

William Hill Buchman



SUITE
FOR
MODERN
MAN

ART IS POETRY

What is an »art is« ?
Is it a »what is« ?
Is a »what« art ?
What art is it ?
Is it »art« art ?
Or is it »is« art ?
Is it not an »art is« ?

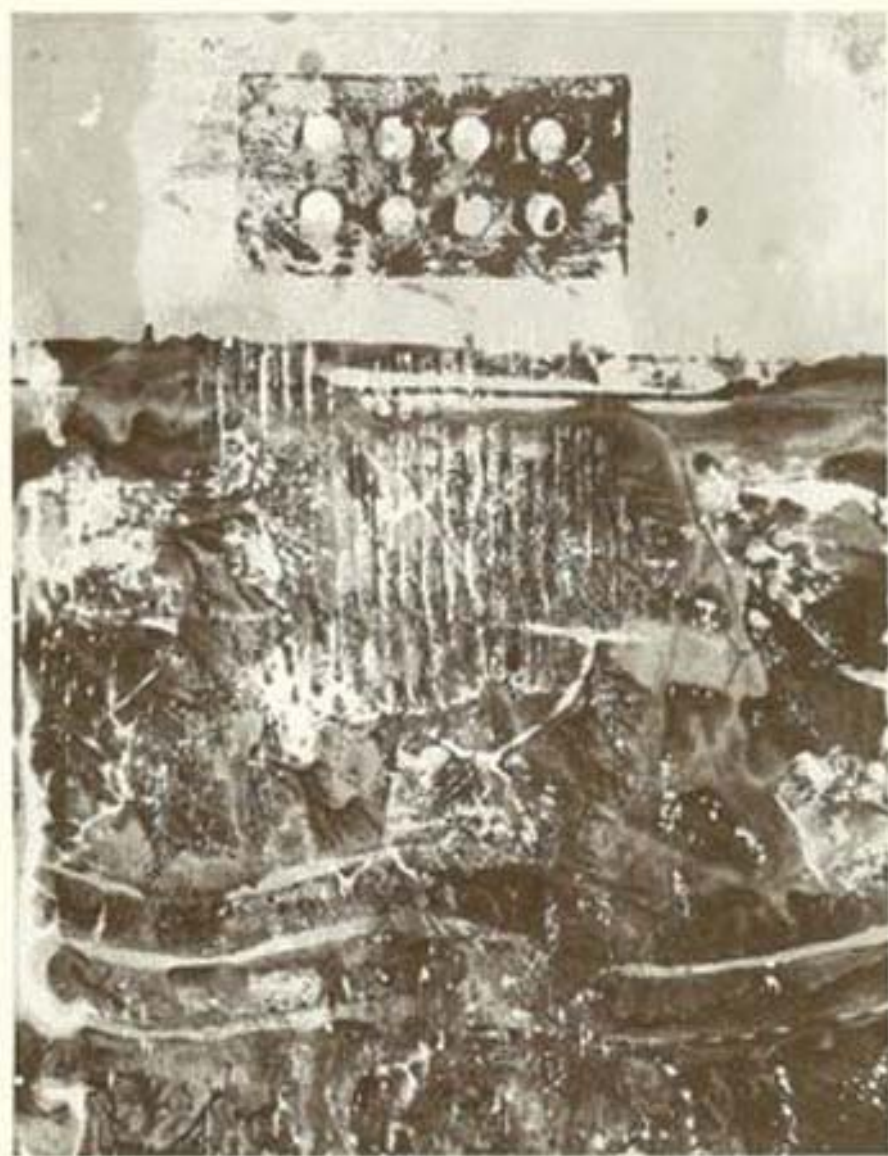
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Eight
Poems

The Absolute
We
Lotus Blossom
The Filament
I've Left You To Your Own Devices
The Mad Nigger Of P.C. Hooftstraat
Modern Man
The Perfect American



The Absolute

The absolute law poetic
states:

no matter

a life

how pathetic,

can be found

a profound aesthetic;

and a mind

rare and prophetic,

regardless of

saintly athletic,

will always be called

a heretic.

