

Winter 1988

Ballast Quarterly Review, v04n2, Winter 1988

The Art Academy of Cincinnati

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©1988 The Art Academy of Cincinnati. The copyright holder has granted permission for posting.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/ballast>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

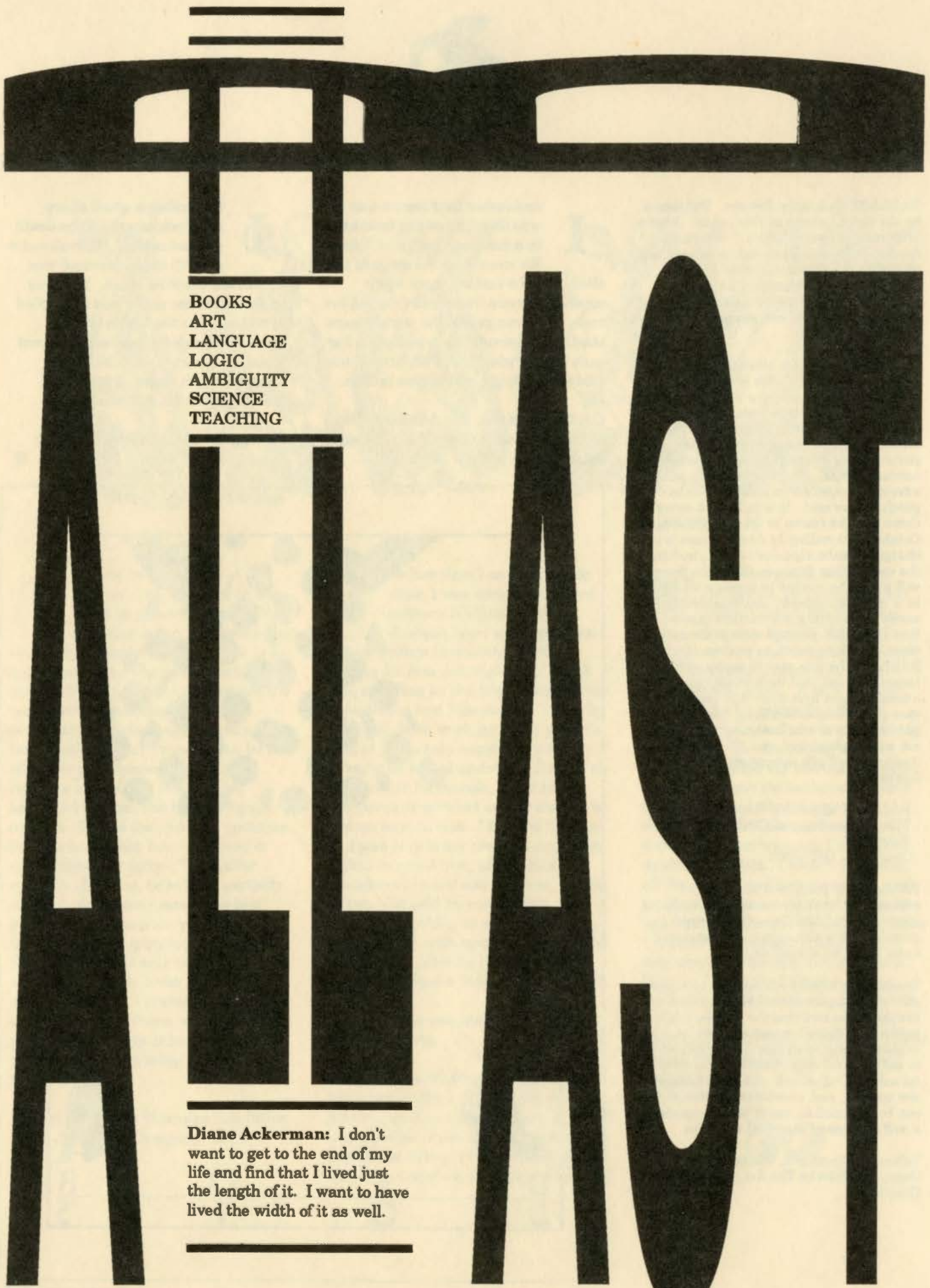
Recommended Citation

The Art Academy of Cincinnati, "Ballast Quarterly Review, v04n2, Winter 1988" (1988). *Ballast Quarterly Review*. 13.

