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JACK KEROUAC
(On the Road)
I ate apple pie
and ice cream
—it was getting better as I
got deeper into Iowa, the
pie bigger, the ice cream richer.
There were the most beautiful
bevies of girls everywhere I looked
in Des Moines that afternoon—they
were coming home from high school—but I had no
time for thoughts like that...So I rushed past
the pretty girls, and the prettiest girls
in the world live in Des Moines.1

ANON
(The Prairie Rambler) Old postmen never
die. They just lose their zip.

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and art director.

Ballast is an acronym for Books Art
Language Logic Ambiguity Science and
Teaching, as well as a distant allusion to
Blaze, the short-lived publication found-
ed during World War I by Wyndham
Lewis, the Vorticist artist and writer.
Ballast is mainly a pastiche of astonish-
ing passages from books, magazines,
diaries and other writings. Put differ-
cently, it is a journal devoted to wit, the
contents of which are intended to be
insightful, amusing or thought provok-
ing.

The purposes of Ballast are educational,
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price for the first time in ten years. We
will honor all standing subscriptions,
but henceforth all renewals, new sub-
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subject to the current rate.

1 Cf., Our own memory, still vivid, of landing in
Des Moines in 1971 after 18 months of military
service in Hawaii, being shocked by the cheerless
rigidity of weather beaten Iowa faces, harder
than those in Grant Wood's American Gothic. The
prettiest girls in the world, we concluded, live in
Hawaii.
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Paul Rand, *From Lascaux to Brooklyn* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1996). ISBN 0-300-06676-7. Eighty-two years old this year, Paul Rand (above) is the doyen of graphic design. His influence is indisputable, largely because of his logo designs (IBM, ABC, Westinghouse, UPS), three previous books (*Thoughts on Design; Paul Rand: A Designer’s Art;* and *Design, Form and Chaos*), and nearly four decades of teaching at Yale.2 As confirmed by this charming and beautiful book, neither his command of book design nor the eloquence of his writing have diminished. Comprised of a handful of essays on aesthetics, typographic style and problem-solving, and illustrated by stunning visual examples, the book’s weakness is in the shopworn simplicity of its pronouncements about aesthetics.

Arise Evans had a fungous nose, and said, it was revealed to him that the King’s hand would cure him, and at the first coming of King Charles II into St. James Park, he kissed the King’s hand, and rubbed his nose with it; which disturbed the King, but cured him.

**JOHN AUBREY**4 Brief Lives and Other Selected Writings (New York: Scribner, 1949).

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2 Dorothy Parker: “If all the girls attending it [the Yale prom] were laid end to end, I would not be the least surprised.” 3 For apple nomenclature, see John’s *Apples* by Walter Hamady (Perishable Press Ltd, 1995), whose perverse fascination with footnotes we have appropriated for this issue. 4 Charming 17th-century English antiquary introduced to us by Guy Davenport almost twenty years ago.
Once, on the train from Boston to New Haven, he [the British poet Robert Graves] nudged me. About three rows away was a book face down on the arm of a seat, its owner asleep. It was [Graves' book] The Reader Over Your Shoulder. I had heard him tell, many times, a possibly apocryphal story about Arnold Bennett, who had carried in his wallet a five-pound note to give to the first person he found reading one of his books: on his death, the note was found, still folded, in his wallet. Graves awaited until his reader awoke, and then he moved to an adjoining seat, introduced himself, told his Arnold Bennett story, signed the book, and gave his startled reader ten dollars, swearing he would claim it from his publisher.

ALASTAIR REED "Remembering Robert Graves" in The New Yorker, 4 September 1995, p. 78.

Gerald Brenan
Middle-aged couples who are bored with one another will find that they draw closer together if they keep a dog. Or better two dogs, one for each.

Mae West
To err is human—it only feels divine.

Adlai Stevenson
He who slings mud usually loses ground.

Highly recommended
Diana Martin, Graphic Design: Inspirations and Innovations (Cincinnati OH: North Light Books, 1995). ISBN 0-89134-640-6. In preparing this full-color compendium of current graphic design, 75 designers were asked three questions: How do you get ideas? How are those ideas translated into tangible form? In what manner are your solutions presented to clients? What sounds like a dreadfully typical book on the creative process turns out to be refreshingly atypical, largely because the designers' responses are often quoted at length and uninterrupted. While many answers are less than surprising, others are enlivening. In particular, there is a lengthy articulate note from New York designer Milton Glaser ("Painting is more about philosophy than about painting objects"), and a statement by Skolos and Wedell in which they discuss and illustrate how some of their finest ideas result from improvised compositions of cut paper scraps.

