one would have seen us. But already
we had excited ourselves so much
that we became unfit for precautions.*

*Our clothes were half-opened — they were
not many
for a divine month of July was scorching hot.*

*Enjoyment of the flesh between
our half-opened clothes;
quick baring of the flesh — the vision of what
occurred twenty-six years ago; and has now
come
to remain among these verses.*
(transl. R. Dalven)

The figure of Cavafy that emerges from his books and from the few writings on him in English is that of an aging poet,

significantly snappy, yet with an unmistakable dignity, standing in an empty Alexandrian street, perhaps beside a dusty shop window through which the sun is casting streaks of light onto the faces and arms of the young man who works there. The poet turns his head slightly to peer into the window, sees his own knowing and melancholy reflection in the grimy glass, turns, and slowly, thoughtfully, walks away.

Cavafy's complete works can easily be contained in one volume, but in them he delineated, as no other artist has, something of what it is like to be of a particular place at a particular time in history, and something of the poignancy and timelessness of homosexual love. And, in his poem "Hidden Things," he predicted:

*Later, in a more perfect society,
someone else made just like me
is certain to appear and act freely.*

—Ian Young

Two Poems by Constantine Cavafy
Translated by Ian Young

Picture of a Youth of Twenty-Three
Painted By His Friend of the Same
Age, an Amateur

He studies it carefully now,
the painting he completed
yesterday noon.
He has painted him
in a coat of deep grey, unbuttoned,
no vest or tie,
a rose-coloured shirt open at the collar
to show the beauty of his chest and neck.
His hair falls over his right temple,
his beautiful hair
parted in the fashionable manner.
The sensuous feeling is there
that he wanted to portray
when he painted the eyes,
the lips...
That mouth, those lips
so made for consummation,
for choice love-making.

FAR OFF

If only,
if only I could recall that memory now,
so distant, so faded...
So little is left
from the years of my youth.

A skin as if carved from jasmine
that night in August — was it August?
Yes, I can just remember his eyes...
they were blue, I think...
Yes, blue...A sapphire blue...

GAY COMMUNITY

Gay community organizers are often confronted with the notion that the only thing gay men have in common is their sexual orientation. "We don't need gay liberation, everything's going fine, no one's hassled." In a sense it is true; for the vast majority of gay men life goes on smoothly. They go to their closeted jobs, and since no one knows, no one comes down on them for being gay. They go to the bars in San Francisco and the police leave them alone. The neighbors don't know so everything's cool. No need to rock the boat; apparently everything's fine.

But is it? Why do I laugh at the old queen at the bar who says something about gay life being "tragic", and yet feel a twinge inside me? Why so many gay alcoholics and suicides? Why so many lonely people?

Just because there's no head-bashing oppression in the streets does not mean everything's okay and we're not oppressed. Our society's structure and attitudes are extremely oppressive against gays. It is an oppression of fear and questioning of self-worth. The fear of being open about gayness keeps men isolated. Some gay males never have sex or relate emotionally with men. They live and die pretending to be

straight because they are deathly afraid of society's disapproval. And they suffer because of it.

Only openness, exposure, and education can change society's attitudes about gay people. And since that will take awhile, gay men must now look and see what can be done within their community to improve the quality of life for gay men.

In the cruise and bar scenes, gay men are taught to view each other's bodies as commodities. Everyone pits their salability against another's in hopes the other will think he's getting a good deal. Society provides nothing but that scene for gay people. It breeds loneliness and frustration. If it is true that gay people have more emotional problems, it is because they are frustrated in their struggle for emotional fulfillment. Some gay men say they hate organizations, but we must organize if we are to reshape the gay reality.

All gay men have a history in common. The role and oppression of gays in history is our heritage. In every American gay person's personal history there is an important, if not traumatic, time called coming out. Coming out is dealing with society's repression of your sexual and emotional nature. Since all active gay people have gone through the experience,

it is a bond in common. Common bonds are the basis for community.

Few people relate to all aspects of the existing gay sub-culture but it does create bonds of commonality among gays. The night-life scene, drag, leather and camp all serve as common experience of a minority people. Shared oppression and shared experience is the base of gay identity now. For most gays it is not enough to merit "community." Yet a gay man relates emotionally to people and society as a gay man. Even if he passes for straight, he doesn't react to situations as a straight man would. This commonality of the way we feel, the way we look at the world, is ground enough for identifying with other gays.

