

MY INTERPRETERS

One lived in the
color green
and recommended
open eye
meditation
facing east
to conduct
the rising sun's
rays
into the
cave at my
skull's center
over the red and
green
flames that
glisten of a June
morning
in wet grass.
Another that was forever
blushing pink
I last endured
one afternoon at
sunset
framed in a french
window over the Hudson
gasping
at the indubitable
brightness of the
rosé
sunbeams
supposedly
setting fire to my hair.

MR PEACOCK

According to a commentary on the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali
There are these types that look just like regular people
But they aren't. Each, though seemingly a normal individual,
Is in fact a robot projected by a highly trained mind; and each is
Coded for a particular inheritance, which must either be acquired
By that mind or transmitted to an artificial human being
Set to go through it by proxy. Predictable as ciphers,
These products of visualization are noticeably methodical,
Even automatic, in their ways. A single mind moves hundreds,
Occasionally thousands at a time, until one by one their hearts
Stop, as the controlling thought withdraws its ray.
Across the way, on the far side of the Catholic
Schoolyard facing the building where I live, an old man with an
Egglike bald head stands at his open window, sunning himself.
His arm is moving back and forth in front of the white shorts
Which seem to have slipped down. I realize to my dismay
That I am looking at an elder statesman of a *confrérie*
The East Hampton uncle I am named for, a doctor,
Used to call the display boys. Of poets, according to Jahiz,
The best are possessed by genies, the next-best by friendly
Demons, the average by fallen angels, and the bad
By the Devil himself. Ibn-Arabi had a way of putting
Frolicsome spirits in his lute, which made people laugh, cry, or
Fall into a trance, and as he played they said his
Eyebrows moved up and down like the arms of the balance
At the last judgement. In France there's a field
With a thousand staves stuck in the ground known as
Staves' Acre, where a certain plant *Staphysagria* grows,
Which if eaten makes one crave strong drink, sweet
Tobacco and warm pungent effusions of sex fluids
Melting in one's mouth as the certainty of painful
Death looms like a black hat atop a golden cloud.
Take off your shoes means divest yourself of the eyes
Of fancy because what you want to see can't be seen.

Inside the white space you're suspended
In a luminous cell where despite bright light
You can see nothing at all. You float like a
Slide on a light table, but not alone. Something whispers:
He can see you now. You say: He can? Where is he?
You listen in the silence. You repeat: Where is he?
It answers: In a crack so you can't see him. This wall only seems
Seamless, but it ain't, so shut up while you're ahead.
Your head you can't use, your ability to discriminate is
Gone, you're losing all memory
Together with the capacity to think, and as
Your heart seizes up inside you you realize
It is about to take over from your eyes
As the organ of sight and start seeing things.
Just then your mouth turns into a
Loudspeaker, and the voice coming out of it is his.
He's shrieking inside a viscous cloud
That hisses like an egg in fire, its yolk streaking
Over the sides of your gore-drooling mandibles
In the soul's private dining room. A nickname
For the *ee*-character is Lefty, the reason being
That when a bride's left eye quivers, it's good luck.
At this, Mr Peacock steps from his alcove and
With a strangled hoot erects his electric-blue neck like a cobra.

KRIM KRIM VARHI
VARHI DWAGA PAVO
NIL KANTH KEKA
KEKA SHIKI TAWO

In the Punjab they smoke his feathers in a pipe for snakebite;
The ashes are good against vomiting. His fat remedies
Arthritic joints; he struts gracefully and with ease.
His flesh never rots. The beatified Augustine
Was at a dinner party where they had peacock. He took his portion
Home and kept it for weeks, without observing
The slightest sign of putrefaction. It simply shriveled.

