

SEEK *MATTERS*

SPRING 1969 1.00



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This first issue of the University Center literary magazine is gratefully dedicated to the SEEK Advisory Council, who worked so hard and so devotedly on behalf of our educational community.

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EDITORIAL

SEEK MATTERS: IT'S YOUR THING

What has happened on the Seek University campus is unique. The concept of student-faculty involvement is being implemented. It has created channels by which we might bridge the difficulty of speaking to one another with one voice. It shows others our ability to cope with Seek matters in a cooperative spirit.

Our new interim director, Aijaz Ahmad, provides an image which meets our needs. With a strong administration which holds our trust we can perform before those powers who observe our Seek University in transition; Seek Matters!

Now what needs to be faced, realized, is what Seek University Center means to us. In search of an answer a few students have put together what we hope will meet with your approval. Seek Matters!
It's your thing.

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ED VARGAS

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SEEK UNIVERSITY CENTER

Spring
1969

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May 1969

A Profile of Aijaz Ahmad

On April 18, 1969, excitement prevailed. The office of Director of Seek University Center came under close inspection. The student-faculty coalition manuevers pressed lightly, but directly to replace Dr. Irving Branman. By mid-afternoon the circle closed in. Around 12:30, in the Fiesta Room, Seek students stood growing restless, irritable. The fuse burned to its end.

While Irving Branman addressed the faculty, curious onlookers pushed one another.

"I know what you are feeling...", student cut in screaming "Yeab., we know, Bran...". Noise drowned out Dr. Branman's voice. Just then a tall sleek, figure stood up, with both hands spread out like an eagle and said... "Hey, quiet people, let's take it easy." Then he turned around facing Dr. Branman and said, "Dr. Branman, these students are most unhappy due to the useless bickering. Nothing has been done to satisfy the demands to any degree. I've come here as an observer and speak as a faculty member whose sympathy lies with the students dilemma."

With these simple words the student-faculty coalition-plus one "took the bull by the horns" giving themselves and University Center a chance to construct a feasible solution. This chance has been personified in the form of Aijaz Ahmad.

Few people had ever noticed this unobtrusive-looking man, who was born in Dehra Dun, India, about ninety miles away from what is known today as the capitol of New Delhi. After a thorough high school education, the Ahmad family sojourned to Pakistan, in 1955. At the age of nineteen he earned his M.A. at Punjab university in West Pakistan, and much later at Columbia University in 1968. He has been teaching regularly on the Seek Program of the City University of New York since 1968, first in association with the program at City College. Then he was transferred to Seek University Center where we have come to know and respect him as our Interim Director; he has often



lectured in Pakistan and extensively in the U.S.A. Aijaz Ahmad has written, and published, poems, articles and stories in the Urdu language, and he has also written English translations of his native poetry. In the past he's been given the task of translating the works of prominent literary men. We, the students, have reviewed his credentials and find him an asset to SEEK University Center.

7TH AVE. LINE PARADISE LOST/
TAKE THE LEXINGTON TO SOME REAL CENTRAL PARK

girl lady baby queen what can I call you
to let you know
the peacock feathers in your hand
make an exploding wand
peeking at me with giant
shameless eyes
inviting me to unknown underground paradise
where queens don't let me sleep
and I am stained eternally by their exotic dyes--
I don't care if you got them cut-rate
from a peacock feather peddler on 14th street--
their huge eyes surrounded
by giant lashes
draw me into the secret
overheated chambers of the queen of the subway
in her mating mood
and I don't know if I'm black or white
or hindu anymore
or if by staring hard
I'm turned into the mask of a rainbow
following the stained glass feathers
of a goddess
that somehow got stuck in your hands
and ended up across the way from me
legs crossed, magic at hand,
all the memories of mental summers
rotating under wafting fans

-DAVE GERSHATOR

HARLEM ON MY MIND: REACTIONS TO AN EXHIBIT

The exhibition was a feeble attempt at showing Harlem for what she really is. There were many faces shown; however, what is not easily seen or what cannot be understood upon a glance or a mere walk through Harlem was not shown. One would have to look under the surface of Harlem in order to realistically exhibit her to others. One would also have to have lived or live in Harlem in order to present a true picture of her. To love Harlem is to understand her -- to hate Harlem is to understand her -- to fear her -- to need her. To hate Harlem is to also abuse her -- for she has many good points about her! The exhibition mistreated Harlem terribly. Harlem was presented as a happy community in which conditions were once bad; however, at present things are looking up. This is not in the least bit true.

- Diane Crosson

Was Harlem On My Mind really on my mind? This was the major question that was thrown into perspective when I left the exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I couldn't identify with any one or thing at the exhibit. What happened to Spanish

Harlem? None of my "boys" were there. I can't look at any of the photos presented and say, "Now I know how my race migrated and faced their problems in this white city."