5Graves wrote the historical novel I, Claudius, made popular by public television, but perhaps he is better remembered for his World War I memoir, Goodbye To All That. "There's no money in poetry," he said, "but then there's no poetry in money either."
HARVEY FIERSTEIN
The great thing about suicide is
that it's not one of those things
you have to do now or you lose
your chance. I mean, you can
always do it later.6

GEORGE
JEAN
NATHAN
I drink to make
other people
interesting.

LEFT Logo for
fictitious firm
called Elephant
Electric by Sun
Kwon, graphic
design student
at the University
of Northern
Iowa.

HIGLY RECOMMENDED
James Trager, The
Women's Chronology: A Year-By-Year Record From
of this massive chronology, an erect australopithecine or
"ape-woman" appears on earth in the late Pliocene peri­
od, about 3 million B.C. In the most recent entry, on page
723, dated July 21, 1993, Supreme Court Justice nominee
Ruth Bader Ginsburg testifies before a Senate hearing
committee about the equality of women. In between are
more than 13,000 historic events, not merely listed, but
also succinctly and clearly explained. The sheer number,
range and annotative thoroughness of its entries are
almost unbelievable.

GIORGOS
SEFERIS
Don't ask who
influenced me.
A lion is made
up of the
lamb's he's
digested, and
I've been read­
ing all my life.7

CARL JUNG
The greatest
and most
important
problems of
life are all fun­
damentally
insoluble. They
can never be
solved but only
outgrown.8

JOHN BERRY
(Flight of
White Crows)
The bird of
paradise
alights only
upon the hand
that does not
grasp.

6 Cf., Friedrich Nietzsche (Beyond Good and Evil): "The thought of suicide is a
great consolation; by means of it one gets successfully through many a bad
night." 7 Cf., Woody Allen ("The Scrolls"): "The lion and the calf shall lie down
together but the calf won't get much sleep." 8 For mysterious thumps in the
wall, shattered bread knives, and Freud's fainting fits, see Jung's Memories,
Dreams, Reflections.
TALLULAH BANKHEAD
My heart is as pure as the driven slush.

SAMUEL GOLDWYN
Why should people go out and pay to see bad movies when they can stay at home and see bad television for nothing?

RIGHT
Portrait made of letter parts by Soo-Kyung Chun, graphic design student at the University of Northern Iowa.

SAMUEL BUTLER
Life is a long process of getting tired.

BEATRICE LILLIE (Every Other Inch A Lady) At one early, glittering dinner party at Buckingham Palace, the trembling hand of a nervous waiter spilled a spoonful of decidedly hot soup down my neck. How could I manage to ease his mind and turn his embarrassed apologies into a smile, except to put on a pretended frown and say, without thinking: "Never darken my Dior again."

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Heather Busch and Burton Silver, Why Cats Paint: A Theory of Feline Aesthetics (Berkeley CA: Ten Speed Press, 1994). ISBN 0-89815-612-2. A certain amount of faith, or at least the suspension of disbelief, is required for the acceptance of anything, not just religion. This is especially true of art, the aims of which are frequently ill-defined, its criteria inconsistent. In this hilarious and unrelenting lampoon of academic theorizing, we are asked to believe that reprehensible cat behavior, like subway graffiti, is both explainable and excusable as territorial marking and self-expression. Especially amusing are its categories of feline styles (e.g., Romantic Ruralist, Elemental Fragmentist, and Psychometric Impressionist) and its rich selection of contrived evidence, historic and contemporary, including a wonderful parody of a Victorian theatre poster, interpretive diagrams, and elaborate photographic proof.
Ideas turn up because in every problem the heart of the solution is embedded in the problem like a piece of gold in a matrix of rock. What you learn to recognize, and one of the most thrilling things about design, is that every problem fundamentally will guide you to the solution if you believe that the problem and solution are bound in that way. The whole joy of graphic design is discovering within the problem the answer and trying to sniff out the gold.