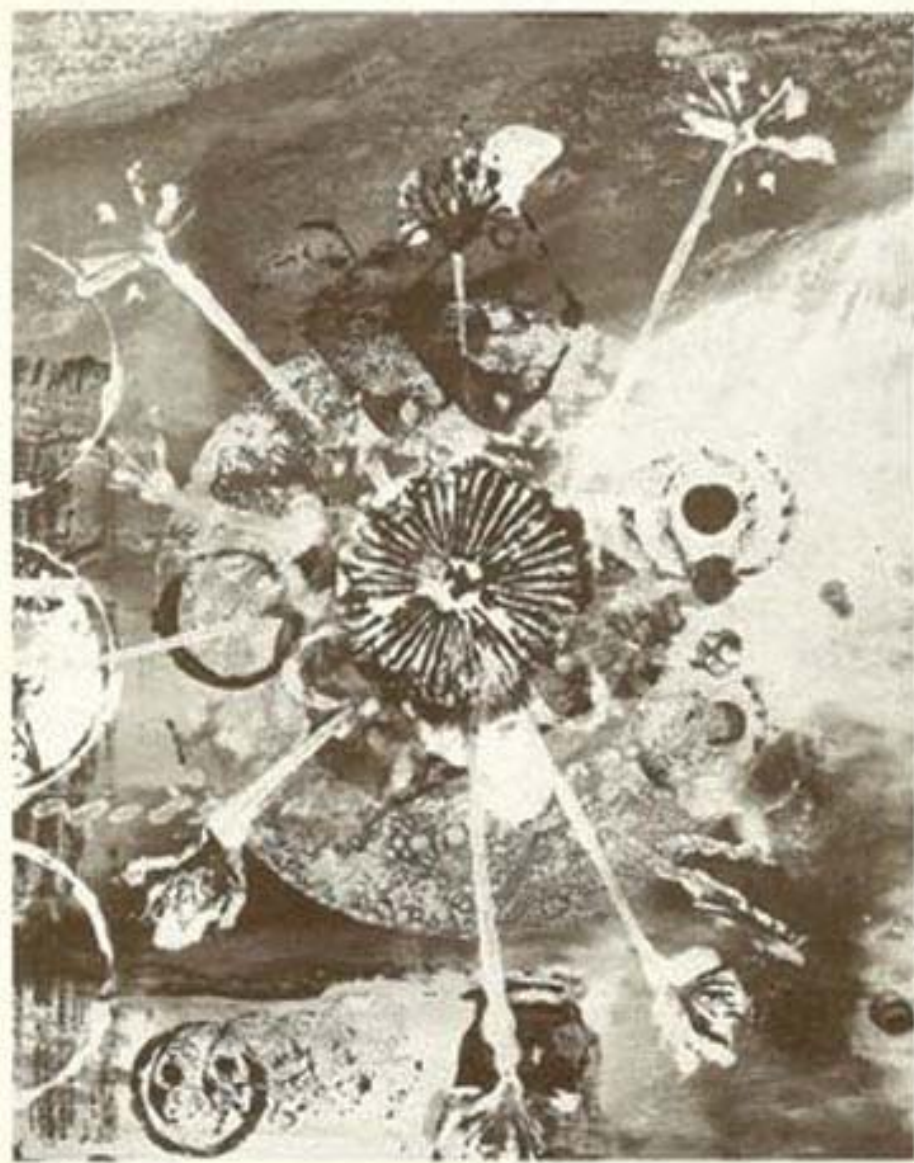


We

We exist
eyes in heads
bouncing and rolling
like so many beach balls
ping-ponging
in the currents of sight
blowing
through the mind-tunnels
of the night.

Riding trains
of thought,
we try to possess
the unpossessible.

In and out of darkness
sparks of hope glimmer
in the secret chamber
that we think
cannot be found
by so-called strangers
who, likewise hoping,
hide diamonds
in transparent mines.



Lotus Blossom

My mind
has opened
multi-colored
with thoughts
carrying me
past a thousand
unknown christs
staring
at the seemingly stopped
time frame
of my simply shocked
eyes.