Mr Peacock eats snakes, his screams terrify demons.
His dung mixed with saliva cures eye infections;
His tongue, pulverized and taken in pill form, forstalls fits.
The peahen conceives by licking tears shed by the eyes in his fan.
It doesn't really happen that way, yet as Peacock Jr. with his fine
Feathers vibrates (an as-yet-immaterial imprint) in the plasma of
Her egg, the universe unfolds in her mind like a city appearing
In a mirror of bright and as it were molten glass, the image being
No different from the glass although it seems to be. Mr Peacock
Retreats, fans his wings. Then backing at her, lifting his fan he
Bares his fanny. He pivots. She stares at the approaching
Plumes towering overhead like the tent of Holofernes in the fiery
Night when Judith walks out with her tormentor's head
Having arranged his torso in a pose inviting anal penetration.
The open stump wells up in a thousand sighted facets called
Little Eyes. They stand for villages tacked to the vertebrae
Of Italy, seen by Cicero in a dream shortly before the end of
The Republic. They bunch together in a concavity known as the
Oculus, or Panopticon, where there is (quotes) not a single
Foot square in which man or boy shall be able to plant himself
Under any assurance of not being observed—the prison
Of the sun and stars, having cells constructed around and exposed
Toward a central well whence warders can at all times
See inmates in a structure mirroring that of memory function
Vis-à-vis brain stem. She pictures him turning on a spit,
Bathed in a fire of a heat no greater than that of sunlight on a
Leaf in space. She wheels before the magnetic eyes, their
Dark blue pupils, gold irises, green lids and lashes forming a
Last screen before the crystalline skeleton of the world as we see it
Passes into the open, her mouth gulping blood still
Shooting (as she fancies) out of Mr Peacock's decapitated
Trunk, like a wineskin that she

L A J O N G L E U S E

tramples, juggling

Not one but many heads with staring eyes, hieroglyphs of the

Illusion of a solution as presented in a constellation spelling out
 Ways of getting home to what all have sensed but
 None yet seen or known. There's a giant in the fan. In the *Manyoshu*
 The expression "madder-root hue" (*akane sasu*) stands for "sunrise"
 Or "the pink of youth." In means skin which is what veil also
 Means because when you rend it there is nothing to keep you out.
 The stem consists of systems of spirals whirling on a common pole.
 The wound's surface is a flattening of the upward patterning
 In rows of florets like the segmented orbs of a
 Fly on a windowpane. To see the veil part is like getting
 Undressed for the first time with someone and you notice a
 Detail that repels but you can't stop. At the center of the fan
 Stands a gigantic veiled figure seen in vision by Shaikh Adi in a cave
 On a mountain above the Plain of Nineveh. Mr Peacock's
 Neck stretches like a snake in the veiled giant's hand, and
 As the veil dissolves in polychrome wisps like a toxic cloud
 The giant's eyes gleam like malefically conjunct planets, they glow
 Like the asterisms that were watching as Adam's rib cage popped,
 They burn like an opium eater's ears that obstinately spell into
 Sentences the distracted syllables of aerial voices,
 They glare like a thousand frames of the MGM lion's mouth roaring
 In the night after the evening body count is brought to you by NBC in
 Living color. They flare like the coke-encrusted nostrils of a
 Demented trombone player looking straight into the bared brain of
 Heaven through the Devil's nose. Over a salad that reeks of garlic
 And wild thyme, the 92-year-old Virgil Thompson congratulates a
 Young artist with AIDS on having caught the fashionable disease.
 Goethe exclaims *More light!* when what he really means is *Curtains!*
 Blake falls swooning on his garden path.
 Spasms run through the fan which shivers with a metallic rattle.
 She crouches. He jumps on her. The fan enfolds them like a tent, or,
 Actually, since their heads are sticking out, a bedcover
 Imagined by Rackham or Klimt. The *oo*-vowel is known as Left Ear
 Because that's the red ear that wants to feel another's tongue
 Inside of it and *oo* is a particle implying promise to protect.
 Attracting form, treading a pavan measure, a music all in fours
 Over a square, tracing arcs that may never cut each other in

More points than two, oo cries out in such a way as to make you
Dream that (like moonlight shining through a certain egg's clear
Gel) it excites streams of atoms to unkink like armpit hairs
Licked by a wave in a seapoose full of white whirlpools
Turning in black space, eyes drowning in time. At age ten,
From an illustration in a lost-continent book by Churchward,
I learned that the garden of Eden was in Mu
Over gas-filled caves which exploded, bringing up
Spars of planet crust like thousands of white dominos, each one
Six times taller than the Empire State Building. According to Attar,
Peacock stood at the gate of paradise until he let the Devil in.
However in the hills of Kurdistan the Yezidis, shepherds and
Bandits, venerate the redeemed Satan as King Peacock. They say
He has regained his place as Heaven's top angel.
They dance on one leg in pearl-grey sky-blue crimson white yellow
Black and green as Adam Noah Abraham Moses David Jesus and
Mohammad. Their neighbors call them devil-worshippers.
Yet Lucifer (they reason) only carried out God's will. Also
They hate dark blue in anything but a peafowl and they
Kiss the first object a rising sun's rays touch.
My grown daughter recently told me a peacock is just a chicken
With decorations. On Hallowe'en I went out dancing with
Her and her friends. They had a peacock mask which they put on me.
Dark-eyed Ameena came. We danced. They took pictures.