<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/ballast/13>

This Periodical is brought to you for free and open access by UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ballast Quarterly Review by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

Offensive Materials Statement: Materials located in UNI ScholarWorks come from a broad range of sources and time periods. Some of these materials may contain offensive stereotypes, ideas, visuals, or language.



BOOKS
ART
LANGUAGE
LOGIC
AMBIGUITY
SCIENCE
TEACHING

Diane Ackerman: I don't want to get to the end of my life and find that I lived just the length of it. I want to have lived the width of it as well.



BALLAST Quarterly Review. Published by the Art Academy of Cincinnati. Roger Williams, Director. Jane T. Stanton, Academic Dean. Designed, produced and edited by the Communication Design faculty (Roy R. Behrens, Chairman, Lawrence W. Goodridge, Mark Thomas, and Gregory Wolfe) and students at the Art Academy.

BALLAST (a distant allusion to **BLAST**) is an acronym for Books Art Language Logic Ambiguity Science and Teaching. It is a journal devoted to wit, the contents of which are intended to be insightful, amusing or thought-provoking. Its purposes are educational, apolitical and noncommercial. It does not carry paid advertisements, nor is it suppose to be purchased or sold. It is published every three months (more or less), beginning in October and ending in June. There is no charge for subscriptions as such, and (to the extent that finances allow) the journal will gladly be mailed to persons who send in a mailing address, accompanied by (to assist in deferring our various costs) two first class U.S. postage stamps for each issue. In other words, to receive **BALLAST** for one year (a series of four issues), we ask that each reader contribute a total of eight first class U.S. postage stamps. When subscribing, please send good-looking or unusual stamps. We do not accept phone orders. All subscriptions (including all gift subscriptions) must be mailed to:

BALLAST Quarterly Review
The Art Academy of Cincinnati
Eden Park
Cincinnati, OH 45202

BALLAST is published in a limited edition and back issues are not available. However, **BALLAST** may be xeroxed, to provide others with copies, but the copies must never be altered or sold.

Readers are hereby encouraged to suggest offbeat examples of verbal and visual insight of the sort that the journal might publish. Original material must be explicitly labeled as that. Material which is not original must clearly make note of its author and source. All contributions are unpaid, and unsolicited material will not be returned unless it is accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Volume 4, Number 2, Winter 1988
Copyright 1988 by The Art Academy of Cincinnati

I remember that once a nun was showing us the treasures in a convent church in Toledo. We were near the steps of the altar. All of a sudden there was a crash, Gertrude Stein had dropped her cane. The nun paled, the worshippers startled. Gertrude Stein picked up her cane and turning to the frightened nun said reassuringly, no it is not broken.

Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (New York:Vintage Books, 1963), p. 116. ■

I remember a small sharp disappointment on the death of a pet rabbit. It developed a growth in the jaw and was sent to the vet to be killed. This was explained to me and I was reconciled to its loss. But the vet on his own initiative decided to operate. He sent the animal back a week later pronouncing it cured. I greeted it ecstatically and it died that night.

Evelyn Waugh, *A Little Learning* (Boston: Little Brown, 1964), p. 29. ■





Anon., 19th century

The first twenty years of anyone's life are more or less spent in growing up, not that a human being is developed or even fully matured by then, but it is an approximation. The next twenty years in the life of a man or a woman are the period which is dominated by the sexual urge. Biologically speaking, at forty, both men and women can be and often are grandparents. Sex may continue to manifest itself till an advanced age but the fury has gone out of it...This is the period of maturity. Success has either been achieved or not achieved by forty. The ladder must, by this time, be at least partially climbed. After sixty comes the last period of life--the evening, where thought and memory replace action. Where a man not only puts his material affairs in order but tries to sort out his life, to evaluate his failures and successes. Where, with sufficient perspective, he can at last begin to see the wood without being confused by the trees.