Still a child
after all long years,
listening
with the wrong ears,
a babe
barely out of the crib,
still wondering about the rib,
and easily taken
by a smiling face of flowering beauty
that sits atop a foreign acuity
. . . I shall refuse
a thousand times
to be afraid
though unable to pretend
I can defend
the indefensible.

Unwilling to be devoured
by seeming paradox of passion,
I will live outside
the box transparent
and drink my coffee and cake
with my trousers awake
and at crucial moments
get down on my knees
and ask
to see the forest
as well as the trees.



The Filament

I've got the world
in my pocket
but
there's a hole
at the bottom:
a thready spot
where my real self
lies anesthetised,
breathing slowly
while all good sense
is dripping
down the side
of the leg
holding up
the hole
through which
the world is leaking
out of the pocket
of the man who,
himself,
has fallen out of the hole
in the bottom of God's pocket!

I sit
at the bottom
of a bottomless hole
called life
. . . falling through space,
new bottoms replacing lofty perch
once thought to be
the lowest point possible
in the »removal of illusions«
process.

I discover
only a bigger, wider floor
to walk on
with longer legs
to stretch higher
reaching with hands
which have let go
of the world

falling through
the hole
in the pocket
preferring to have the sky in my hands
than my hands in my pocket
where the the world surely is.

Yet, why, when in the sky,
not take an angel thread
of clearest blue thought
unclouded by mist
and,
in a spare eternity,
weave a patch
of understanding
where ignorance
now gapes.

