THE PHYSICIST
George Gamow was also an entertaining popularizer. He once told the story of how with his wife and their baby daughter he visited the Leaning Tower of Pisa. As they climbed the steps, they noticed an increasingly musty smell, which they first attributed to the ancient walls of the building. Then, however, they began to suspect their little girl, and by the time they reached the top it was clear that she needed immediate attention. "And from the very place," explained Gamow, raising his arm and his voice dramatically, "where Galileo launched his experimental objects we also propelled..."

Submitted by RUDOLF ARNHEIM, a reader from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

FRED HOYLE
Space isn't remote at all. It's only an hour's drive away if your car could go straight upwards.

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BALLAST is an acronym for Books Art Language Logic Ambiguity Science and Teaching, as well as a distant allusion to Blast, the short-lived publication founded during World War I by Wyndham Lewis, the Vorticist artist and writer. BALLAST is chiefly a pastiche of astonishing passages from books, magazines, diaries and other publications. Put differently, it is a journal devoted to wit, the contents of which are intended to be insightful, amusing, or thought-provoking.

The purposes of BALLAST are educational, apolitical, and noncommercial. It does not carry paid advertisements, nor is it supposed to be purchased or sold. It is published every three months, beginning in October (more or less) 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 and two first class U.S. postage stamps for each issue. In other words, to receive BALLAST for one year (four issues), we ask that each reader contribute a total of eight genuine unused postage stamps, interesting or not. Do not send postage meter slips. When subscribing, good-looking, antique and/or unusual stamps are preferred. We do not accept phone orders.

AT THE AGE of 13 or 14, [tv comedian Jerry] Seinfeld started tape-recording comic interviews with his pet parakeet. Perhaps the bird was the inspiration for a routine of the 1980s about the tendency of pet parakeets to fly into mirrors. "Even if he thinks the mirror is another room, why doesn’t he avoid hitting the other parakeet?"

JAMES THURBER The naked truth about me is to the naked truth about Salvador Dali as an old ukulele in the attic is to a piano in a tree, and I mean a piano with breasts.

AMONG OTHER things, what [American poet Ezra] Pound did was show me Bohemia. He'd take me to restaurants and things. Showed me ju jitsu in a restaurant. Threw me over his head. Wasn't ready for him at all. I was just as strong as he was. He said, "I'll show you, I'll show you. Stand up." So I stood up, gave him my hand. He grabbed my wrist, tipped over backwards and threw me over his head. Everybody in the restaurant stood up.


DAN GEORGE [Native American] When the white man came we had the land and they had the Bibles; now they have the land and we have the Bibles.

IN THE 1950s, Salvador Dali was a visiting artist for one day at the University of Northern Iowa. The Spanish painter spoke English poorly, and at a party at the home of a faculty member that evening, he appeared to be generally lost and confused. However, he experienced a rare moment of clarity when he was introduced to ceramic artist William Daley, a teacher at the school. For the remainder of the evening, Dali roamed the party, alternately pointing to himself and Bill Daley, repeating, "Dali—Daley! Dali—Daley! Dali—Daley!"

ANON from the editor's journal, as recalled by David Delafield, who attended the party.

ABOVE LEFT Metamorphosis of Ludwig von Beethoven into piano by JOHN DOPITA, graphic design student, Department of Art, University of Northern Iowa (1993).
"WE MUST remember," he [a classics professor] declared, "that professors are the ones nobody wanted to dance with in high school."

This is an insight that lights up the universe—or at least the university. It is a proposition that every entering freshman should be told, and it is certainly a proposition that helps to explain the problem of [unintelligible] academic writing. What one sees in professors, repeatedly, is exactly the manner that anyone would adopt after a couple of sad evenings sidelined under the crepe-paper streamers in the gym, sitting on a folding chair while everyone else danced.

Dignity, for professors, perches precariously on how well they can convey this message: "I am immersed in some very important thoughts, which unsophisticated people could not even begin to understand. Thus, I would not want to dance, even if one of you unsophisticated people were to ask me."

Think of this, then, the next time you look at an unintelligible academic text. "I would not want the attention of a wide reading audience, even if a wide audience were to ask for me."

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED Sigrid Wortmann Weltge, *Women's Work: Textile Art from the Bauhaus* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993). ISBN 0-8118-0466-6. When the Bauhaus opened in 1919, so many women applied that it was decided to limit their number. Of those accepted, most were assigned to the Weaving Workshop, not because of inclination or past training but, according to this book, because weaving is "women's work." Eventually directed by the gifted textile designer and weaver Gunta Stözl (whose exquisite work is reproduced), the Weaving Workshop was the longest standing and, by some criteria, the most successful of all Bauhaus workshops. Not just an account of a single workshop, this stunningly beautiful volume provides an overview of the entire Bauhaus, and traces the immigration of Anni Albers, Trudi Guermanprez, Marguerite Wildenhain, and other Bauhaus women to other experimental schools, including the New Bauhaus, Black Mountain College, and Pond Farm.