Stuart Cloete, *A Victorian Son* (New York: John Day Company, 1972), p. 15. ■

The last time I saw my father alive, I was seventeen. I had gotten a National Defense Student Loan and was about to go to college in Atlanta. I went looking for him one night and found him, standing by the fire, on the corner of Anderson and 31st streets. I had, by this time, been working every possible kind of job to help support the family I thought he had abandoned. During all my years in Savannah, I had never had peace or comfort or any chance to rely on anyone else. I blamed him for it. I was very bitter toward him. That night I lectured him, telling him to straighten himself out, as I had, and be a man. He said he was hungry and wanted something to eat. I bought a meal for him with money I had earned on my own. After he had eaten it he said to me, "And a little child shall lead them."

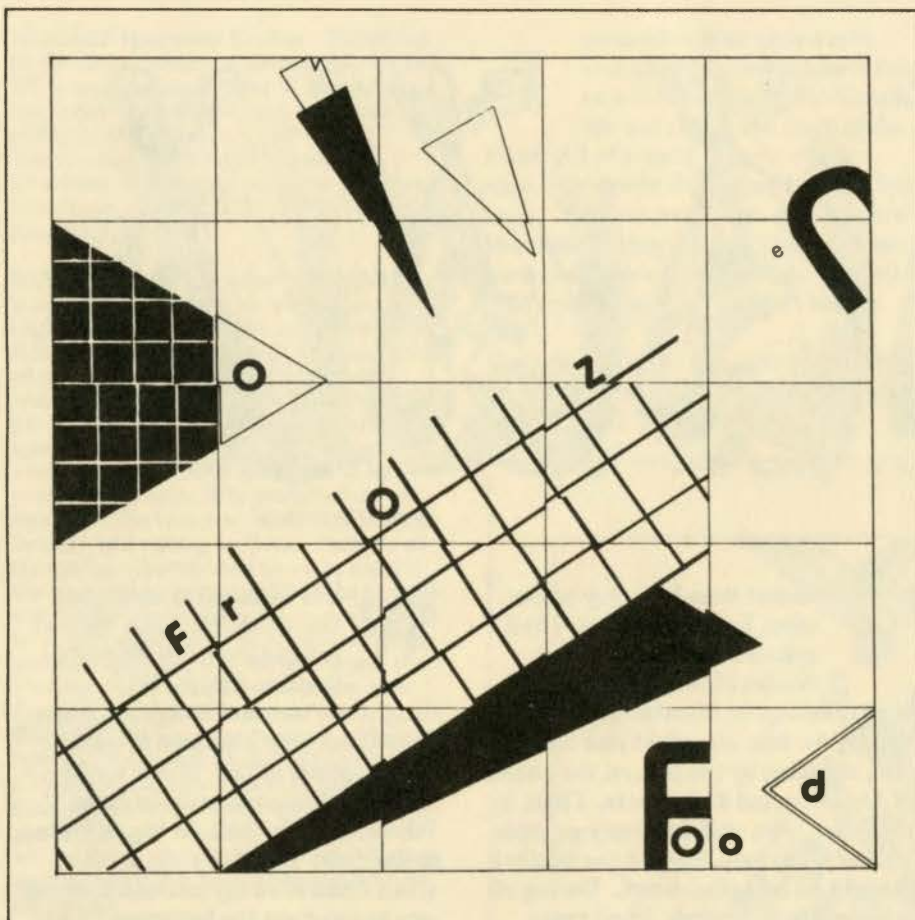
That was the last thing he ever said to me.

