volume I
number 1

may
1960

HELICON

Surf

Each spear sharp thrust
Booms upon the rocks,
Spattering the air
With silverwhite drops;
Their colour
Blinding
The sound of departure.

Every little world
Reflects the rainbow,
An instant.
Then slowly descends
Into the blue-green sea,
Faded and forever lost.

William Barrett

For the first time in its history the campus literary magazine, HELICON, is being published as a newspaper supplement. There are two reasons for the editors' decision to print in this form.

First of all, we were frankly disappointed with the response to our announcement of a literary competition. We did not feel justified in putting out a separate magazine on the basis of the amount of material we received. Secondly, we hope that, by printing in this form, we may arouse more interest on the campus for literary values. Perhaps publication of this kind of supplement to the SCRIBE might lead to regular, even monthly literary publications in years to come.

The editors of HELICON would like to take this opportunity to thank the SCRIBE for its generosity in offering us the use of their facilities. It has enabled us to print the work of those students on campus whose interests are creative, and particularly the prize poem and story which appear on this page.

The Bottle

Ever since cubhood, Boniface, a shaggy, chocolate-colored bear, had an extraordinary aim in life: to build a bottle. Whenever anyone asked him about his future plans, he replied invariably and enigmatically: "I want to build a bottle." The parents of the cub could not understand this, and were especially anxious when their baby left the cave in quest of his goal.

Long before he began his search, he knew that the bottle would be pear-shaped, and tinted green. It would be one of the primary colors which lies between yellow and blue in the color spectrum; not grass green, not leaf green, nor sea green, nor apple green, but a blanched, subtracted, verdurous aquamarine. Verily, what he had in mind was something similar to the flasks the Italians use in the province of Castel Franco for their Chianti wine. He had already seen many of these and was surprised at the number whose pear shaped and green tint resembled his dream-grail. But there were always imperfections in them; it seemed that one half of the bottle had been heated and fused with the other half. Boniface wanted one which would be whole, unified, transparent, limpid, and without any distortions. Now everyone knows that a bottle, being rounded and pear-shaped, must deliver distortions to the eye, but Boniface insisted that with the perfect glass, and the ideal conditions of temperature and pressure, he could blow a perfectly translucent flagon.

It must be confessed, dear reader, that Boniface Bear's genuine intention was not simply to build a bottle of beautifully blown glass. His motive had a deeper meaning, and he dreamed this dream all his life: he wanted, after creating his decanter, to be able to crawl inside it and sleep there forever. In his twenty-second year of honey and seasons and his fifth year as head blower in the Simoon Bottle Blowers Co., Inc. in Blowingville-on-Concurbit, he found the faultless glass for his bottle. He had come by the bottle in the strangest way: a customer had given it to him, ordering twelve crystal drinking tumblers from a huge, jagged-edged mass of glass. When he set to work on it, Boniface saw the unparalleled quality of the glass and bought it from the customer.

"Oh! I have found THE ambric at last!", he exclaimed, and he quit his job as head blower at the factory. His foreman and his supervisor were not surprised, for they knew Boniface had found his inimitable ambric.