- Wilfredo Rivera

In Harlem today there are Puerto Ricans living, which was something which the exhibit excluded completely. There was no sign of any Puerto Rican or Spanish culture in Harlem. Beside the Black man in Harlem the Spanish man is found, which means to me that the Black people aren't the only ones who have any sign of culture in Harlem. There are Spanish writers and artists. I object to the idea of having to think of Harlem as just an all-Black community because, taking a good look at Harlem, it is clear that Harlem is divided in two: the Black man's and the Spanish man's community.

- Olga Perez

Others, including myself, left with the feel of disgust and anger, for so much was left out to reveal the real truth of what is happening with the Black people today: their desire to pull themselves out of the rut they have been bonded to for so many years; their fight for freedom, equality and better living conditions, their suffering, being degraded and humiliated with the mark of being inferior to the White man. I know this exhibition is an experimental one, but I cannot excuse the fact of its poorly put together structure. The planners of the exhibition should have taken more time in planning and research.

- Emma Grier

The Harlem On My Mind exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art was very interesting. As a former resident of Harlem, this exhibit showed me Harlem before I was born. It didn't, however, show all of the factors of Harlem that make it worthy of an exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

- Renee Allen

There was an ad featuring "Black Patti Troubadours," a song and dance act. Under this ad stood the words "30 of the most talented singers, dancers, vaudevillists and refined colored fun-makers under the sun. All new features the very incarnation of mirth, melody, music and darkey fun." As I watched the faces of the Whites viewing this picture, there was an artful grin situated on the face of each. Well, I don't blame them, for "refined colored fun-makers and darkey fun" would fracture my state of sedation, and my sense of humor would spill out all over the museum. But to Black viewers, nobody wants to relive an unfortunate event, even if this was Harlem. Blacks are trying to eliminate "colored" and "darkey" from their vocabulary.

- Harold Carr

On the walls opposite the tall white passage, on huge photographic blow-ups recline a human interplay of unbroken pride. Wails, be-bop stride embrace me. The genuine heart tick of the "Earth People" praising their mellow brother. Black soldiers march down Lexington Avenue in Khaki brown uniforms displaying their patriotism. Then the wide screen opens on another blow-up, revealing Harlem's Renaissance in musical explosion. Bang! Bang! Harlem's showplace of the early thirties spring forth. Familiar personalities pop on! Duke Ellington. Ethel Waters. Louis Armstrong. Golden boys and girls together. These are the firecracking, wagging-tail times. Things happen on large areas of pleasure. Hundreds of tar-baby chippies, jelly-roll thighs, caramel lips. Stomping at the Savoy.

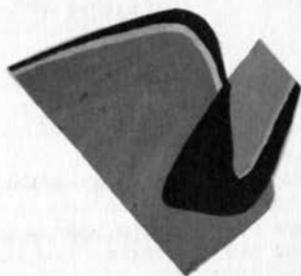
-Edwin Vargas

Harlem on whose mind? This "pictorial history" is misleading in its oversimplification of the socio-economic bonds that tie Blacks to ghettos. Depending upon the unique interpretation of the individual, the exhibit can ease the guilt of a white conscience and simultaneously pacify the temperament of a white racist. In either case, it creates an atmosphere foreign to the ghetto.

-Regina Wdowiak

All in all, the exhibit fails to show the reality of Harlem. Mr. Hoving and his museum have presented a beautiful fairytale with, of course, a happy ending. It ends with smiling faces conveying to the viewer a feeling of calmness. The viewer I am referring to is the white middle-class who happily swallows the exhibit at face value. They fail to look beyond because they don't want to concern themselves. Harlem On My Mind has only reassured them that there is no need for concern.

- Barbara Namias, -5-



So, where did the rest of my community disappear to? The middle-class Negro, blacks involved in organized crime such as numbers and narcotics, pimps, prostitutes, musicians, artists and even the self-help programs have all suddenly become non-existent. And where did Police negligence, Sanitation negligence and the pawnbroker suddenly hide? Consequently, what is there of the Harlem culture that surrounds these different aspects of the community in the exhibit Harlem On My Mind? Nothing.

I would say that the larger part of the blood pulse and way of life of the community have been missed by the makers of this exhibit. Why should I go to the museum to reread the newspapers?

- David Rivera



WE BLEW A GOOD THING

There once was a Black Christ, Who gave all the Brothers
and Sisters all they needed.

He made us from the rich fertile soil of the earth

YET

We ended up working the land.

He blessed us with beautiful bodies:

AND

We used it for stud and call service.

He made us mathematicians

HELL

We ended up as number runners.

He anointed our heads with oil

BUT

didn't we straighten things out?

He supplied us with the Law of Medicine

BANG

We shot in our veins.

He said: Let there be light!!!