James Alan McPherson (Black American writer), "Going Up to Atlanta" in Alex Harris, editor, *A World Unsuspected: Portraits of Southern Childhood* (Chapel Hill: University of Northern Carolina, 1987), pp. 87-88. ■

When I was still a student at Columbia, he [John Dewey] invited me to his home for Sunday dinner. His daughters, son, and daughter-in-law were there, and it seemed to me a rather formal affair. It was my first visit, and I was naturally nervous. When I rang the bell, he himself came to the door. The first thing he did when I had shed my hat and overcoat was to point out the bathroom. I had no experience with dinners as elaborate as this seemed to me and don't remember whether I talked too much or too little. I wasn't sure what all the knives and forks were for, and my lack of ease must have been quite apparent. At the end of the meal, when the nuts were passed around, I took only one lest I be considered greedy. "Sidney," remarked Dewey, "you remind me of the man who kept a bee."

Sidney Hook, *Out of Step: An Unquiet Life in the 20th Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), p. 92. ■





Alleen May, 1988

There are people who prefer to get away inwardly, some with the help of a powerful imagination and an ability to abstract themselves from their surroundings (for this a special endowment is needed, bordering on genius and insanity), some with the help of opium or alcohol. Russians, for instance, will have a drinking-bout for a week or two, and then go back to their homes and duties. I prefer shifting my while body to shifting my brain, and going round the world to letting my head go round.

Alexander Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), ■

I reached Paris towards the end of May. The chestnut trees were in flower in the boulevards, the tulips gleamed in the Luxembourg Gardens and wherever one looked one saw young men and girls kissing and holding hands. Everything spoke of love and I felt lost and sad because I had no one. Then suddenly I did have someone. As I was buying a shirt in the Magasin du Louvre an English girl asked what was the French for bouton. Bouton, I replied, we both laughed and I asked her to lunch. By the time dessert was served we were kissing like everyone else.

Gerald Brenan, *Personal Record* (New York: Knopf, 1975), p. 161. ■

I like painting and I wondered, when I walked to the lane where Gainsborough had painted his elms, whether some of that influence would fall upon me. The thought of being a writer had not occurred to me. I did feel that I should choose some studious kind of life, but the barriers to knowledge seemed to me far too great. I would not have to read or know, to be a painter. A picture took one instantly through a door into another world, one like our own, but silent. There were no raised voices. There were no rows. And there, alive, was Barlow Woods creating these scenes. I never saw him. Whether he was a good painter or a poor one, I do not know. But, unlike ours at home, his pictures were done in real paint. In Ipswich, in that peaceful interregnum of my boyhood, the idea of being a painter began to dawdle in my mind.

V.S. Pritchett, *A Cab at the Door* (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 91-92. ■

The student applied to Columbia University for admission and was rejected. In response, he sent the following letter to the admissions officer:

Dear Sirs:

I am in receipt of your rejection of my application. As much as I would like to accommodate you, I find I cannot. I have already received four rejections from other colleges, which is, in fact, my limit. Your rejection puts me over this limit. Therefore, I must reject your rejection, and as much as this might inconvenience you, I expect to appear for classes on September 18.

Neil Postman, *Conscientious Objections: Stirring Up Trouble About Language, Technology and Education* (New York: Knopf). Suggested by Constance McClure, a reader from Cincinnati. ■



A French fur dealer in a Paris suburb tried to improve the pelts of animals by the use of a peculiar diet. He fed his animals, which happened to be cats, the meat of cats. On that diet, the cats grew bigger, and their fur became firmer and glossier...

I discussed the experiment with my fellow students in the anatomy class, and we decided to repeat it and see if we got the same results. We did--and this encouraged us to extend the experiment and see if it involved a general principle for other animals, specifically human beings, by ourselves living on a diet of human meat.