As gay organizations provide more services, gay identity will be reinforced because individuals will know that "our people" are providing the service. Some services, especially medical and psychological, ought to be administered to gay people by gay people to avoid uptightness about personal problems. It is common that gay people get manipulated by straight professionals. It also happens that gay people will spend hundreds of dollars for a psychiatrist. Although the root of the problem is often the inability to accept being gay (i.e. to be different, perverted in society's eyes), the client will be too afraid to tell the psychiatrist he or she is gay.

It is notable that gay community services are now mostly used by low-income counter-culture gays. For gay organizations to really mean something to the wide gay community, involvement must generate emotional fulfillment. Despite the political gains and social services that gay liberation can produce, the basic reality is this: What gay people have in common is their sexual and emotional orientation. If gay people needed only sex from each other, bars and baths would be adequate to take care of their needs. Gay community is needed to improve greatly the chances of an individual's finding emotional fulfillment in sharing love, sharing friendship, and sharing happenings with a community. If people find emotional reward in gay liberation, you know they'll stay and gay community will grow. If the "tragic" side of gay life is due to the oppressive bar situation, then getting gay people relating on human levels is the way to end a good deal of real unhappiness and depression.

Although a sexual love relationship is the primary fulfillment an individual seeks when relating to gay community, it is important to emphasize that gay people gay friends: people who can understand the things happening in another gay person's life. It is amazing how many gays don't have gay friends, either by choice or circumstance.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

INSIDE PRISON

[Ed. Note: The following article was written for Gay Sunshine by Ronald Endersby, a brother presently in Oregon State Penitentiary, 2605 State Street, Salem, Oregon 97310]

In a prison gay inmates are expected to assume the role of the missing female in the life of the hetero inmates. That is a polite way of saying that gay inmates are treated like women and are simply an alternative to masturbation! When a hetero inmate tells his "prison lover" that he loves him, he is really saying that he is horny and wants to have sex; love has nothing to do with it.

All gay inmates are considered "queens" and treated as such. A gay inmate might weigh 300 pounds and lift weights for a hobby but he is still considered a "queen." All gay inmates are also considered sex criminals by the other inmates. This puts the gay inmate in the same category as child molesters, rapists, and other types of sex criminals. I am serving a seven year sentence for Burglary-Not-In-A-Dwelling, and most of the inmates and staff members think that I am in prison for a sex crime — simply because I am an admitted homosexual.

From the time a gay inmate comes to prison he is followed around by sex starved inmates. It doesn't matter if the gay inmate is 18 years old or 65 years old; someone will want to have sex with him. The youngest gay inmate at this prison is 18 and the oldest is 67. They both have

GAY COMMUNITY, continued

"Certainly the cruise scene is demeaning," someone told me, "but gay liberation offers no real alternative. I went to a GSU meeting and felt like I was in a bar, only there wasn't any booze." As usual, people who knew each other rapped by themselves while nervous single individuals sat around cruising like they were trained to do in bars.

Although it's good that gay organizations have social meetings and dances, they really are not an alternative to the bar scene. Countless gay people have been to gay liberation meetings once or twice only to be bored and unmotivated. Nothing reinforced them to come back or get involved. Gay liberation, in order to build gay community, must address itself to the emotional fulfillment of individuals if the individuals are going to stay.

The way in which a gay organization can be an alternative to the bar scene is to put all energies into getting as many people working on projects as possible. People needn't commit themselves to hours and hours of work, but rather than going to the standard boring business-and-social meeting, devote a small amount of time working with other gay people inside the organization. East Bay Gay (Oakland-Berkeley area) is beginning a system of committees that is already working: dance, media-publicity, counseling collective and switchboard. In this way the individual who first comes to East Bay Gay will do something positive with the time he chooses to spend on the gay movement and will have a group of people to work with from the start. A number of special interest groups (Gay Radio Collective, Gay Literature Group) are meeting regularly and doing positive things.

Gay liberation has to seriously consider the challenge of the validity of gay ID and gay community. If it is true that gay community is unnecessary or impossible, projects and services beyond social gatherings are an elaborate waste of time. But if the sexual-emotional needs we have in common merit the development of gay community, then gay liberation must get people working together in projects, common interest groups, and social services. It is the only way we will build solidarity, and it's the only way to change the gay social scene in our lifetime.