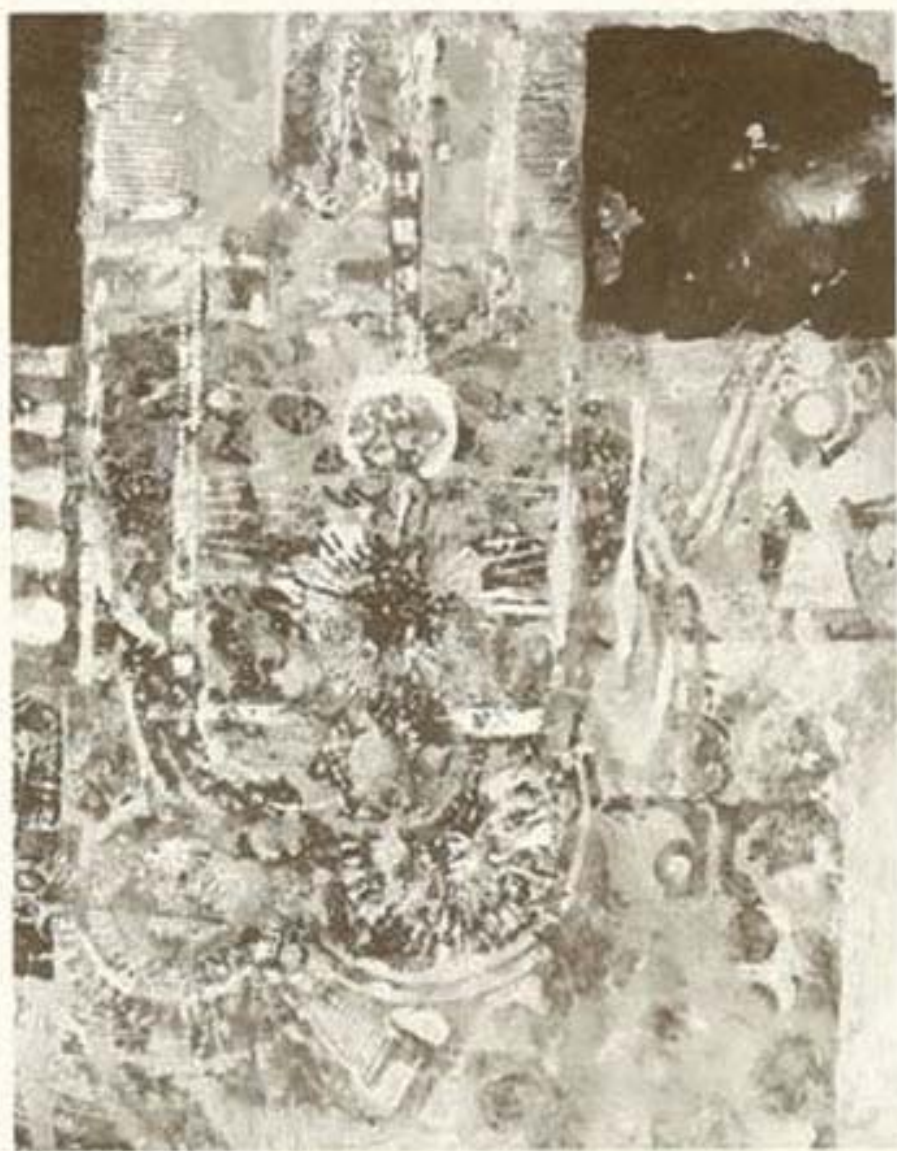


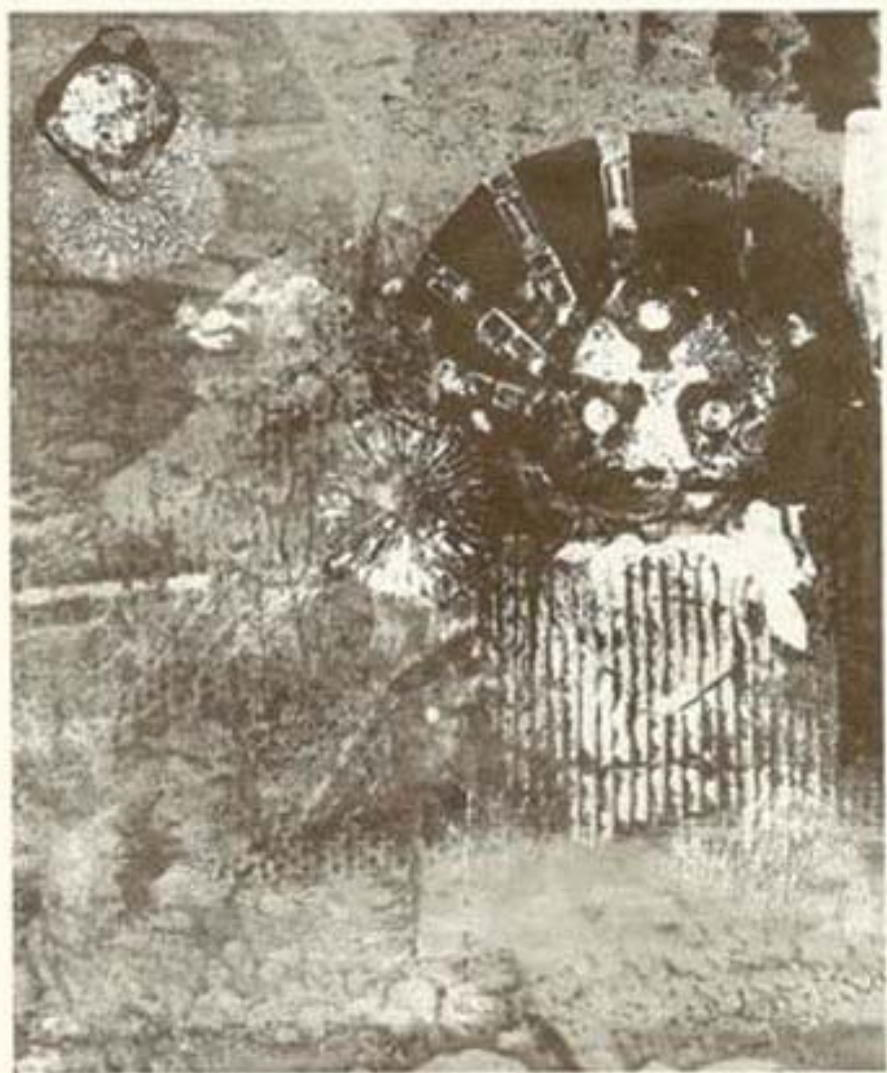
I've Left You To Your Own Devices

My mind
is enough of a knife
to take my own life
... to my own throat held
and applied
to sever my head
like a boat
untied,
to wander untried:
a theory
belied
by practice
imperfect,
... a dreary bout
with doubt
without origin...

unless
you count a slight tendency
to listen to lies
told by a beggar
in disguise.