ME A SURGEON

to Gerrit Lansing

I can see it now.
For a whole
winter I
held onto this
matchbox from
La Royale,
East Hampton,
one Jody
had taken a
light off of
in the wind
changing at Jamaica.
Cute, she said.
For that alone
I kept it.
Having heard
you tell how
yogis stare at the sun
to allow light in
straight to the core
a cave you said
of secret teaching
I recall
they told me I had
surgeon's hands.

WEEKEND WITH EZRA POUND

It was raining in Washington when I arrived, and the dull red buildings of St. Elizabeth's seemed particularly discouraging. After checking in at the main office, I climbed the spiral stairs, all steel and dirty enamel, chipped and peeling walls, to the heavy black door of Ezra Pound's ward, and rang the bell. I could hear radio music inside.

A Negro attendant with a great jingling ring of keys let me in. Half a dozen patients gathered round a TV set next to the door. The hall was very wide and dark as a subway station. There were benches on either side, and patients were sitting or lying on them. Doors opened on rooms for two or three, and there were several alcoves where rooms might have been, with tables for games, and chairs. Pound and his wife, with a young novelist named Jean Marie Châtel, and a painter, Miss Martinelli, were sitting in one of these alcoves when I arrived.

Pound sprang up from the canvas lawn-chair and shook my hand. "You're Rattray? How fortunate you got here at this moment—John here was just beginning to be tiresome, and so now," and he laid his hand on the chair in which Châtel was still sitting, next to his own, "*he* will sit over there, and you may sit here." Châtel, looking a little embarrassed, took a seat in the corner on the other side of the round game table. Pound picked up his overcoat from the arm of my chair and flung it across the table after him.

He sat back down, in a reclining position with his legs crossed, eyes half closed, looking exactly as he did in the Wyndham Lewis portrait made many years ago. His hair is now white all over and he is getting bald. He was dressed in tan shorts too big for him, tennis shoes and a loose plaid shirt. His face looks weathered, like that of a man who has worked outdoors all his life. His heavy-wristed hands are coarse and calloused, but the fingernails neatly cut short and square. I was surprised by the appearance of his arms and legs. There was no sign of that flabbiness that comes even to some of the strongest men in their forties and fifties. The Greeks spoke of "old age that unstrings men's knees," but as I watched Pound stride up and down, his knees strung taut, his calves bulging like an athlete's, I thought of some lines from Ramon Guthrie's poem, "E.P. in Paris and Elsewhere":

“This is not walking.
This is stalking, pacing
as done by jaguar or ounce
in Zagreus’ days, tracing
the lay-out for the Labyrinth...”

Before we had a chance to talk about anything, Pound jumped up again: “You’ll have tea, won’t you?”

I said that I would, and immediately he was everywhere at once, in a frenzy of activity, loading himself with jars of various sizes, tin boxes of sugar and tea, spoons and a saucer. I stood up in embarrassment, not knowing what I ought to do, but Mrs. Pound beckoned me from her corner: “Let’s sit here and talk while he makes the tea.” She was sitting behind a ramshackle old upright piano, so as not to see the people in the hall or be seen by them. Miss Martinelli was making sketches for a portrait of her.

Suddenly Pound was standing before me, holding out a peanut butter jar filled with hot tea. When we got settled again, he glared up at me and said, “Well, what specific questions have you? Or did you just come to talk? I’d just as soon talk.”

So we talked quietly. Pound took a sip of his tea and sat back with his eyes closed. I sipped nervously at mine. Miss Martinelli went on sketching Mrs. Pound, the two seated next to the barred windows, in which the grey day peered uncertainly, through a tangle of wet vines laced over the trellis-work of the bars. It was dark in the alcove, but a bare electric bulb blazed from the high ceiling of the hall. Châtel, with his back to it, was reading, his face concealed from us by a huge newspaper, *Truth*. I hitched my chair over out of the light.