—Jim Green

"prison lovers." A "prison lover" is an inmate (usually hetero) that is willing (indeed eager) to engage in homosexual activity while in prison. This same person wouldn't talk to a gay person when he isn't locked up. This guy is called the "jockey" (the masculine partner in a "prison romance"). The feminine acting partner is called an "old lady" or a "kid." The "jockey" and his "old lady" are prison lovers. This is very common and is accepted (tolerated) by most of the inmates and prison staff.

In addition to these prisons produce an inmate called a "jailhouse punk." This guy sells his body to the other inmates — for cigarettes, dope and whatever. "Jailhouse punks" have plenty of customers but very few, if any, friends.

Prisons have what is known as the convict code. This code is an unwritten set of "rules" made known to all inmates via word of mouth. All inmates are expected to follow this code, and those who don't might find themselves in the hospital, or worse. Gay inmates are mentioned in the convict code several times.

One example of the convict code as applied to gay inmates is the situation in mess hall. Gay inmates should never attempt to sit at the same table with

hetero inmates, unless they are asked to do so. A gay inmate should eat with his prison lover or with other gay inmates. Another example of the convict code as applied to gays is the situation in recreation yard. Gay inmates are discouraged from participating in rough sports (i.e. basketball, baseball, weightlifting, etc.). Gays are allowed to play handball, golf or ping pong — but only with their prison lovers or with other gays.

Not only do gay inmates suffer at the hands of their fellow inmates, but they also suffer under the "guidance" of the prison staff. Gay inmates who are caught engaging in sexual activity with a consenting partner are sent to segregation for 90 days. Gays are also sent to segregation for kissing, holding hands, or standing "too close" to another inmate. The guards decide what is "too close." And more than one gay inmate has been sent to segregation for suspicion for engaging in sexual activity. What can a gay inmate do when a guard tells him, "I hate faggots with a purple passion!" This happened to me and I couldn't say a word without being sent to segregation for 90 days for insubordination to a staff member.

Gay inmates are allowed to subscribe to gay newspapers, but this doesn't mean that they will actually receive those pub-

lications. Gay publications have a habit of "getting lost" in the mail.

Only a real fool would say that there isn't any sexual activity taking place inside a prison. You can't lock hundreds of men up for several years and not expect them to engage in some type of sexual activity. However, gay inmates do not have to resort to force to find a willing sex partner. A gay inmate can find all of the sexual activity that he wants.

Gay inmates are not the aggressors. Gay inmates are not the ones who rape and molest the other inmates. The "he-man" or "straight" inmates are the ones who sexually abuse younger prisoners. And when the prison staff discovers such a situation they transfer the molested inmate to another institution; or they place both of the prisoners in segregation for 90 days; or they forget about it and pretend such things don't happen. Yet when a prison rape does take place gay inmates get blamed for it.

I am the first to admit that prisons are not intended to be country clubs or resorts and that there must be certain rules and regulations for security reasons. But there is no reason for the prison staff to treat gay inmates like second class citizens of an already second class society (prison). What has censoring a gay inmate's mail have to do with rehabilitation? Being an inmate of a prison is never easy, and prison is not heaven on earth for gay people.

the magazine man

you sit behind the magazine stand
in a puddle of fat
elastic skin holds you in where
you're falling out
sometimes they have to nail you down
the weight from your head tips you over
they put girders to reinforce the sidewalks
you wear an old teeshirt
with the stale smell of sweat
your nose is bulbous round as your belly
you move as if made of stone
on fat stumpy legs
belching salami sandwiches
and farting rotten eggs
you laugh at the drag queens
with envy and maybe lust those tall
picturesque ladies
your lips snarl "fuckin' faggots"
you murmur under seven chins
yesterday they had to basket you
cut off both legs
you acted brave of course
giving the spare parts to a dog
what incantations to ward off the pain
with its sharp jaws
you have this dream in which you think
you're

a phone
your shoulders shrug
are you ready to ring?