The weight
of the guillotine,
long ago propped,
has finally dropped
after so many years
and separated my ears
from all your fears
and my eyes
from all your
questioning whys.





The Mad Nigger of P.C. Hooftstraat

The mad nigger of P.C. Hooftstraat
went out
all the way
to the edge
of life/death
and almost killed
and was almost killed
and in this moment
of dark madness
his heart
came back to life.

The terror and agony left
and the calm open life
was his once again.

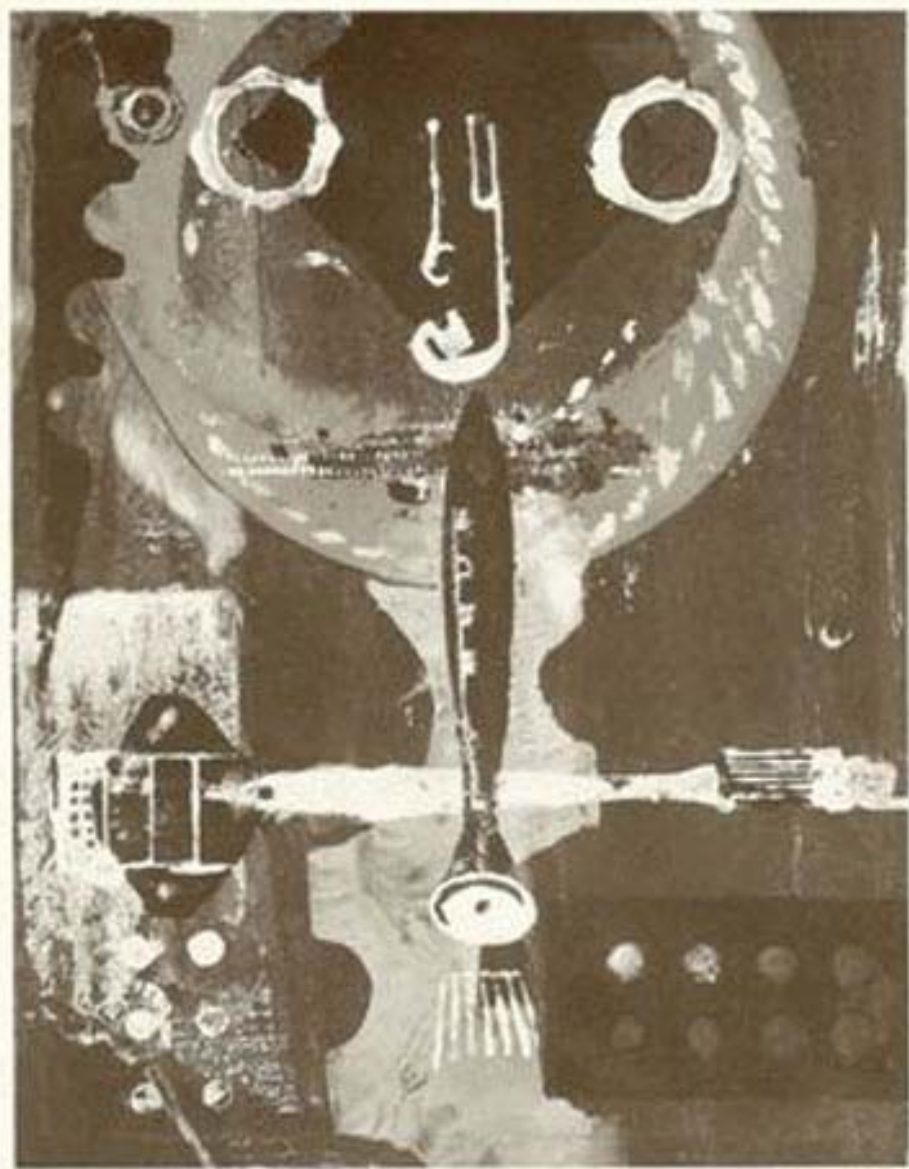
The wicked, wicked witch
gave back the piece
of life
she had taken from the heart
of the mad nigger of P.C. Hooftstraat
and the little mad bees ate all the honey
which came out of the place
where the hole had been.