WHEN I BEGAN to write it [*The Tropic of Cancer*] in New York I was thirty-three, and you know why I left it till then? I would have been lingering still, but my wife told me one day, "If you haven't begun your life's work at the age of thirty-three, which is the age Christ died, you will never do it," and that lodged in my mind.

NORMAN COUSINS
President
Nixon’s motto was, if two wrongs don’t make a right, try three.

A FEW HOURS after I arrived at Taliesin we dined with others outside under a large tree. Flies, for some reason, were prolific on this warm spring day. [Frank Lloyd] Wright remedied this annoyance by having a fly swatter next to his chair. As a fly landed, he would pick up the swatter and take precise aim. “That’s Gropius,” he jovially exclaimed, and then he would take aim again at another unsuspecting fly. “And that’s Corbusier,” he would add, until dead flies littered the table and he had struck down the so-called hierarchy of modern architecture.


HIGHLY RECOMMENDED Wolfgang G. Fischer, Gustav Klimt and Emilie Flöge: An Artist and His Muse (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1992). ISBN 0-87951-451-5. Klimt was of course the famous 19th-century Austrian painter—known for his erotic portraits of women—who founded the Vienna Secession and created the frieze for the Palais Stoclet. Flöge, a Viennese fashion designer, was his in-law (Klimt’s brother married her sister) and his mistress for many years. Together and separately, they created one-of-a-kind clothing known as “art dresses,” an art form popularized by Henry van de Velde, who designed his wife’s clothing to correspond with the architectural style of their home. By revealing unpublished material from the Flöge estate, this elegant, richly illustrated volume offers new details about the Klimt and Flöge relationship, both highly personal and professional.

SOMERSET MAUGHAM [on his 90th birthday] The weariness and sadness of old age make it intolerable. I have walked with death in hand, and death’s own hand is warmer than my own. I don’t wish to live any longer.

Beard, a well-to-do American photographer and celebrity, known for discovering the fashion model Iman and “chronicling the devastation of nature in East Africa,” lives on a 45-acre encampment in Kenya called Hog Ranch. A Yale graduate who studied with Josef Albers and Richard Lindner, and a friend of Karen Blixen (*Out of Africa*), he describes himself as a “diarist” because of his daily commitment (begun in 1949) to a series of extraordinary collage diaries (of which a dozen full-color spreads are reproduced) “crammed with the effluvia of his life: snapshots of friends, newspaper clippings, wildlife pictures, wax drippings, beer bottle labels, frogs, moths, flies, mud, pieces of asphalt, snakeskins, telephone numbers, what he had for dinner, photographs of fashion models...postcards, receipts, feathers, stamps, labels from clothes, phone messages, business cards, contact prints, football line scores, appointments, pen tips, quotes scribbled madly after he’s heard them in conversation or on television, used napkins, claim tickets, BBs, records of the time he got up and went to bed, weather reports, menus, Things-To-Do lists, Cheez Doodles, and pressed flowers...He spits, blows, and bleeds on the pages.”

SOLON [6th century BC Greek statesman]

Laws are like spiders’ webs: If some poor weak creature comes up against them, it is caught; but a bigger one can break through and get away.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

When they circumcised Herbert Samuel they threw away the wrong bit.