—Tommi Avicelli

PETITION FOR GAY RIGHTS IN CALIFORNIA MEN'S PRISONS

PETITION

We demand of the Adult Authority and of the California Department of Corrections:

1. an end to using a prisoner's gay sexuality as a basis for postponing parole.
2. an end to the involuntary lock-up (segregation) of gay prisoners on special units.
3. that gay prisoners have full access to all recreational facilities and programs.
4. that no gay prisoner be barred from any job or vocational training program in the prison system, and that new programs be started that meet the needs of gay prisoners.
5. that gay prisoners be allowed to organize officially recognized social, political and religious organizations, with regular meetings, and the right to invite outside speakers.
6. that prisoners be allowed to receive and use clothing and make-up with which to express themselves.

Sign below & return to INSIDE/OUT (California residents only)

Name _____
Address _____

This petition is being circulated by Inside Out, a group of gay men in the San Francisco Bay Area who have been writing and visiting with prisoners for over a year. The petition is one form of protest against the double oppression faced by gay inmates of California State prisons.

Our goal is to have 30,000 signatures by early November when we will present them to the California Department of Corrections and the California Adult Authority (parole board). Hopefully, the petitions can serve as a basis for demanding negotiations with those officials aimed at correcting the serious problems that exist.

Obviously, petitioning alone is not enough. Many other forms of public education and political pressure must be applied.

This petition deals specifically with men's prisons because our knowledge is of conditions there. We understand that women's institutions are desperately in need of changes, too, and we support efforts to bring them about.

People who want to help circulate this petition or who are interested in our work can write to us:

Inside Out
P.O. Box 42531
San Francisco, Ca. 94142

How the Sexually Sophisticated Lover Makes Things Easier for Himself

Now, more pleasure for the sexually sophisticated man!

We live in a time of increased sexual liberation. Of new love techniques, of new pleasures and greater erotic exploration. Now, at last, science has come up with a handy, inexpensive product for the sexually liberated lover who wants more pleasure for himself and his lovers. And it comes in a handy and small disposable packet you can easily slip into your pocket or wallet.

ATHOS, developed in a leading laboratory, is an easy to use anti-septic lubricant which is an invaluable aid to anal intercourse.

ATHOS means much more pleasure and complete ease in love making due to its unique lubricating properties, especially developed for this unique and unusually useful product. Insertion is much easier, completely painless and much, much more pleasurable both for the giver and the receiver. Nor is this all. ATHOS has been clinically tested and, in a published laboratory report it has been found to possess certain anti-V.D. properties because of its anti-septic characteristics. ATHOS means greater peace of mind and greater pleasure. Use ATHOS next time you make love and you will never make love without it again. "A delightful love balm," "I never go on a date with my lover without a couple of packets on me," "Now I don't have any trouble with penetration at all, and it's pleasure all the way for both of us" are just some of the things satisfied users have said about ATHOS, the new antiseptic lubricant being used by more and more sophisticated men every day. You too should use ATHOS the next time you make love. For greater peace of mind and for much more pleasure, both for you and your love partners. USE ATHOS—YOUR LOVERS WILL THANK YOU FOR IT.

Get some today—you will be glad you did tonight!

ATHOS Box G, Rockville Centre, New York 11571

Enclosed is \$3.95 for 1 Dozen.