Life came back
into the heart
of the mad nigger of P.C. Hooftstraat
when he was kicked in the balls
four times and
could only laugh
to know
that his life
was just on loan
. . . and in the very cool calm
of the mind
of the mad nigger of P.C. Hooftstraat
was so much knowledge
which now must be used
before it leaked out through the crack
that yet remained
where the pain still occasionally could be felt
when he wondered
why nobody
can really hear the mad nigger
when he yells
but all his whispers are noticed!
Except, God hears,
naturally.

Out of the hole
that remains open,
though it is closed,
now is flowing
pure blood of knowledge
that was given
by the angel
with no heart
who lost her knife
in that hole
when she discovered
the nigger's golden human heart
in the middle of
the middle
where
the fantastic flame
of life
still glimmered
and the fire
which started to rage
was more
than enough
for two.

She
could not
put it out
and soon,
the nigger
of P.C. Hoofstraat
must take the
flame
to the secret mount
of dedication
and give it back
without reservation
or hesitation
to the one
who
deserved it.

From the height of human folly
so arduously climbed,
the mad nigger of P.C. Hooftstraat
finally fell into the pit
of human deprivation
and then
rolled out his turban
onto the street
where everyone
could step
with dusty shoes
upon it -
he,
having let go,
once
and for all,
of the nasty lie
that held
all men
in
bondage.



Modern Man

1.

I shall begin by apologizing
for not having begun earlier
to tell you what I know
and perhaps,
what you don't,
and for my bitterness,
though it is this acrid stuff
that will wet these dry pages
with handy intimate supplies
of red ink
and other colours too.

But, I do not expect
to be forgiven
for I do not forgive.
So, what do I have to say
to a world
so full of words?
Or shall I just
write endless preludes
as many have before?

2.

Shall I not rather contribute
the hardened excretion
of accumulated perception
to the towering babble?
And are not preludes valuable?
The forty-two revolutions
of earth 'round sun
comprehending my earthly existence
have been but such!

There is freedom here
and oxygen to breathe
because I can talk to you
and not have to hear from you.
Your feeble and ignorant answers -
I can hear them still:
ignorance masquerading as knowledge;
facts. . . facts of life;
proofs of experience never lived
and most unproven;
offal, sacrificed uneaten;
scraps, conveniently left on the altar
for gods of convention!
It is this rotting matter
that needs a scrub!!

3.

Patina,
so attractive on old works of art
is hardly so
on half-worked artless thoughts
that are the currency
of the marketplace
called conversation.

To be free of man's
»with-words-ation«
and bound toward
Whitman and words-worth-sation
- O, happily!
»God's in a gutter«.

So say some artfully monkish types
who secretly keep the world
from untimely destruction
with their good deeds,
spat upon for their efforts
by their beneficiaries.
Shall we not learn
to drink in this spit
and, in drinking, recognize
the true nectar of the gods?
A thought hard to remember.

4.

I circle cautiously around my quarry
throwing sidelong glances
into important corners
where things more immediately pertaining
crouch,
and yet, it is you I'm after.

Is it so I can parade before you
naked, gloating, proud,
sweating with the puffy grandeur
of intellectuality
mingled with the sexuality of power
that artistic effort implies. . .
to bludgeon you into submission
with powerful arguments,
disabling dissections,
and spartan metaphors?

I need your attention
as a tender plant
blowing fragile
in shaded cranny
simply craves its rightful sunbeam:
to be assured of its life force and identity,
of its infinite possibilities
and primal right to nurturance.

5.

I shall take life
from whence it comes,
all-of-a-sudden like,
mature, though invisibly,
before your eyes.

I shall prevaricate
a little longer
before the abyss
from which
I am writing you.