“D.P. has a beautiful face,” said Miss Martinelli, “I think she has a beautiful profile, but it is so *difficult*...yes, of course, that’s why. Maestro...”

“Yes Ma’am,” said Pound, jerking around to sit on the edge of his chair.

“Will you look at this drawing?” Pound looked at it, squinting in the light, then said, “It’s a likeness,” and swung himself violently back into the reclining position.

I told him I was planning to spend a few weeks in Dalmatia.

“So you’re going to the Damnation Coast? Don’t know what the Hell you’ll see there, do you?” I said that I had friends in Split and Dubrovnik. One of them was a painter, who wanted to show me the medieval frescoes.

“If I were you, then, I should get to the heart of the matter, and see them in Turkey. I hear they’ve done a lot of work there recently, restoring them where the Turks had painted ‘em over.” He told me about a Professor Pearson of Yale, who is an adviser on the selection of Square Dollar Books (“American textbooks for students who want first things first”) and who is very interested in Byzantine frescoes. He jumped up and rushed to his room to type Pearson’s address.

“You could make an appointment with him if you happened to be passing though there any time. He’d confirm what I told you about medieval Greek. Now there’s something that’s wide open, plenty there’s not even published yet, not chewed and hashed...Now you’re talking to an old man that never learned his Greek properly, but you, you’re lucky, to know it at the beginning of the game. But I know it well enough to recognize style when I see it, and Psellus’ style, he’s seventh or eighth century, Psellus in the *Chronographia*, he writes with the precision and economy of Flaubert or the Goncourts. And Psellus had enough perception to see ‘em fall into just about the same categories they do today. He knows the difference between true credit and *creatio ex nihilo*...So you’re going to southern France next year. Well, I’ve been trying to make some people wake up to a number of simple facts, and they’d better hurry up, if they don’t want to wake up too late to *do* anything. Now if you want to *do* some really live historical research, something that hasn’t been chewed over, look into Bertran, Bertran de Born I mean, ‘*Baros mettez en gatge...*’ you know the one I mean, ‘Barons, hock your castles.’ You’ll probably walk that country a lot, and see those castles, the ones he was talking about, the ones they *hocked*. Bertran knew a usurer when he saw one—they hocked ‘em to go on crusade, you know. That would be some *useful* research, what you told your reader, your reader could put to use—the area still suffers from when they put their lands *en gatge*—you could find out for yourself, and tell your reader what happens when you hock your castles to the Jews.”

Mrs. Pound interrupted this tirade by telling about the walks they took together in southern France.

“We always used Toulouse as our base. Toulouse itself is a mediocre town, but one comes to grow fond of it, and the country all around is as beautiful and full of Provence as any place else in the South. I went with him on his last two walks. We had been married only a short time, and we went all over with rucksacks, and slept outdoors, but then the War interrupted all that.”

“I don’t suppose,” said Pound, “that the old cupboard is still there, the one that was bulging with pornographic books. And old Pere—is dead. Now let me see who *is* still alive.” Then he slowly unraveled the number of his acquaintances now living in France, who were interested in Provençal literature: Laubies, Vanderply, Pellizzi (‘a civilized wop’) and Brancusi (‘probably gaga by now, if alive at all’), and told an anecdote about each.

“And you *could* go see old Aldington as to Greek or Provençal, but better not as from E.P.; you’d better just be the *jeune homme modeste*. He lives in Montpellier now, I believe.”

Mrs. Pound repeated the list of poets and scholars back to him, counting them off on her fingers, and he went to his room and typed their names and addresses for me.

When he came back, we sat for a while in silence. It was late afternoon. Miss Martinelli was perched like a bird at dusk, her feet planted on the rung of the wooden chair. She was still at work on her sketch. Looking at her, with her golden hair falling down around her thin shoulders, I thought of Pound’s line,

In the gloom the gold gathers the
light against it

She was dressed in blue jeans and a checkered blouse. Her appearance suggested a frayed and faded survivor of the early bobby-sox days. She had huge eyes like a cat. They bulged in a flushed face that tapered down from an enormous forehead to a tiny chin and tinier double-chin. Her lips were tight and pale, but sometimes relaxed and parted into a naïve smile. I assumed that she was a patient from another ward.