NO ONE knew him. He lived alone, like a dog. People were afraid of him...He ran around the fields with these huge canvases. Boys used to throw stones at him. I didn’t. I was too small.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:
Barbara Norfleet, *Looking at Death* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1993). ISBN 0-87923-964-6. The author is a photographer and social scientist, and this is an eccentric anthology of death-related photographs from the archival collections at Harvard University and Radcliffe College. There are 107 photographs, organized in such categories as "Death by Violence," "Death at the Medical School," and "Death in the Family," each section prefaced by a brief essay. Many of the photographs are hardly disturbing, even serene, but others are almost nauseating, for example, beheaded bodies from the Boxer Rebellion, or a shot of the horribly beaten remains of Mussolini and his mistress.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:
Eric Gill, *An Essay on Typog­raphy* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1993). ISBN 0-87923-950-6. Paperback edition. Designers will no doubt be happy to learn that this classic by the celebrated British typographer is back in print. First published in a limited edition in 1931 then revised and reissued in 1936, it is Gill’s typographic manifesto—one of the first books to call for consistent wordspacing and unjustified (or "ragged-right") typesetting—combined with his comments regarding the bond between art and industry.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:
Dee Brown, *When the Century Was Young: A Writer’s Notebook* (Little Rock, AR: August House, 1993). ISBN 0-87483-267-5. The author of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* was born into Victorian society in a small Louisiana town in 1908, the year in which (unknown to him) E.M. Forster wrote *A Room with a View* and Charles Ives *The Unanswered Question*. Growing up in Little Rock, he fell in love with books and ink, and claims to remember the moment (like the incident in Helen Keller’s autobiography) when, at age five, sitting on his grandmother’s lap, he realized that words were meaningful marks. This is a pleasant, unhurried memoir of his childhood fascination with printing (by far the most interesting part of the book), his role as a New Deal librarian, his World War II military service, and his years as agricultural librarian at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Margo Rouard-Snowman, Roman Cieslewicz: Master of Graphic Design (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993). ISBN 0-500-27729-X. Published to accompany a retrospective exhibit at the Pompidou Center in Paris, this is a collection of about 300 posters, magazines, book jackets, and advertisements by a celebrated Polish-born poster designer and illustrator (former art director for Elle) who has lived and worked in Paris since the 1960s. Cieslewicz is probably best-known for his dream-like photomontage and collage illustrations, described by Rouard-Snowman as "created not to frighten but to reactivate our perception. They raise questions and constantly touch on the permanent division between our inner world and the world outside."

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Otto L. Bettmann, The Delights of Reading: Quotes, Notes & Anecdotes (Boston: David R. Godine, 1992). ISBN 0-87923-951-4. The author is the founder of the famous Bettmann Archive, so we were not surprised to find that historic engravings appear as illustrations in this quiet and likable volume about books, produced in association with The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. It contains hundreds of interesting quotes, notes and anecdotes about reading and writing, including, for example, Robert Benchley's classic admission that "It took me fifteen years to discover I had no talent for writing, but I couldn't give it up because by that time I was too famous."

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Barbara Glauber, editor, Lift and Separate: Graphic Design and the "Vernacular" (New York: Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art/distributed by Princeton Architectural Press, 1993). Of recent publications, this is one of our favorites—and not just because of the terrible pun in the title or the tastelessly flocked cover. Put together for a recent exhibition of the same title at Cooper Union’s Herb Lubalin Study Center of Design, this is a volume of essays about the relationship between "high" and "low" design, with the latter more commonly spoken of now—at least in post-modern circles—as "vernacular design." We were especially delighted to find that the layout style of each essay had been "lifted and separated" from vernacular contexts—so John Downer's essay on "Brush Tracks to Type Design" looks like a page of brush lettering, Mike Mills' article on skateboard graphics resembles a skateboard advertisement, and so on.
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Allan Kaprow,
Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life. Edited by Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). ISBN 0-520-07066-6. Surely everyone remembers Kaprow, the American painter (student of Hans Hofmann, Meyer Schapiro, and John Cage) who surfaced in the 60s as the originator of the Happening—his term for "spontaneous, plotless theatrical events"—a precursor of performance art. Now 66 and retired from his teaching role at the University of California at San Diego, this is an anthology of twenty-three essays by Kaprow, beginning with a tribute to Jackson Pollock from 1958 and ending with a recent piece on "The Meaning of Life." It is interesting that Kelley traces Kaprow's blurring of art and life to the fusion of art and experience by John Dewey.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
George Myers, Jr.,
Alphabets Sublime: Contemporary Artists on Collage and Visual Literature (Washington, D.C.: Poycock Press, 1986). ISBN 0-931181-02-X. The author is an Ohio-based literary critic who has often focused on experimental writing and artists' books. This is a collection of 20 brief interviews with contemporary collagists, both literary and artistic, among them Michael Kasper, Paul Metcalf, Paul Zelevansky, Alison Knowles, and Doris Cross. Of particular interest is an extended interview with the then 72-year-old artist and poet Bern Porter, a former physicist who worked on the Manhattan Project, who has since practiced "found poetry"—one of his poems, for example, is a lengthy list of types of teas—and who lives alone in Belfast, Maine, in a fourteen-room house which he calls the Institute of Advanced Thinking. For more information on this and Myers' other books, contact him at Cumberland, 7652 Sawmill Road, Suite 194, Dublin, OH 43017.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Supon Design Group,
International Women in Design
(New York: Madison Square Press, 1993). ISBN 0-942604-30-X. Produced by a Washington, D.C., design studio, this large-format book contains a sampling of works from the portfolios of twenty-three female graphic designers from four continents and a wide range of cities, among them Milan, Hong Kong, Zurich, London, Barcelona, and New South Wales. Featured are some of the most prominent women in contemporary American graphic design, including April Greiman, Paula Scher, and Lori Siebert.
ONE EVENING I was walking along a path, the city was on one side and the fjord below. I felt tired and ill. I stopped and looked out over the fjord—the sun was setting, and the clouds turning blood red. I sensed a scream passing through nature; it seemed to me that I heard the scream. I painted this picture, painted the clouds as actual blood. The color shrieked. This became *The Scream*.