Dept.—

NAME

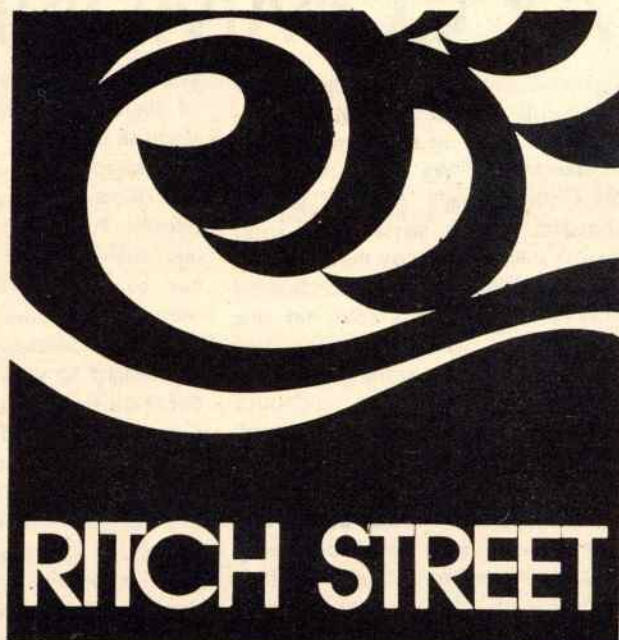
PLEASE PRINT

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP



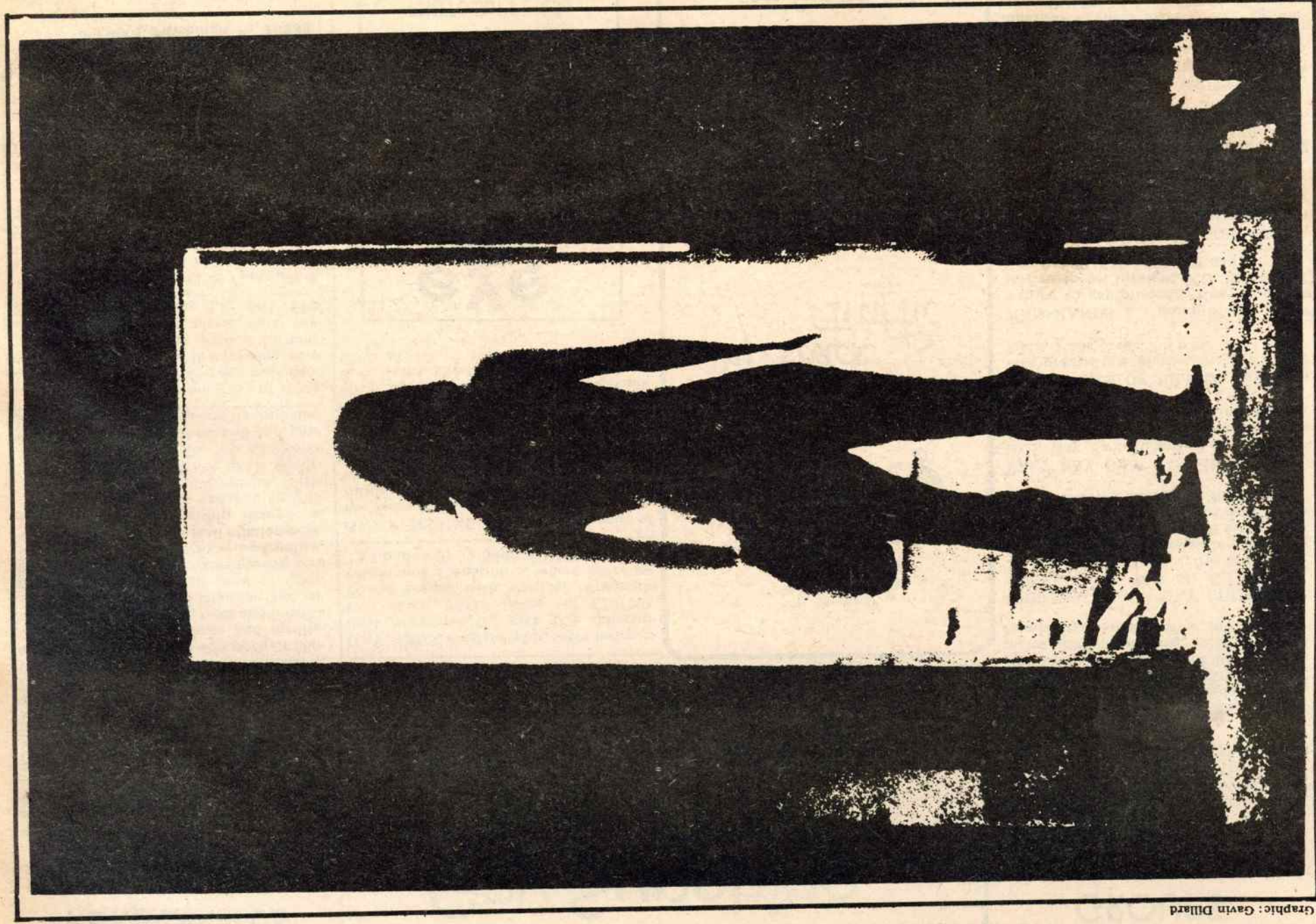
RITCH STREET

JOIN IN! / Steam / Sauna / Gym /
Sundeck/Minoan Pool & Lounge/
Open 24 hours daily