The next day Boniface bought a large blowing tube to blow his bottle and a cistern in which to melt the glass. It must be noted that the bottle's dimensions would have to be rather grand to accomodate dear old Boniface's corpulent hulk. This meant a height of at least fifteen feet, but no more than eighteen; at least nine feet wide at the widest part of its body, but no more than twelve feet. That night Boniface built a blazing bonfire and proceeded to melt the precious ambric in the immense cistern. The next morning he found it almost overflowing with the rich, clear-green liquid which emanated a thick, breathy, spicy, cinnamon scent. He began, therefore, to blow the bottle and to form it to his liking, blowing and blowing the whole day and becoming so dizzy that he had to stop in the evening for a bit of nourishment and rest. He felt weak, and hardly noticed his progress for the day. After he snacked on twelve pints of honey and took a twelve hour nap, he saw that the still-warm bottle was near completion. Drunkenly, he blew again for another hour, cautiously cut the blowing tube away with a torch, and carefully placed the bottle upright. Reflecting its lonely, prismatic magnificence, and yielding soft, lilting mint tones to the dawn's scintillating lavender, it stood finished, free from imperfection and distortion, a delicate, clear, green pane of glass. The neck and mouth, no more than an inch thick, formed a long graceful projection in contrast to the squatness of the lower half. Boniface scurried for his ladder, placed it against the flange, and proceeded to climb up. His arteries dilated. His pupils constricted. His viscera vibrated. His fur was wet. Hynotically and lustfully, he climbed the rungs of the ladder; there was a mystical force within the bottle; he at last reached the warm, moist, welcoming mouth, with its rounded flange and soft, curvacious edges. He stood on the top rung and gazed downward into the depths of his monumental challce. A plump tear oozed from his black-brown eyes as he inhaled a deep breath of dry, burning musk. He crawled head first into the opening and began to slide in, shimmying down and in as far as he could. But he was hanging — fixed and suspended. He could not move; he could not extricate himself, and he could not shimmy in any further. As his cool, wet fur touched it, the mouth and neck contracted, shriveled, imprisoned.

Raymond Cormier

Love Old and New

The infant to his mother's bosom clings.
He finds there love which freely to him flows:
He finds too warmth and nurture, life's twin springs
To swell his limbs as rushing brooklet grows.
In childhood he needs love still more and more,
And runs to her to seek it in each day
That precious toys lie broken on the floor
Or when he hurts his tiny hand in play.
In youth her tender love he still must seek,
But hers alone no longer will provide
His needs; he searches far and wide each week
For more. Then comes the day he must decide:
New love now holds more power than he knows,
And old may vanish in the new love's throes.

Margaret Ann Figlar

IMPRESSION

Slowly, the drops of rain drifted down
upon the mirrored blackness,
That lay silently beneath the lamp,
reflecting its light,
Illuminating only the stalagmite
spokes,
Jutting out to nowhere ————

And all around darkness, empty and cold.
Neverending, yet enveloping.
Suddenly, motion from out of the black,
Following steadily and cautiously in the
path of its beams,
Leaving behind the unblemished road.

The lamp aloof, its glittering arms,
shimmering in all directions,
Reaching out with enthusiasm . . . . . .
Only to bounce back elastically to its
source . . . . . .

Cynthia Gelbard

Winter Dawn

This white world
Withered branches framing the horizon
Lifeless, quiescent
Takes from a wan sky pale reflections
As the disappearing moon
In the rosy mirror of a not yet puissant sunrise
Hangs in the gnarled remembrance
Of an ancient oak.

Over the ocean
Great gold and orange trumpets
Announce the coming of a new day's life
Breaking the still air with color
Gilding the restless water.
The sleeping earth, snow-blanketed
Shimmers in the spectrum
Of infinite renewal.

Phyllis Stock

THUNDERSTORM

In the distance, a low rumble of thunder sounded like the roll of drums heralding an awesome tempest. The wind whistled a tuneless song while the leaves fanned the oppressive air. The lightning was a candle in the heavens flickering and foreshadowing the oncoming torrent. Soon the rain-laden clouds broke, and the driving water hurled itself into the dry earth. The thirsty earth drank deeply of the nourishment and, when it had had enough, the rain stopped as abruptly as it had come. The cooling and refreshing rains had been a welcome friend that would come again.

The world seemed the better for its visit — the grass was greener, new buds had suddenly sprouted on the trees, and the birds had learned a new song. The fragrance of rich, soaked earth permeated the air, and if you took some deep breaths, the perfume was like no other.

Nature had left her gift to man and then had gracefully departed, leaving a crimson halo in her wake.

Joan Sopko

TRANSMUTATION

Ingrown senses trickle out my ear and ripple this moment on a wake breathing down the harbor—sleep backwatering.