EDVARD MUNCH, *Diary* (1889).

HE [Leonardo da Vinci] would often dry and purge the guts of a wether [a gelded male sheep] and make them so small that they might be held in the palm of the hand. In another room he kept a pair of [blacksmith's] bellows, and with these he would blow out one of the guts until it filled the room, which was a large one, forcing anyone there to take refuge in a corner.


IN APPEARANCE he [British novelist E.M. Forster] was the reverse of a dandy. Incurious fellow-passengers in a train, seeing him in a cheap cloth cap and a scruffy waterproof, and carrying the sort of little bag that might have been carried in 1890 by the man who came to wind the clocks, might have thought him a dim provincial of settled habits and taken no more notice of him. When I said as much in an essay...I sent him a copy for his approval or disapproval before it went to the printer. He showed it, or read it, to his mother, who said, "There! You see what Mr Plomer says. How often have I told you, Morgan dear, that you really ought to brush your coat?"


PETER FLEMING
Long Island represents the American's idea of what God would have done with Nature if he'd had the money.

PETER USTINOV
Parents are the bones on which children sharpen their teeth.
SHE MADE love the way she talked—by breaking down the grammar and the rhythms of sex. Young men tend to make love monotonously, but Sheri took my monotony and developed variations on it, as if she were composing a fugue. If I was a piston, she was Paul Klee's Twittering Machine.


WHAT I MOST dread is that life should slip by unnoticed, like a scene half glimpsed from a railway-carriage window. What I want most is to be always reacting to something in my surroundings, whether a complex of visual sensations, a physical activity like skating or making love, or a concentrated process of thought; but nothing must be passively accepted, everything modified by passing it through my consciousness as a worm does earth. Here too comes in my theory that pleasure can be extracted from experiences which are in themselves neutral or actually unpleasant, with the help of drama and curiosity, and by drama I mean the aesthetic aspect of the shape of events. The exceptions are physical pain and anxiety, the two most stultifying states; I can't hold intensity of experience to be desirable in them.


"AND DO YOU often go back to America?" a friend of mine asked [the American-born British poet T.S.] Eliot in my hearing at about this time.

"Not very often." A pause, while he looked at the floor with great concentration: his answer mustn't offend any of his principles, nor militate against truth, logic, or the established religion. "On the average," he said, and then again paused, perhaps to consider the possible ramifications of the effect of what he was about to say, "I should say about every twenty years."

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED Gerry Rosentswieg, editor, *The New Logo from California* (New York: Madison Square Press, 1993). ISBN 0-942604-28-8. This is an interesting album of hundreds of whimsical “New Wave” or post-modern logos produced in California at the turn of the decade, from the mid-80s until now. While the title refers to these symbols as “the new logo,” the editor admits that “what’s new is beginning to look a lot like what’s old,” that they tend to be more or less similar to Art Deco pictorial trademarks from the 1930s through the 50s, described here as “a cross between the mechanical shapes of the draftsman and the artist’s irrepressible spirits.”

IT REMINDS me of a string of wet sponges; it reminds me of tattered washing on the line; it reminds me of stale bean soup, of college yells, of dogs barking idiotically through endless nights. It is so bad that a sort of grandeur creeps into it. It drags itself out of the dark abyss of fish and crawls insanely up the topmost pinnacle of posh. It is rumble and bumble. It is flap and doodle. It is balder and dash.

ANTHONY POWELL  People think that because a novel's invented, it isn't true. Exactly the reverse is the case. Biography and memoirs can never be wholly true, since they cannot include every conceivable circumstance of what happened. The novel can do that.

CHARLIE CHAPLIN  Life is a tragedy when seen in close-up, but a comedy in long-shot.

MARTIN NIEMOLLER  In Germany, the Nazis came for the Communists and I didn't speak up because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews and I didn't speak up because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn't speak up because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics and I was a Protestant so I didn't speak up. Then they came for me...By that time there was no one to speak up for anyone.
GRANT THE COACHMAN, a genial soul, was occasionally called in, when the house was full, to help wait at table. Wearing white cotton gloves with loose flaps at the ends of the fingers (since he could never get them properly on his weather-worn hands) and sweating freely, he made a most friendly though not a polished butler. Once, when a new local female grandee was being entertained to dinner at Maidenwell for the first time he handed her a jelly (jello) on a large dish. Just as she was about to help herself the jelly began to slither dangerously toward the edge, and in a hearty voice, as he righted the dish, he called out “Whoa, mare!”