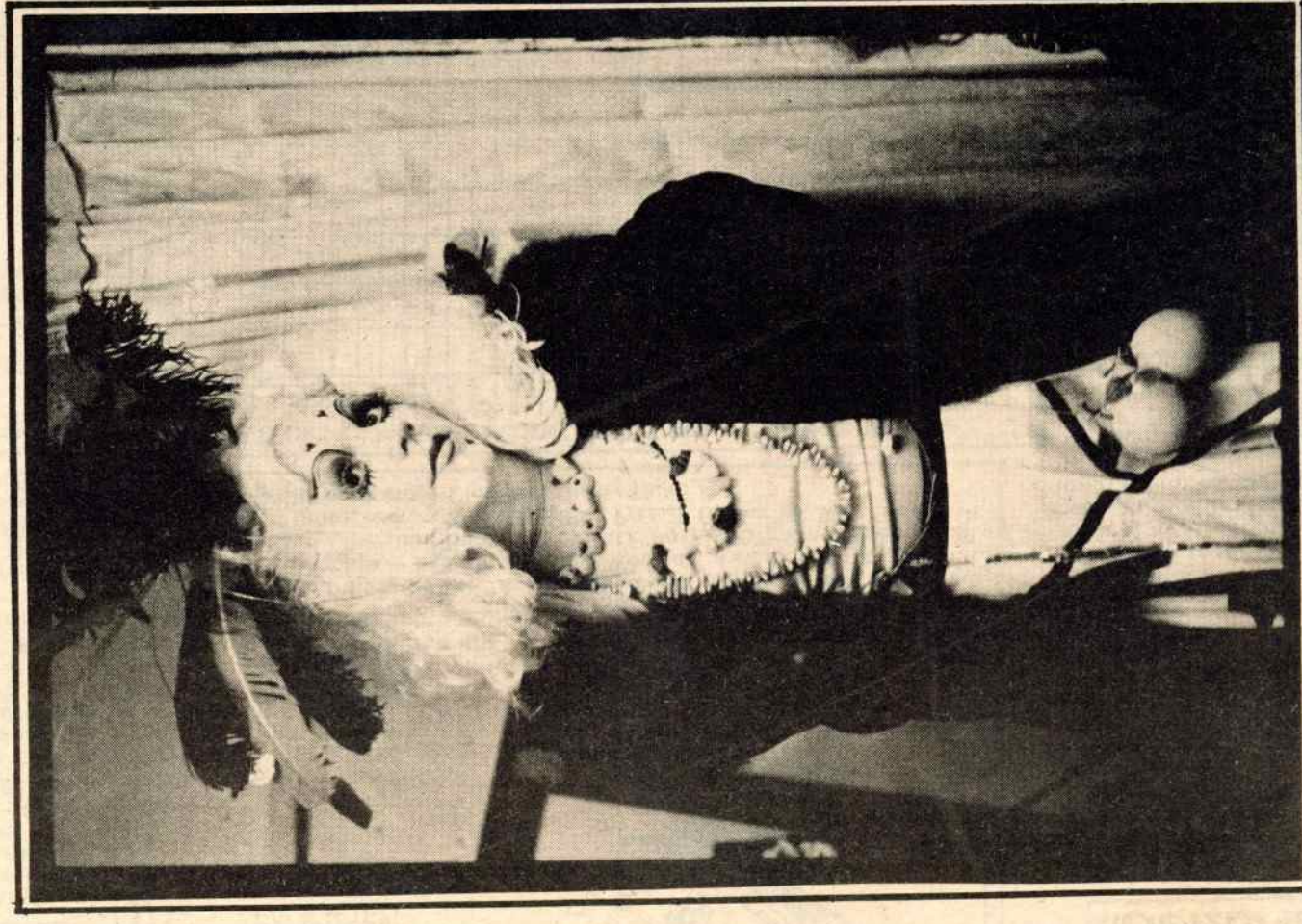
330 RITCH STREET
Off Townsend between Third & Fourth
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
TELEPHONE 392-3582

GAY SUNSHINE

A Newspaper of Gay Liberation



Graphic: Gavin Dillard



Pristine Condition, San Francisco 1972

Photo by Anthony Enton Friedkin

September · October 1973 No. 19

.35 Calif/.50 Elsewhere