Pound jumped up and strode across the hall to his room, making a sign for me to follow him. He gave me one of the Square Dollar books, *Roman and Moslem Moneys* by Alexander Del Mar. The notice on the jacket informed me that Del Mar was

among those “American writers who can hold their own, either as stylists or historians, against any foreign competition whatsoever,” who are being printed by the Square Dollar Series. I was further impressed by the following paragraph on the opposite cover:

The sheer incompetence, triviality and worthlessness of our universities is nowhere more blatantly exposed than in their ignorance of Del Mar’s writings, published from 1862 onwards in both London and the U.S. Had one not met some of the low-grade personnel of the faculties, one would be unable to attribute the historical blackout to anything save the great conspiracy which some fanatics claim to be at the root of it.

Pound’s room was strewn with wadded papers, bits of envelopes, trampled books, pencils, lengths of string, cardboard files, trunks, old paint cans, jars filled with teabags or scraps of food. The walls were hung with paintings, some by Miss Martinelli. There was a dressing table with a huge mirror which reflected the glow of sunset, and filled the room with it. The old man dove under the table looking for a couple of large tin paint cans. I noticed again how strong his bare legs looked. A person who saw him that afternoon might have had the impression, not of a poet who had lived ten years in the sordid prison described by MacLeish, but of an old-time seaman, aged but still spry from climbing the rigging every day, sitting at his ease in a coffee-house or tavern between voyages of exploration or privateering on the Spanish Main. He pulled out the tins and pried them open. They were filled with doughnuts and bread. He put some into a paper bag and tossed it to Miss Martinelli, who was standing at the door. Then he poked around under the bed until he found a box filled with boiled eggs and salami. This he handed to me to give to Châtel. It was marked *Books*, sent by Witter Bynner.

When we reached the big black door at the other end of the hall, near the TV set, Miss Martinelli saw a pair of singing comedians on the screen.

“Look at those fairies! Isn’t it disgusting?”

Pound threw his arms around her, hugged her, and kissed her goodbye. He turned and asked me to come the next day. The attendant unlocked the door while we made our farewells. I was a little surprised to see that Châtel and Miss Martinelli were only visitors.

Châtel put me up for the night on a couch. We had the food Pound had given him for supper, and talked about literature and politics for several hours. He told me that he and Miss Martinelli were supplied with almost all their food by Pound, who gets it from the hospital cafeteria. In our conversation he revealed himself as a fanatic disciple of the “Maestro”; he apes his every like and dislike, even imitates his nervous tics and manner of speaking, and way of jumping up and stalking around. Next morning his father invited us to lunch.

Châtel’s father, now a modest insurance man, was before the war a *colon* in Algeria; then joined the Free French and emigrated after the war. While we were at lunch, Châtel showed his father the copy of *Truth* which Pound had lent him, and which was filled with financiers, munitions manufacturers, a McFadden speech of 1932, and a “recently uncovered” Rothschild letter of 1862, “when America was sold to the Jews.” M Châtel read page after page, murmuring “*Très intéressant, très intéressant...*”

While we were on the way from his father’s to St. Elizabeth’s, I asked my young companion if there might be some connection between the Kasper of Kasper & Horton Square Dollar Books, and the Kasper of Clinton, Tennessee. He laughed loudly and slapped his gloved hand on the steering wheel: “Ah! at last, the Great Dawning... why yes, of course, they’re one and the same.”

Kasper had recently opened a bookshop in Georgetown, DC., organized the Seaboard White Citizens’ Council and affiliated it to similar councils in the Deep South.

The group aimed to end “integration” in Washington, put the NAACP on the Attorney General’s “subversive list” and abolish “rock-and-roll.” Membership was open to anyone 18 and white, who “believes in the divinity of Jesus Christ.” Jews were not allowed. *The New York Times* quotes from a pamphlet sent out by the Council. It condemns “pink punks...freaks, golf players, poodle dogs, hot-eyed Socialists, Fabians, scum, mold on top of the omelette...liars for hire, the press gang, degenerate liberals crying for the petrefaction of putrefaction.”

The phrase “petrefaction of putrefaction” had rung a familiar note, and I must have suspected what Châtel’s answer would be, but it wasn’t till then that my mind began

to work, and the passage quoted above came to me, together with Cantos XIV and XV, Pound's *Inferno*, and the following phrases from them:

n and the press gang
And those who had lied for hire...
...a circle of lady golfers...
and the fabians crying for the petre-
faction of putrefaction...