**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** Robin Baker, *Designing the Future: The Computer in Architecture and Design* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993). ISBN 0-500-01578-3. Our favorite portion of this book is a demonstration of what can be done with a software program called Mutator, by a process that might be referred to as “evolutionary aesthetics.” From nine abstract images, the user is asked to select the most pleasing. In an electronic “survival of the fittest,” only that form then survives and goes on to be used in the “parenting” of the next generation of nine, from which a single form survives, and so on. But this is just one example from this large colorful pictorial treasury of the scientific and artistic uses of computer imagery.


When I learned of my illness (liver cancer), I wept for myself and for my old mother, for my children and grandchildren, and for Jane [his wife]. And I wept to think that I would have to stop working. This mortal curtailment of work-pleasure weighed less than the personal griefs—but it also weighed. When I went into the hospital I brought work home with me, and in the last two days before I went home I started writing again. When I began to recover, still anxious about recurrence, I worked with a manic prolixity—not well—and knew in my heart that I worked against death. What’s more, I realized that I had always worked—the real thing, the absorbedness—in defiance of death.
THE SHOCK, for an intelligent writer, of discovering for the first time that there are people younger than himself who think him stupid is severe. Especially if he is at an age (thirty-five to forty-two) when his self-confidence is easily shattered. The seventh lustre is such a period, a menopause for artists, a serious change of life. It is the transition from being a young writer, from being potentially Byron, Shelley, Keats, to becoming a stayer, a Wordsworth, a Coleridge, a Landor. It would seem that genius is of two kinds, one of which blazes up in youth and dies down, while the other matures, like Milton or Goethe's, through long choosing, putting out new branches every seven years.


I REALIZE that people still read books now and some people actually love them, but in 1946 in the Village our feelings about books—I'm talking about my friends and myself—went beyond love. It was as if we didn't know where we ended and books began. Books were our weather, our environment, our clothing. We didn't simply read books; we became them. We took them into ourselves and made them into our histories. While it would be easy to say that we escaped into books, it might be truer to say that books escaped into us.


MARSHALL MCLuhan Anyone who tries to make a distinction between education and entertainment doesn't know the first thing about either.

NIELS BOHR [when asked about a horseshoe hanging on his wall] Of course I don't believe in it. But I understand that it brings you luck whether you believe in it or not.
BALLAST is published in Iowa in a region increasingly listed among the most desirable places in which to live (okay, so why not move here soon before we all go stir crazy?). All subscriptions (including gift subscriptions) must be mailed to the following address:

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BALLAST is published in a limited edition and back issues are rarely available. However, the magazine may be xeroxed to provide others with copies, but the copies must never be altered or sold. Our readers are encouraged to suggest offbeat examples of visual or verbal insight of the sort that the journal might publish. Original material must be explicitly labeled as such. Material that is not original must clearly make note of its author and source. All contributions are unpaid, and unsolicited material will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

BALLAST doesn’t have a budget really. For more than eight years now, it has operated at a financial loss but at a personal and philosophical gain. Our losses are currently offset by donations from enlightened subscribers and generous deductions from the Reader Service Runt’s paycheck. If anyone is foolishly philanthropic (foolish because such contributions are surely not tax deductible), we will sometimes accept a check (made payable to Roy R. Behrens), an encouraging word—and the skies are not cloudy all day!—or, if you feel really generous, why not just send us a 600 dpi (dots per inch) laser printer, such as, for example, a Hewlett Packard 4MP LaserJet for about $1,500.

This issue was produced on a Macintosh Performa 600 using QuarkXPress software.

COVER ILLUSTRATION 19th century metamorphosis by unknown artist.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, editors, Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas (Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1993). ISBN 0-631-16574-6. Comprised of more than 300 documents in about 1200 pages, this is one of the largest, most complete anthologies of critical and theoretical writings regarding the growth of the concept of “art” in the 20th century. Beginning at the turn of the century, and arranged by both time and topic, it contains classic art-related writings, such as Viktor Shklovsky’s “Art as Technique” and Walter Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” as well as significant but less familiar texts, including a lecture by Hitler in 1937 in which he describes degenerate art as “the artifactitious stammerings of men to whom God has denied the grace of a truly artistic talent, and in its place has awarded them the gift of jabbering or deception.”