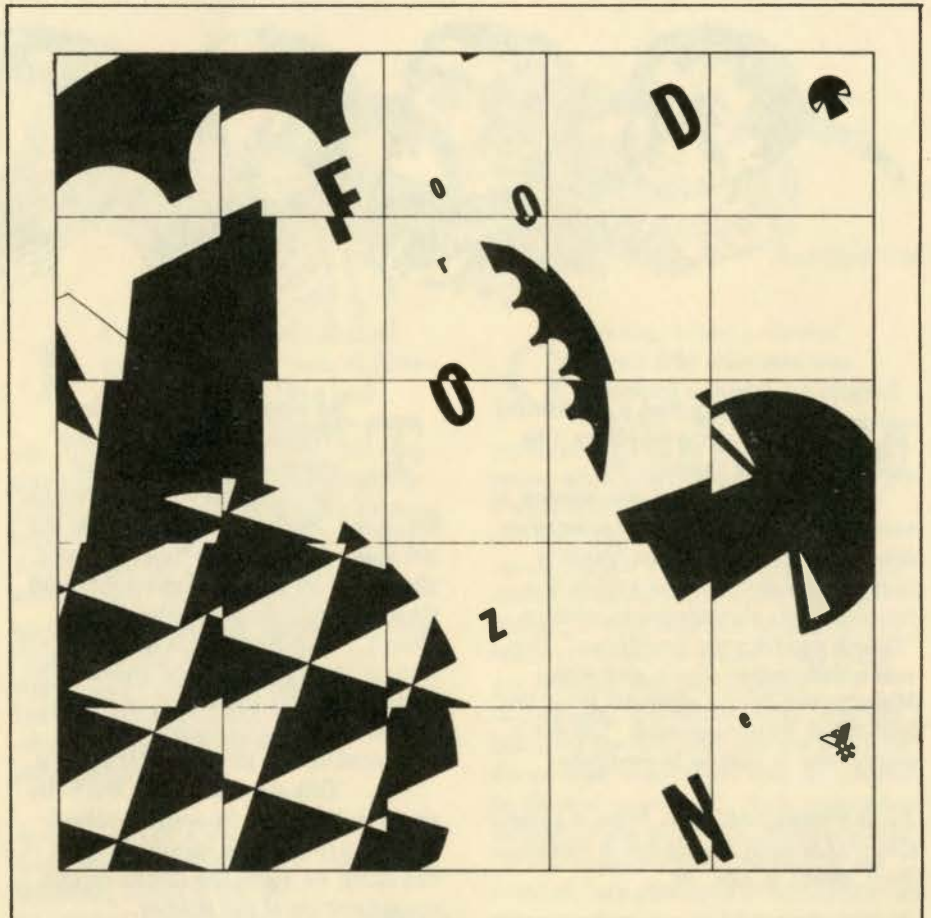
Those of us who undertook the experiment pooled our money to purchase cadavers from the city morgue, choosing the bodies of persons who had died of violence--who had been freshly killed and were not diseased or senile. We lived on this cannibal diet for two months, and everyone's health improved.

Diego Rivera, *My Art, My Life* (New York: Citadel Press, 1960), pages 44-45. ■

Jon Reis (photographer, in Tom Parker, *Rules of Thumb*): Spring moves north about thirteen miles a day.

Sometimes, when I lie in a state of half-waking half-sleeping, I am conscious of a stream of words which seem to pass through my mind, without their having a meaning, but they have a sound, a sound of passion, or a sound recalling poetry that I know. Again sometimes when I am writing, the music of the words I am trying to shape takes me far beyond the words, I am aware of a rhythm, a dance, a fury, which is as yet empty of words.

Stephen Spender, "The Making of a Poem" in *Partisan Review* (Summer 1946). ■



Steve Weinstein, 1988

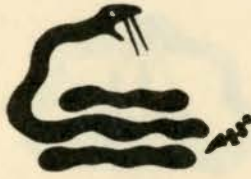
One afternoon, at the cinema, I found myself by the side of a pretty girl; and gently, insinuatingly, I pressed my calf against hers, harder and harder, emboldened by her seeming response. After an hour of it, she rose, and I found I had been pressing the velvet side of the chair.

Another day, spreading myself in my seat with no thought of women, I was shocked when my neighbor, a plain female, rising to go, said as she squeezed herself past me: "I won't thank you for pressing your leg against mine."