I mentioned this to Châtel. The sun had just broken through the clouds and was kindling a fire in his stiff brown bush of hair, lighting up his pale unshaven face, marred by pimples and a huge insect bite on the forehead, while his coarse features labored with excitement.

"Of course, of course," he said with a wave of his hand, and stepped on the gas. "And you know what else was in that proclamation...no, you could never guess, because the book he took it from was burned up by order of the International Jews after the war, every copy they could lay hands on. The important part, where he sets forth the economic program, is straight from Feder...Gottfried Feder, do you know who he was?"

I indicated by a smiling nod and a properly righteous shudder that I did.

"Feder's book on the Nazi Economics. That's the important thing, the Negro business is just a front, he knows it's the only way he can get the Southern farmers to vote for him, but *then*, when he gets the power (and they've already won here and there, Charlottesville is one place) then, he can get to work on the economic program."

I wondered, as we turned up the road to St. Elizabeth's, if Pound might not have turned out that "Seaboard" pamphlet, and had a hand in *Truth* as well. As it happened, I came away convinced of it, having met the Maestro in an Economic Mood that afternoon, and also made the acquaintance of Mr. Horton of Kasper & Horton.

When Châtel and I arrived, Mrs. Pound was already sitting in her corner. Pound said:

“Glad you could come again. Hell of a lot better company than what he brought with him yesterday, I’m sure. Sit down and I’ll make you some tea.”

Mrs. Pound explained that an un-invited caller had made his way into the ward with Châtel, having given him to understand that he was invited by Pound and authorized by the hospital. I asked who he was.

“He is a journalist and we don’t like him. In fact, E. P. has a violent aversion to him, and so we got the attendant and had the man ejected.”

I started to question Pound about Provençal music, and he said he had heard that more than 250 tunes survive, but he didn’t know where they were published.

“Oh yes, it seems to me that one of those old fellows, the ones I told you about yesterday—could it have been Pellizzi?—one of them told me something about a facsimile edition being printed in Barcelona. Of course you know that most of those old manuscripts are just *motz* without *sons*. I’ve seen ‘em with the staves carefully drawn on, but no *sons*, just the verses underneath, an entirely understandable bit of laziness: the fellow knew how it went, a perfectly simple tune, why waste time writing it all out? And as you know, transcribing those songs from the original to the modern notation is a job for a musicologist. Maybe that’s why so few have been published. But you know, that old notation, it’s just a kind of musical shorthand, an aid to memory, to be used only by someone who had already heard the tune at least once.”

I told him about the record of Provençal songs made by Yves Tessier, who in addition to being a musicologist was an excellent singer. He waved his hand impatiently.

“Don’t expect Grandpa to know anything about Provençal after 1920. That’s all after my time. You have my *Spirit of Romance*? You do? All right, I cover all that in there.”

I had noticed several times before Pound’s unwillingness to be told anything that he hadn’t already found out for himself; and yet, he declares that he never reads anything unless it’s going to teach him something.

“At my age I can’t waste the time. I read for information. I am not on the examination board to determine whether a young fellow’s past the sophomore level in writing, or whether he should graduate with senior honors. I used to do it when I was young, but now I leave it to the young men...But speaking of notation as an aid to memory, that’s the way I did my opera *Villon*. I have the only copy in existence over there in my room. BBC put it on in 1932 and they had some copies, but lost them. Too bad they didn’t make a record of it, because I wrote out the *motz el sons* just the way the old troubadours did, just as an aid to memory. I used the modern notation in the old simple shorthand way, and I can read it, but nobody else can without hearing it first—I could hum it or whistle it to ‘em. I don’t have much of a voice to carry a tune, singing, but whistling or humming, I could make it clear to the musicians. They wanted to do it again, and get the tunes from me here, with a tape recorder. No, that wouldn’t be any good, I’d have to rehearse it with ‘em the way I did before. Imagine, recording engineers, singers, all swarming around in *here*—it would be a madhouse...”

His eyes were shining with good humor, and we laughed.

“No, that’s one project’ll have to wait till I get out of pokey. I guess I’ll have some more tea; how about you?”