Buds that awoke and touched bright short signs were aroused by raining wings, gold and green, and cleverly arranged in bouquets for the dusty furniture of silent rooms.

Quick petals of light.

Impossible voices — born in the descending warmth of blue powder, the screen door and whitely-wintered trees — beckon from filament edges with smooth flaplap laughter.

An eye, a nose shiver apart and dilate in revolving water. Fragmented, a hand gropes at them, then blurs.

Horrible patience needed for the bruised skin throbbing beyond reach, for its broken veins too slow in bleeding night. Black tide crouches intensely.

Edward McNulty

Grandfather, tell me once more how it was,
How it was in the old days
When you were a little boy, when you lived on the top of the earth.

So long ago, it is hard to remember
It was so different, and we lived
More like animals. We tilled the earth and felt the rain and the wind—so different.
The trees were reaching to the sky, and when I was a boy
I used to climb them, and just sitting here
Could feel the hard bark scraping on my legs.
The apples grew, just as they do down here—not so big or red,
But the juice in them was cooler, somehow, in the mouth.
We played games, hiding in the woods, or under piles of leaves in autumn.
You see, we were dependent on the seasons. If the frost came early
All the crops were spoiled. People had no food sometimes.
It was not as good, I suppose.

And what games did you play, grandfather? Did you exercise as we do?

Oh no, it wasn't nearly scientific, as you say.
We used to fight, mostly. Hit each other and roll over
On the ground. Because our parents didn't know how to bring us up
Like you, with the new methods.
We always tried to hurt each other. Now it's not allowed to touch, I know,
It must be better.
But in those days we always wanted
To touch each other.

But why, grandfather?

I don't know. Perhaps it was for warmth.
Yes, I was always cold. It seemed to make you warm
To touch another person.

And so you touched and hurt each other.

Yes, when we were young we fought each other.
Then the girls, when we were older,
We touched them with our lips. They were much warmer, somehow,
And smooth. Yes, I remember now. How long ago!

But is was wrong to touch, grandfather, and to fight.
We do not touch, and now we have no war.
We are not cold, all is regulated,
And not a one goes hungry.

Yes, it is better, I am sure
To keep each person separate, not to touch,
To give each man his duty and his living.
But we were more like animals,
We liked to look at everything, and hear
The noises of the trees and of the birds,
And smell the earth. We were like infants
Who liked the contact with all living things. We had our wars
And always had each other to contend with.

Yes, that was bad.

It was both bad and good,
Bad when you had some other one against you
Or maybe dependent on you and limiting your freedom,
But good when you felt, oh I don't know, a bit alone
To touch another human being. It was warm.
And don't you ever feel a little cold, my son?

No grandfather, we are now free men, all free of each other. Now we live
With dignity, we lack nothing. No man
Depends upon another.

Yes, you are right, perhaps I am too old
To appreciate the progress you have made. We always
Talked of it, but then,
So long ago, I can hardly remember.

Phyllis Stock

Spiral

Life seems to be a series of unfinished pathways,
Tread upon by every soul,
In vain attempt to reach an ending,
Within the bounds of an infinite spiral.

Cynthia Gelbard

That Old Sweet Malaise

It was a lazy, lapping evening in the spring. From the windows of the K.A.S. fraternity house, Seaside Park could be spied demure under its umbrella of trees, prissily facing the Sound. A thin misty warmth seemed to arise among the trees, tantalizing, provocative. A pulsating rhythm secured the earth with flats and sharps of discordance which ate into the veins. It was a time for restlessness, for anticipation.

Ron Green, looking out of the window, seeing the hulky freighters melt away in the overcast, felt the stirring in his blood. Had he been older, wiser, he might have recognized the symptoms. But alas, the mystic rites that performed themselves in different guises over and over again, before his eyes, brought no real message to him. His awareness totaled to a slight elevation of pulse, a generalized restlessness, a yearning for something quite undefined, something periodic, inchoate, senseless, naggling and tormented. It was a time of nothing and of something; of anticipation and surely of disappointment; of hope and hopelessness. In a corner of his brain many fire jets roared in spurts of dread.