William Gerhardie, *Memoirs of a Polyglot* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973[1931]), p. 189. ■

This exhibition, which marked the fifteenth anniversary of [Sergei] Eisenstein's death, also contained his photos, letters, and old clippings, and books about him. One poignant item was a page from a notebook upon which Eisenstein wrote in Russian: "Today I am fifty years old," signed and dated. This is exhibited upside down to show how his unique signature in this position resembles the battleship Potemkin. The day after Eisenstein wrote this, he died.

Raphael Soyer, *Diary of an Artist* (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1977), p. 127. ■



Grandville, 1844

Moholy-Nagy had a wonderful way of using words as if in error or through not understanding--sometimes, I suspect, on purpose. On one occasion John Betjeman had taken him to a party. As Moholy left he said to the hostess in his strange pronunciation, "Thank you for your hostilities." She was a little taken aback, and when Moholy told John Betjeman what had happened, Betjeman said: "Oh don't worry--she is hostile to everyone."

Jack Pritchard, *View From a Long Chair* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 124. ■

Lin Spaeth (first grade teacher, in Tom Parker, *Rules of Thumb*): When first-graders get disruptive as a class, there's going to be a major change in weather.

Fran Lebowitz (*Metropolitan Life*): Very few people possess true artistic ability. It is therefore both unseemly and unproductive to irritate the situation by making an effort. If you have a burning, restless urge to write or paint, simply eat something sweet and the feeling will pass.

The young William Carlos [Williams], aged let us say about seven, arose in the morning, dressed and put on his shoes. Both shoes buttoned on the left side. He regarded this untoward phenomenon for a few moments and then carefully removed the shoes, placed shoe A that had been on his left foot, on his right foot, and shoe B, that had been on his right foot, on his left foot; both sets of buttons again appeared on the left side of the shoes.

This stumped him. With the shoes so buttoned he went to school, but...and here is the significant part of the story, he spent the day in careful consideration of the matter.

Ezra Pound (recalling a story told to him by the mother of the poet William Carlos Williams), *Polite Essays* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1966 reprint) p. 67. Suggested by Joseph Podlesnik, a reader from Washington, D.C., Chicago and Milwaukee. ■

John Donne: No man is an island, entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

Iwent to see Davies in his flat several times, and once he apologized for a picture which was hanging on his wall. As I am very short-sighted I had not noticed it, but he explained to me that it was a picture which he himself thought very improper. It had been given him by the artist, Austin Spare, and though Davies considered it quite unsuitable, he felt he must hang it on his wall in case the artist called and asked, "Where's my picture?" So if Davies was expecting a lady visitor or a conventional friend, he would take the picture down and stand it with its face to the wall; poor Davies was in a constant state of trepidation about the picture, which was always going in or out of grace.

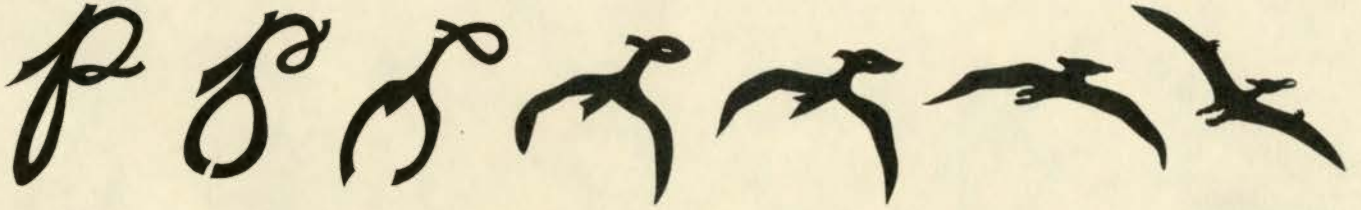
Helen Thomas (speaking of W.H. Davies) in Myfanwy Thomas, editor, *Helen Thomas: Time and Again* (Manchester, England: Carcanet New Press, 1978), p. 90. ■

Though I was unable to reach the wall from the cot, I remember the pattern of wallpaper on it--a scattering of gaily colored flowers...For as long back as I can recall, I have lived in space, not in time...My childhood memories are not co-ordinated chronologically, as you might expect in a biography, but visually.