JULIAN BARNES (Flaubert's Parrot) Do not imagine that Art is something which is designed to give gentle uplift and self-confidence. Art is not a brassière. At least, not in the English sense. But do not forget that brassière is the French for life-jacket. 12

9 Cf., Mae West: "I used to be Snow White, but I drifted." 10 Cf., Frank Lloyd Wright: "Television is chewing gum for the eyes." Fred Allen: "Television is a medium because anything well done is rare." David Frost: "Television enables you to be entertained in your home by people you wouldn't have in your home." 11 See Milton Glaser, Graphic Design (Woodstock NY: Overlook Press, 1973). 12 Nor should one forget that "Mae West" is American slang for life-jacket. As for Gustave Flaubert, you must read about "the dance of the Bee" (not the insect). As for art's subversiveness, cf., Susan Sontag (Against Interpretation): "Real art has the capacity to make us nervous. By reducing the work of art to its content, and then interpreting that, one tames the work of art. Interpretation makes art manageable, conformable." Or Morse Peckham (Man's Rage for Chaos): "There must, it seems to me, be some human activity which serves to break up orientations, to weaken and frustrate the tyrannous drive to order, to prepare the individual to observe what the orientation tells him is irrelevant, but what very well may be highly relevant. That activity, I believe, is the activity of artistic perception."
The hills are alive to the sound of Muzak.

Hollywood is where people from Iowa mistake each other for stars.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED Tom Trusky, Some Zines 2: Alternative & Underground Artists' & Eccentric Magazines & Micropresses (Boise ID: Cold-Drill Press, 1996). ISBN 0-916272-64-8. This is the illustrated full-color catalog for an exhibition of zines and other offbeat periodicals held during March 1996 at Boise State University. Curated by the Director of the Idaho Center for the Book, it continues an earlier similar show that occurred in 1992. Published in a limited edition of 300, it lists, describes and illustrates about fifty off-the-wall publications, both defunct and current, including such classics as Richard Kostelanetz's Assembling, Gregory Hischak's Farm Pulp Magazine, Nozone, and Adamant Eva. To order a copy for $22.95 postpaid, call 208 385-1999 or fax 208 385-4373.

GERALD BRENNAN It is by sitting down to write every morning that one becomes a writer. Those who do not do this remain amateurs.

When I was a kid the local newspaper was full of births, marriages, and an occasional death, fetes, school sports and speech days, new flower-beds in the Jephson Gardens, the benign doings of the town council, and the odd petty larceny. Now my local paper is packed with muggings, murders, rapes, drugs, hit-and-run accidents, and the closing of public baths and lavatories. Is this the result of improved communications?

JULIAN BARNES (Flaubert's Parrot) Books say: she did this because. Life says: she did this. Books are where things are explained to you; life is where things aren't. I'm not surprised some people prefer books. Books make sense of life. The only problem is that the lives they make sense of are other people's lives, never their own.

One night [when he was a college student] a friend lent me a book of short stories by Franz Kafka. I went back to the pension where I was staying and began to read The Metamorphosis. The first line almost knocked me off the bed, I was so surprised. The first line reads, "As Gregor Samsa awoke that morning from uneasy dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect..." When I read the line I thought to myself that I didn't know anyone was allowed to write things like that. If I had known, I would have started writing a long time ago. So I immediately started writing short stories.


A wonderful radio comedian whom we vividly recall from our childhood, not to be confused with his contemporary, social historian Frederick Lewis Allen, who wrote Only Yesterday. The former's radio jokes were so clever, as he once said of someone else, "he makes me feel like putting my quill back in my goose." 14 A zine (BALLAST, for example), as distinct from a magazine, is "a small handmade amateur publication done purely out of passion, rarely making a profit or breaking even." That's the definition from a periodical called Factsheet Five (Post Office Box 170099, San Francisco CA 94117-0099) that catalogs, describes and reviews hundreds of zines. Send $6 for a sample issue. 15 What Marquez appears to have realized in part is that art and life are not synonymous, that fiction and fact have different requirements. Or, as the Surrealist painter René Magritte once wrote, beneath the picture of a pipe, Ceci n'est pas une pipe. Simply, an image of a pipe and a real pipe have vastly different attributes.
LES COLEMAN (Unthunk)
The cowboy put on his dark glasses and rode off into the sunset.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Steven Heller and Anne Fink, Covers and Jackets: What the Best Dressed Books and Magazines Are Wearing (New York: PBC International, 1993). ISBN 0-86636-195-2. Contrary to warnings that the aesthetic sky is falling, this book offers convincing evidence that rich and quite wonderful things are afoot, at least in the genre of cover design. Selected for originality and aesthetic quality, and divided into two major sections, Books and Magazines, the result is a dazzling anthology of more than 400 full-color book jackets, paperback covers and magazine covers produced since 1985 by designers, typographers and illustrators from America and abroad.