He couldn't take it. He looked around carefully. They were all immersed. Elliot in "Playboy," Pete in "Gray's Anatomy", and Eddie in Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy". In a corner a group were playing gin with grim masks. I'm getting the hell out of here, he thought.

Later he found himself racing along the Thruway past numbers, figures and lanes. The uniformity seemed to irritate him. He swung off leftward toward where the Taft threw a beacon of light across lower New Haven. High, then Chapel, then Church and the Arch. "Urim Vtumim", "Lux et Veritas", "Light and Truth".

A vision came to his mind. It was a sheltered cove. Water beat against it, foaming in fury. The cove, ringed with black turgid waters, jutted out, alabaster white, a promontory secure, alone, inscrutable. He was barely able to swing away from a bakery truck which had turned on to Whitney Avenue and was bearing straight down upon him. As he spun the wheel mechanically, the driver leaned out and cursed at him. Ordinarily Ron would have answered in kind, with a stimulated fury. He gave the man a fixed stare as he passed him and sped on westward.

As the darkness deepened, he found that he was crawling along, oblivious to the curious passing drivers, their annoyed looks, stares and muttered indignation. He was busy. In his mind formed the vision of an angry bull, bleeding, defiant, staring with bloodshot eyes out over the Killer Matador pointing with short-necked dagger, teetering on high heels, ready for the kill. The Killer was dressed in a black velvet beret, blue silk shirt with yellow pants. A lavender cape flapped away from his shoulders in the wind. As he lunged, the sword became a meershaum pipe, full of laudanum. The Matador reached the bloodshot eye and stabbed it through. The beast promptly rolled over and died, his legs sticking stumpily into the dark spaces of air. Only his remaining red blood-shot eye gleamed in the dark, haunting the air, poisoning it with profanity. There was an evil and lascivious grimace on the beast's mouth.

Soon a black cavernous rock jutted out from the dark. He stopped the car and looked around. It was Savin Rock. The huge monolith, ugly and black, rose from the water like pusillating sore, smooth lapped, beady eyed, croaking like a frog. As he walked forward, it seemed to turn into a tiger shark with myriad, razor sharp teeth, reaching into its throat, ready to devour.

He climbed up, precariously, feeling as if he were mounting the head of a historic monster. Underneath, the water lapped against the north side of the monster, untiringly, seeking to force the entrance, to create the cove, to penetrate the flesh, to merge, to annihilate, to create. Adamantine, the monster stood, tough and forbidding.

Children were playing around a Maypole, further away, he could see, in the classic circle of life. Boys were jumping over a Totem Pole with rites of counting and expiation. Girls were brazenly, defiantly strutting along the spine of the promontory rising like Venus into the Sea and he suddenly knew what he wanted and a cry arose from his lips which he stiffled, chokingly, hoarsely, remembering and wanting to forget fighting hard to beat back the demons which pursued praying fervently that the chalice he passed from his lips this time — this time.

Edmund Wolf

Life

Life comes too late.
Its timing is poor.
Spring comes not to the moor,
In deference to Fate.
The dying flower
Repels the life-giving sun's rays.
The once-gentle shower now flays
The lichens in life's withering bower.

Man moves to resuscitate his Soul,
To fill the emptiness of the past
With hopes for the future, to the last
Of his fantasies made whole.

But the Soul in shadows, irretrievably lost,
And unable to make a conditioned reply,
Flees, sun-starved, to die,
While man hangs on to suffer the loss.

But even loss is labeled too late.
We suffocate in the greenhouse of the unlighted present.

Roberta Blender

Helicon

Published annually by the students of the University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

STAFF

PHYLLIS STOCK ..... Editor
ROBERTA BLENDER ..... Assistant Editor
RAYMOND CORMIER ..... Assistant Editor
DR. MILTON MILLHAUSER ..... Faculty Advisor