Miss Martinelli appeared just as Pound was gathering up the jars and tins for tea-making. She was wrapped in a heavy wool overcoat and a long winding scarf, and was flushed and winded. Pound embraced her and ran his hands through her hair, and they talked excitedly, each interrupting the other. I turned and talked with Mrs. Pound. Miss Martinelli sat down in her chair and piled her things on the floor, announcing to us that she had been working since five o’clock that morning.

“At this time last Sunday,” said Mrs. Pound, “he was making a record of his own readings. An old friend of his from BBC, a man we knew we could trust, brought one of those tape machines. He’s never consented to have a record of his reading hawked in the market place, turned out by one of the great American nonsense factories. But he’s known this man for years, and we know he’s honest.”

“What did you read?” I asked him.

“Well, it wasn’t anything really serious. I just wanted to get something on record. I conceived the whole thing more or less as a ribbing for Eliot. Eliot is like that old mule, you light a fire under his tail to get him started, and he goes forward just far enough to burn up the wagon. That’s neither here nor there. Anyway I read *’Homme Moyen Sensuel’* (first time I’d looked at the damned thing for years), the *Usura* Canto, one of the John Adams, a couple of the Alfred Venison poems, and the preface I did for her book.”

He made a gesture toward Miss Martinelli.

“I just wanted to give the old boy a jolt, some time when he’s settling down for a nice cozy evening, if he turns on the Third Programme and hears E.P. reading Alfred Venison—I chose the ones he likes the least...As for her preface, I wanted to give her a boost. She’s one of the few American painters of any promise, that I know of. The Esperia people in Milano did a book, in color, of her paintings last year, and I wrote the preface.”

A dark hulking man, dressed in a black overcoat, appeared.

“Hello, Dave,” said Pound. It was Mr. Horton.

In the gloom of the alcove his wavy hair and clothing were black, but Horton’s face shone white, soft and slippery, as if crudely modeled in soap. I grasped his huge, soft hand. His eyes narrowing suspiciously, he smiled, parting lubber lips to reveal a pair of fang-like eyeteeth.

He sat down on the piano stool, opposite Pound and me, and produced a letter from his coat pocket.

“It seems that Wang has lost an important address book* He’s been staying at the Dartmouth Club in N.Y., and says there’s a Jew been hanging around his room,

* David, R. Wang, a member of the Dartmouth class of 1955, is distinguished as being the only Chinese poet of record who devotes himself to the cause of white supremacy. Since graduation, *The Dartmouth* reports, Wang has been touring the Ivy League colleges with the purpose of setting up White Citizen’s councils on the campuses. He has characterized Secretary of State Dulles as a “wishy-washy Socialist.”

hasn't been able to get rid of him. Says he suspects him of stealing the address book. Here, he says, '...contains names of all our nationalist friends and those working for our cause...' What the Hell do you think he's done with it? He enclosed this example of the Jew's handwriting."

He handed Pound a creased slip of paper with the following words crudely penciled in a large hand: "The home of the Jews is Israel."

Pound held it up to the light. "So this is a specimen of the Hebe's calligraphy. Strange thing for him to be writing."

"And the funny thing," continued Horton, "is that it looked exactly like Kasper's hand to me."

At this comment, I had to hold my mouth just right to keep from laughing.

I had known Wang fairly well while he was at college, and besides finding him personally repellent, I had concluded that he didn't amount to much, as a poet, or anything else. He has become a legend on campus, an object of ridicule for both teachers and students. But I'd never suspected *how* stupid and conceited he was till Pound showed me a letter Wang had written him.

"Remarkably sensitive to the language for a young Chink," said Pound, looking at me sharply and grinning, as he handed me the letter.

I wondered as I read if Pound really meant it, or was just baiting me. In it Wang referred to himself in the third person, as "Hsin"—his Chinese given name for all I know; it means "Heart-mind." His letter was filled with phrases such as "the Cause which alone keeps body and soul together, in this horrible city where all stinks of Jewry." The last sentence was "P.S. Hsin has learned, from a reliable source, that *Hudson* has been selling E.P.'s typescripts to the Jews."

"How ridiculous," said Mrs. Pound. "What difference would it make if they were, because at least they're publishing them."