RUDOLF ARNHEIM A traveling salesman spending the night at a small motel found a Gideon Bible in his room, and looking for something to do opened it and saw something like "When you are in distress and in need of succor and consolation look up Isaiah 7:24." He did and found that someone had written in pencil on the margin "And if that does not help call Sally 974-6565."

D. J. ENRIGHT (Interplay)
Lunching with your publisher at his club and handing over your new book. As you part fulsomely at the door you have to remind him that he has left the typescript under his chair.

In the hymns, the popular songs, and the "serious" pieces I played and sang repeatedly in my youth, I experienced a powerful version of the "momentary stay against confusion" Frost said poems enact. In my attention to their forms and figures I found satisfying resting places, seldom attempting to move behind them to whatever content or thought might presumably lie there. Here, in retrospect, was the beginning of a lifelong preference for surface to depth—for the primary sensuous claims made by words and music rather than their secondary significations in meaning.

WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Poppy Evans, *The Graphic Designer’s Sourcebook* (Cincinnati OH: North Light Books, 1996). ISBN 0-89134-642-2. This book is described on its cover as “an indispensable treasury of suppliers of every kind of material and service.” Inside are 145 pages of annotated listings for thirteen categories of products and services of the kind that designers might possibly need while solving design problems. Among more than 1000 entries, there are such exotic items as holograms, watches, chef’s hats, murals, gold leaf and large-scale inflatable sculptures.

LES COLEMAN (Unthunk)
I take off my hat, gloves, scarf and overcoat to you.

LEFT

As work-saving things were manufactured, work itself became denigrated. You do it only when you can’t get a machine to do it. I see the value of a dish-washing machine. I also see its stupidity. When you have a lot of dishes to be done, a lot of people to attend to, it’s excellent. But for, say, two people, it’s simple to wash dishes by hand. The machine doesn’t save you any money, doesn’t save you any time.

At home, I did the washing, he [her late husband, Lewis Mumford] did the drying. I asked him once, “Would you like us to have a dish-washing machine so you wouldn’t have to dry dishes?” He said, “Certainly not. It makes a hell of a noise. I like to dry the dishes as you wash them. We always have a good time talking.”

A young man, condemned to death for a capital offence, asked permission for his mother to visit him in prison before he went to the gallows. When she entered the cell, he said that he had a secret to tell her, and, putting his mouth to her ear, he bit the ear off. At this, even the hard-boiled warders were shocked. “First you murder a man, and now you bite off your poor mother’s ear. What possessed you to do that?” “Can’t you see?” was the answer. “Why, it is my mother’s fault that I am now a convicted murderer under sentence of death. When I was child, she never taught me to obey. She did not do her duty by me; and this is what she has brought me to. Having her ear bitten off is a light punishment for having done her son to death.”


Highly recommended Alexandra van Dongen, et al., One Man’s Trash Is Another Man’s Treasure: The Metamorphosis of the European Utensil in the New World (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, 1995; distributed by the University of Washington Press). ISBN 90-6918-152-5. This collection of eleven essays is the catalog for a fascinating exhibition on the transmigration and assimilation neither of persons nor souls but of utilitarian objects from one society to another. For example, an empty sardine can, discarded by one culture, is salvaged and used by another as part of a head dress; the foot of a brandy glass becomes the pendant on a makeshift necklace; and copper kettles are recycled as ceremonial dance rattles. One is reminded of the ingenious contraptions of Rube Goldberg, the poetic box sculpture of Joseph Cornell, or the sinister resourcefulness of North Vietnamese soldiers during the Vietnam war, who used GI trash to make deadly jungle booby traps.16

16 For more on inventive recycling, see the discussion of bricolage in Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Savage Mind (University of Chicago, 1966); and Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver, Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation (Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1972).
PETER DE VRIES The standards for immorality are getting progressively steeper...a hundred years ago Hester Prynne of The Scarlet Letter was given an A for adultery. Today she would rate no better than a C-plus.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Patrick Werkner, editor, Egon Schiele: Art, Sexuality, and Viennese Modernism (Palo Alto, CA: Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship, 1994; distributed by the University of Washington Press). ISBN 0-930664-14-0. Austrian painter Egon Schiele was born in 1890, the year Van Gogh committed suicide (a coincidence he thought significant), and died of influenza twenty-eight years later. Described by art historian Michael Ratcliffe as “one of the most spontaneously gifted draftsman of all time,” he remains provocative, largely because of the intimacy of his sexually charged figure drawings, drawings in which, as Albert Elsen explains, “the model is rendered naked rather than nude, a particular person rather than the idealized offspring of culture.” This collection of seven captivating essays on Schiele, sexuality, and fin-de-siècle Vienna originated at Stanford University in 1990, on the occasion of the artist’s centenary.