Oskar Kokoschka, *My Life* (New York: McMillan, 1974), pp. 7-8. ■



Katherine Wilson, 1988



Frank Clark, 1988

I wish, however, that I had not climbed Mount Fuji; never again was I able to quite capture the feeling of pristine beauty that it undoubtedly gives until such time as one actually sets foot upon its slopes. But then, as one of my Japanese friends was fond of saying, Fuji is only a 'seeing' mountain; it was never meant to be climbed. The Japanese, however, have a saying that there are two kinds of fool: those who have never climbed Mount Fuji, and those who have climbed it more than once.

John Morris, *Traveler from Tokyo* (London, 1943). ■

I had an exhibition, and nothing was sold. My vivid memory of that time is of a sense of embarrassment and a feeling that my paintings were of no value. We were in great financial need, and when someone offered to buy the contents of my studio--drawings and paintings, all for \$1000 plus an old Packard--I consented. Two men came with a pushcart, and while they were loading my work, I was painting.

Raphael Soyer, *Diary of an Artist* (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1977), p. xi. ■

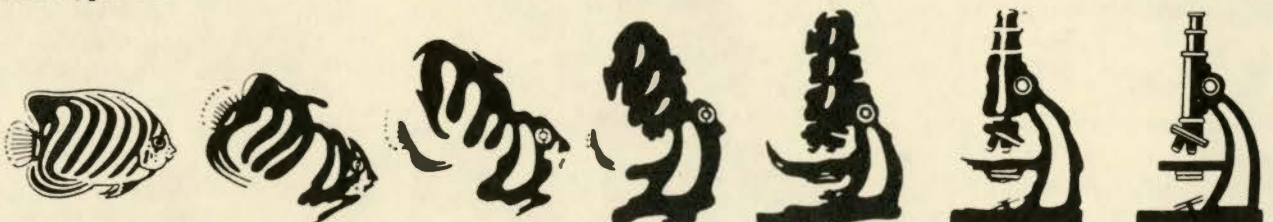
I t is only vulgar and ill-bred people who give their children expensive toys. To a real child anything will serve as a toy. Cheap toys do no harm; and they give these unique Beings incalculable pleasure. But it is always their old toys, however cheap, that children cling to. Why? Because they are no longer simply toys. They have become the mediums, the bridges, the ladders, the trap-doors, the magic carpets, by which they enter the Kingdom of Heaven; enter, in other words, the rainbow-land of their own imagination.

John Cowper Powys, *Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1934), p. 26. ■

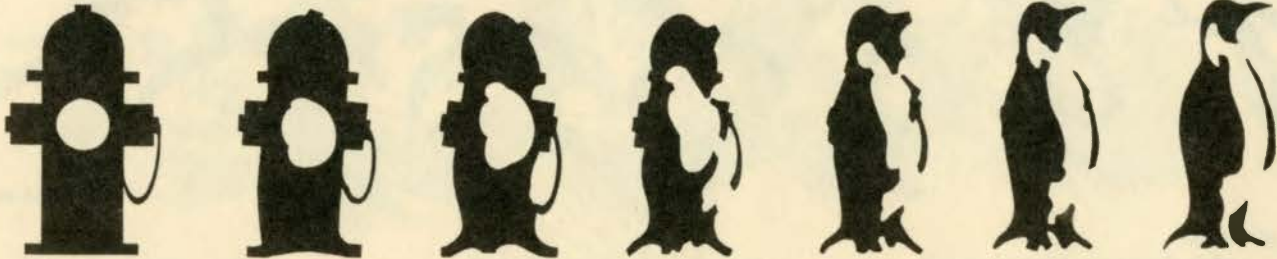
O ne day, when a class of about fifty students was painting a model, he singled me out. He found fault with my drawing, but he said, "Just the same, what you are doing interests me. First thing tomorrow come to my studio." The other students flocked around to see what had interested old Rubell to extract an invitation to his studio, to which he had admitted no student in twenty years. They could see nothing, and ascribed his enthusiasm to a senile whim. But the next day the old man told me what he discovered in my work was an interest in life and movement. Such an interest, he said, is the mark of a genuine artist. "These objects we call paintings" he went on "are attempts to transcribe to a plane surface essential movements of life."