“I don’t think they would,” said Pound, “I know the editor and he’s honest. I think *Hudson* is honest. Now that’s the kind of monkeyshine I wouldn’t put past Laughlin, you know, Laughlin of ‘No Directions’.”

“There are very powerful elements opposed to the publication of the Cantos, you know,” said Châtel.

“It was ‘No Directions’ that suppressed that passage about the Rothschilds in the Pisan Cantos,” said Pound. “They wanted to leave the whole thing out without any indication of the omission, and I said, ‘Black lines or nothing’ and so in went the black lines, so all my readers could see the censorship. I guess they were afraid of losing the support of the New York banks, if they published the truth about international finance.”

“And so,” said Miss Martinelli, “Grandpa’s got to do it with suicide troops. Like Kasper. Kasper is your suicide troops. I have a strange feeling about him. I have a feeling that he is going to die very soon. And Horton is our coming President.”

Horton laughed, “No, no, don’t say that. That’s looking too far ahead.”

“But has one of my prophesies ever failed?” said Miss Martinelli. “You know perfectly well that every one of them has come true. Grandpa says I know intuitively what it takes a great genius years of study to learn.”

During the rest of the afternoon Pound and Horton discussed their mutual political acquaintances. Pound was continually shuffling in his recent mail, and pulling out letters and pamphlets which he would hand to Horton. Horton tried to keep up with these, pursing his lips and murmuring as he scanned each one, before Pound thrust another at him.

I noticed two Negroes sitting at a game table in a similar alcove just across the hall, both of them dressed in rumpled baggy suits and wearing pushed-in felt hats. They were playing checkers, but each seemed oblivious of the other. Once they pushed the checker board aside and talked loudly a minute in some unintelligible dialect. Then hitching their chairs over, they faced the checker board again. After a long pause, one of them carefully reached out both hands and moved two pieces at once. In a

moment both men were moving pieces at random all over the board. When they stopped, one of the Negroes shuffled over to our alcove and stood in front of Pound, staring out the window, and extending an upturned palm. Without hesitation Pound reached into the pockets of his outsized drawers and fished up a handful of small change. With an abstracted air he selected a dime and a nickel and dropped them into the pink palm, then turned back to the stack of papers in his lap. The Negro stood there a moment, then turned without a word or even a glance at Pound, and stuffing the coins into his coat pocket, he went back across the hall. No one else had paid any attention to this little scene.

Pound pulled out a proofsheets of his biography which will appear in the next *Who's Who*, in which he pointed to a sentence vindicating his war-time actions.

"I had a Hell of a time with 'em over that, and told 'em they couldn't print the thing without that sentence, so they put it in."

It was time to leave, and Pound embraced Miss Martinelli as on the day before. As we went down the stairs, she said, "Grandpa loves me. It's because I symbolize the spirit of Love to him, I guess."

"It's true," said Châtel, "He wrote a whole passage in the 'Rock-Drill' about her."

I didn't have a chance to find out where that passage was.

We stood talking in front of Horton's shabby black car. A middle-aged Jewish couple walked down a nearby path, both of them extremely short and fat.

"Just look at those twin spheres!" said Miss Martinelli, giggling delightedly, "Isn't it too disgusting for words!"

Horton pulled a portrait of himself from the back seat of his car. He said his wife had done it, and it was just about her first painting.

"Oh, what a wonderful job for an amateur," said Miss Martinelli, "I can hardly believe it. Just think of it, her first painting."

I have seen portraits of great dictators, the kind that are printed in color and hung on every wall. Whether of Stalin, Hitler or Tito, they seem to run to a type, and his portrait of Horton was a crude imitation of that type. It was Horton conceived as Our Leader, the Square Dollar President. The painter had given him a hearty complexion, removed his double chin, re-modeled his burly chest and shoulders, straightened his nose, lightened his lips, taken the heaviness from his eyelids and contrived to give him a calm and determined gaze.

I was taking leave of Mrs. Pound when the door of the building we'd just left flew open, and there stood Pound on the doorstep, waving a sheaf of paper in his hand.

“Hey John, come back here and take your god-damned manuscript! How the Hell are you going to become a novelist if you leave your work all over the place? Goodbye Dave, you'll come over Christmas Day, won't you?”

He nodded smilingly at us, and disappeared in the door with a little wave.

Châtel and Miss Martinelli gave me a ride to the railroad station.

David Rattray