I condemn you
because if I paint you
a picture
you will hang it
at the far end
of an airport terminal
or in your bathroom.
If I play you a song
you will sell a pint of beer.
More or less, whatever I make for you -
you will package and name and sell it
as something else!!!
For you are
»Modern Man«

. . . and in your painless,
deathless, lifeless,
anesthetic cubicle
you call a brain
your mind sleeps
and dreams.
Will you peer
out of the hole
you call an eye?
You see fear and call it
»the universe«
while rat-like victims
of fashion wait
for their turn
to be anesthetized
by »culture« and »works of art«!
Glorious cultures of past epochs
stare nakedly at us
with their bold declaration
of minds exploited
and lives controlled
by ideas backed up by images
and icons. . .
alluring, comforting,
deadly.

6.

Freed by my sky blue pen
filled with blood-red ink
I inflate my balloon
of sad happy air
and, floating,
cut loose
from your moorings. . .
»Farewell, Earth!
Hello, Mars! Venus!
Jupiter! Mercury! Menacing Saturn!«
And before outer planets
of white purifying fire
of vengeance and such,
I pause and say,
once and for all,
who you are,
who I am:
none other
than
»Modern Man«.

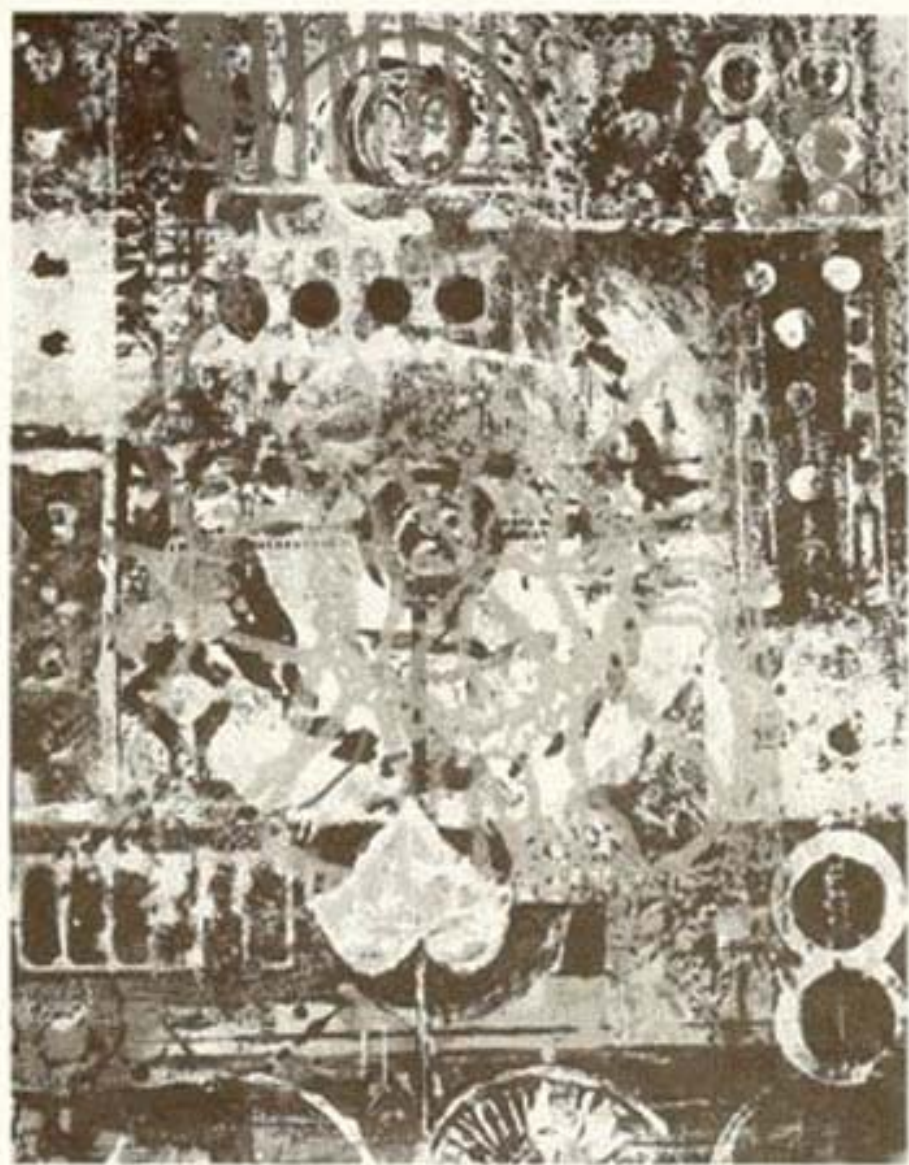
7.