Diego Rivera, *My Art, My Life* (New York: Citadel Press, 1960), p. 41. ■

John Patrick, 1988



Robert Frost: Talking is a hydrant in the yard and writing is a faucet upstairs in the house. Opening the first takes the pressure off the second.



Rodney Whisman, 1988

He [Edgar Degas] virtually stopped work in 1908 and died in Paris in 1917. He told a friend to avoid making a long oration at his funeral and that "You might just say he loved drawing."

Richard Humphrys, in Justin White, editor, *Makers of the Nineteenth Century 1800-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 160. ■

Anon: After four martinis, my husband turns into a disgusting beast. And after the fifth, I pass out altogether.

Miss Florence refused to write me a recommendation to Duke University where I wanted to study parapsychology with the famous Dr. J.B. Rhine, so in the fall I went away to the University of Kentucky, in Lexington, where I fell in love with a boy who was interested in UFOs and mind expansion...All the mysteries of the universe lay before me, and I couldn't learn fast enough. I read *Brave New World* and *1984* and *On the Beach* and *Mandingo* and *Elmer Gantry*. I studied French and psychology and philosophy and volleyball...Buddy Holly died that winter. Elvis was in the Army.

Bobbie Ann Mason, "Reaching the Stars: My Life as a Fifties Groupie" in Alex Harris, editor, *A World Unsuspected: Portraits of Southern Childhood* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1987), p. 75. ■

I worked at the drive-in for nine years, runnin' the projectors. The bossman there liked to drink liquor. He emptied a fifth of Country Gentleman every night before midnight. Then he'd start on his second fifth, and he'd divide that with me. He just gave it to me free, probably 'cause he thought I'd never quit that job if I got all that free liquor. So, after a while I got to stayin' up all night and drinkin' too much liquor. And then they started showin' adult movies at the drive-in all weekend long, and I didn't like that...And about that time my nerves went bust, probably from stayin' up all night and drinkin'. I started havin' these panic attacks. I went to the doctor about it, but he said there was nothin' he could do about it. He told me it was caused by an ear problem. That was when I quit my job at the drive-in in 1968. I stopped workin' the movie projectors, and I quit drinkin' liquor, and I quit drinkin' coffee or cola pop, and got over them panic attacks after that. My nerves got better. I never did get another job. I quit drivin' cars or motorcycles--I used to have a motorcycle--and I just rode my bicycle and lived very low, where it wouldn't cost me much. And that's how I been livin' ever since then.

James Harold Jennings (North Carolina 'naive' artist), quoted in "Roadside Art: Beating a Path to the Homemade World of James Harold Jennings" by Tom Patterson in *Art Papers* (vol 11 no 6), November/December 1987, pp. 28-29. ■

She remembers when she was very small she was to learn to draw and was sent to a class. The children were told to take a cup and saucer at home and draw them and the best drawing would have as its reward a stamped leather medal and the next week the same medal would again be given for the best drawing. Gertrude Stein went home, told her brothers and they put a pretty cup and saucer before her and each one explained to her how to draw it. Nothing happened. Finally one of them drew it for her. She took it to class and won the leather medal. And on the way home in playing some game she lost the leather medal. That was the end of the drawing class.

Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. 76. ■



The manner in which he now tripped over a rug and cannoned into an occasional table, upsetting it with all the old thoroughness, showed me that at heart he still remained the same galumphing man with two left feet, who had always been constitutionally incapable of walking through the great Gobi Desert without knocking something over.

P.G. Wodehouse, *The Code of the Woosters*. Suggested by David A. Shelton, a reader from Boulder, Colorado. ■