Winston Churchill (when told about the Greek statesman Plasteras)
Well, I hope he doesn’t have feet of clay also.

Albert Einstein
As far as the laws of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain, and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality.¹⁷

PATRICK WERKNER
Everything [in Egon Schiele’s artwork] is subjected to the skeptical vision that reveals the scars, the vulnerability, the dark sides that are concealed behind the sleek personal facades. Schiele saw the abyss that lies beneath seemingly innocuous appearances.

¹⁷See Lawrence Leshan and Henry Margenau, Einstein’s Space and Van Gogh’s Sky: Physical Reality and Beyond (New York: Macmillan, 1982). The title refers to Arthur Koestler’s statement (in The Act of Creation) that “Einstein’s space is no closer to reality than Van Gogh’s sky.”
In Paris once I had two strawberry finches. Having to leave the city for a few days, I asked Mary [Reynolds] if she would save them for me. On my return, noticing that she had not removed their cover (indeed had her head up and turned, as in thought), I pulled it off myself and cried out at once, “Fore God, imposters!” Moving like a risen Récaumier, Mary said, in her light pining voice, “That cat and your abominable eye! Who on earth before has known one finch from another?”


Whitehead himself had moments when he was not quite sure where he had put things. One day in the early 1930s he had Professor James Melrose of Illinois to tea at the Whitehead cottage. It occurred to Whitehead that his guests might like to see the work in progress on a library addition to the house. So he led them outside, first carefully putting on Professor Melrose’s hat which he found in the coatroom closet and assumed was his own. After the excursion he returned the hat to the closet, but at tea’s end, when he and Mrs. Whitehead prepared to accompany the guests to their car, he went there once more for his hat. This time Melrose beat him to it and retrieved his lawful property. Whitehead reached up to the place where his visitor’s hat had been, made a little exclamation of surprise, then trotted some distance to a spot where his own hat hung on a hook. It was clear to his guests that the author of Process and Reality did not realize there were two hats, but believed that his own had in some unaccountable way changed its place.


18Cf., The classic response from a condemned punster whose hanging was delayed: “No noose is good news.”
Ballast is published in Iowa, about 90 minutes from Spillville, on the Turkey River, hometown of Josef Kovarik, assistant to Antonin Dvorak. At Kovarik’s suggestion, the Czech composer spent the summer of 1893 in Spillville, where he composed the Symphony in E Minor, Opus 95, From the New World.19

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Ballast is published in a limited edition and back issues are not generally available. However, any issue may be xeroxed to provide copies to others, but the copies must never be altered or sold. Only infrequently do we use unsolicited submissions, but readers are always encouraged to send offbeat material, verbal or visual, 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 submissions are unpaid, and unsolicited material will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Ballast does not have a budget as such. For more than ten years, it has operated at a financial loss. Such losses are currently offset by contributions from enlightened subscribers and generous deductions from the Reader Service Rube’s paycheck. If anyone is foolishly philanthropic (foolish because such gifts are surely not tax deductible), we will sometimes accept a check.

19 For more about Dvorak’s summer in Iowa, see Patricia Hampl and Steven Sorman, Spillville (Minneapolis MN: Milkweed Editions, 1987). Our own distinct memory of Spillville is that we once ate rancid coleslaw there on a hot summer afternoon and succumbed to a swift and magnificent bout of food poisoning.

SIR J. M. BARRIE
Times have changed since a certain author was executed for murdering his publisher. They say that when the author was on the scaffold he said goodbye to the minister and to the reporters, and then he saw some publishers sitting in the front row below, and to them he did not say goodbye. He said instead, “I’ll see you later.”

DOROTHY PARKER
(on hearing that a promiscuous British actress had broken her leg) She must have done it sliding down a barrister.