We continue the journey
that was last pursued
by more ancient men
preceded by primordial men
and still further back
instigated by
Eternal Man
... this chaotic procession
towards reharmonization
(or so theology has deduced
from its more honest seers)
we hope - all this
just an illusion of time.

We coexist
with all
that is past and future
and so we,
»Modern Man«,
are not modern
at all
and our most modern imaginations
are pale and unimaginative
compared to the actual future!

8.

We are like ants
crawling
on a wall
looking
for a crumb
or a grease spot
unable
to sense
or find
four vats
each
a mile wide
filled
with
rasberry jelly
just below us
until we fall into one
and likely die
for our lack of
circumspection.



The Perfect American

1.

I have perfect moments now
sometimes.
Transparent seas of thought
reverberate
in the mandala form
we call
the »human«.

The »human« -
supremely foolish
multi-media event
motor-driven by
a perfectly definite
and utterly vague
force.

Sure of his uncertainty,
he is watched carefully
by the Queen
and others
less vigilant.

2.

Final Perfection.
The plate -
the one we'd fight for
and even die for -
without even an imitation
of a cherry
on it!

It's not all it's cracked up to be -
completely lacking
in profound mystery.
Profound mystery
forestalled
by anal fantasy.

I and most of you
want intoxication
of a better kind
but are unwilling
to make
the necessary sacrifice
of fragile eggshells
and
of the
extra cherry.

3.

Hell's angels
with beach chairs -
finally tamed by
some kind of a poet -
some kind of a poet
only realizing
the ecstasy
of misspelled sounds;
a perfect joy
transmitted journalistically
by a blue balloon;
little sweet eyes
that suggest
presence of
mind.

»I am only a perfect American«.

Why not record the sounds
that otherwise echo unheard?
I am, after all, here -
of that I give you
the the most unqualified assurance
- to witness your perfection too!

4.

Out of the poverty
of existence
explodes and exudes
an accidental,
and so it seems,
perfection
every now and then
from some
goddamned
you know what I mean sort
of poet
whose tenses
fly down a narrow drain
only trained sparrows know
to drink from.

Only in non-verbal silences
may we finally drink
from the illegible source
that writes our little story -
wondering why
it doesn't happen more often,
in final
or even temporary perfection!

5.

Falling
through endless chasms
of perfect architecture
and being spat out
on a broken staircase . . .
perfectly falling . . .
when not interrupted
by goddamned ignorant bastards
who finally will fail
as any Bible student knows.

Consciousness still prevails.

Perfect orgasms
exist
and for those of you
who have been there
I have come back
to testify
that I have heard
the inmost rhythmical thought
and it rhymes perfectly
in spite
of all
that you see.

6.

As genius may be forgiven
certain excesses. . .
as certain drunks
who encounter benign persons
suddenly meet
an understanding snub
and are absolved
of the damnation
of ordinary existence,
perfection exists!
And if you've never
been there -

NOW
GO THERE

once and for all
and be glad!

A little singing
will help.

7.

How deep
can you go
before you reach
the perfection
that I can easily find
in the rather simple transparency
of my mind
- when Martin Luther
finally learns
to play the Hammond organ?

 This much
I will reveal to you:
The power of ecstasy
has been largely
ignored!

 I think I will
bow down to it,
just once,
if it won't be destroyed,
purity
and all.

8.

Out of deference
to common reference
we have to take
your boring rituals away
one
by
one.

WHOO-E-E-E!!!

You must attend,
you must - repeat - ATTEND!

the
Final
Barnyard
Striptease
of the Mind.

If Jesus Christ
could play the organ
what would that sound like?

9.

Please excuse me
while I study
the ecstatic nature
of the universe.

I am but a snail
that protrudes
eye-fingers
out into
the world space.

I explain things
to myself
as I suck along
the ground.

Clinging mightily
to rocks
I am the perfect American . . .
and once again
it is not
my time.

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