AND WE SAID:

Con Edison, did you hear that baby?

He Said: Seek and Ye shall find; when we found He had the power
we set fire to his righteous behind.

He never got a minute's rest for we always had a "last request"

O Lord, she cried: Send my man back to me!!!

O Lord, just let me hit this 603!!!

O Lord, please forgive me for this here sin!!!

O Lord, please let me get on my feet again!!!

We all had chances to be a Prince or a King

But let it be known we Blew A Good Thing!!!

All Praises Due to Allah

- Ronald Watford

Who Am I

I am a person too complex, I believe, to be adequately recorded or described on paper. Consequently, at best I can only give a brief synopsis of my experiences in living which have contributed to my present state of existence and mind. In this way I may be able to convey some small insight into what has caused me to become individualistic, angry, critical and not too concerned about approval or condonation of others.

I am an only child. My childhood and adolescent experiences were not shared with my parents or anyone else. My community was basically middle class and I instinctively did not fit into their social framework. I also never "learned" to be middle class. At the age of seventeen I found myself addicted to heroin. I stopped using heroin in nineteen sixty-four and the main aspects of my development took place from then until the present. Having been addicted, being black in a middle class section of the ghetto and having felt the consequences of man's inhumanity to man, I have had to develop my own set of values and means of struggle. Consequently, I exist alone, in contact with other people. I believe in no super-natural beings and deal completely with the here and now. I think for myself and am not involved in many of the social myths people maintain for their existence. I encounter some external difficulties as a result; however, I am internally in accord with myself.

-David Rivera



BEAUTY

Oh you weak and feeble men
Who seek and lust for fair women,
Know you not that this is a trap
For those who are fair only rap.

It is said that those who have
more fun
Must have hair as yellow as the sun,
But men and women have yet to learn
That beauty is that which is earned

No man can ever truly say
That he has seen a beautiful being.
For the essence of true beauty
Lies in that which is unseen.

-Rose Mitchell

POEMA DEL AMOR LEJANO

En la fresca brisa de la noche
Llegan hasta mi mente atormentada
El dulce recuerdo de un amor lejano.
Mis noches, frías y vacías desde su partida,
Anhelan nuevamente su presencia.
Todo mi ser palpita y se estremece
Al recordar las horas felices que pasamos,
Sus manos presas de las mías;
Mis labios bebiendo en el manantial
Cristalino y refrescante de su boca.
Nuestros cuerpos unidos en un abrazo
Lleno de ternura, de pasión y éxtasis.
Nuestras almas libremente comunicando
El mensaje poderoso y silencioso del amor.
¿Por qué te has ido de repente de mi vida?
¿Qué horizontes nuevos tus ansias ahora buscan?
¿Por qué tus promesas has roto de amarme sin medida?
¡Vuelve a mí, amor de mis amores!
¡Regresa a llenar este vacío tan inmenso
Que tu ausencia ha dejado en mi existencia!
¡Vuelve otra vez a alumbrar mis días!
¡Regresa nuevamente a extasiar mis noches!

- Sacul Otrebor Ozir

Day In, Day Out

Walking on a narrow sidewalk, you get the feeling of trash, some bad odors, with stabbing and robbery surrounding you. As you keep on walking, you notice a precinct in the middle of the block. Cops are standing around telling the young kids, "Get lost; stop disturbing us."

Further down, you see broken-down buildings that have police lines surrounding them. But there are the junkies who ignore the lines and go through the buildings.

Walking further on, you hear the screams of a woman. A man stops and asks her, "Madam what's wrong?" The lady answers, "One of those lousy junkies just stole my purse." With this happening, a commotion starts. Who is to follow the junkie without knowing who he is? But all come to a conclusion, "Lady forget it; he is gone."

On and on you walk and all that surrounds you is the dirt, trash, garbage cans overflowing and cats and dogs running wild in the streets. You make a right, in front of the market. The old man sells rotten food to the people for a living, not knowing the day he will die for selling rotten food. Some people dare to protest; others don't. Wait! Here's one man who does not like the idea of being sold poor food. He tells the old man, "Either I get good meat or my money back." The old man insists that the meat is good, won't give the money back, and is stabbed.

At the sight of blood, women scream, kids holler, the place swarms with cops. You hear the sirens miles away. The man gets arrested and pushed into the wagon. The ambulance arrives, but the old man never makes it to the hospital.

This you see and hear all around you at every corner, every street day in, day out, the same routine all year round.

- Celia Mariani

Confrontation

Saturday Night

Just got home from work
Tired as hell:

Music going, kids playing
Franks and beans for supper

To hell with Saturday night...
I'm hungry

- Patricia Gilbert

Dig It

Got to keep moving
Move, don't stop
Can't afford to
Stay within the mainstream of a constant
source of direction

Self

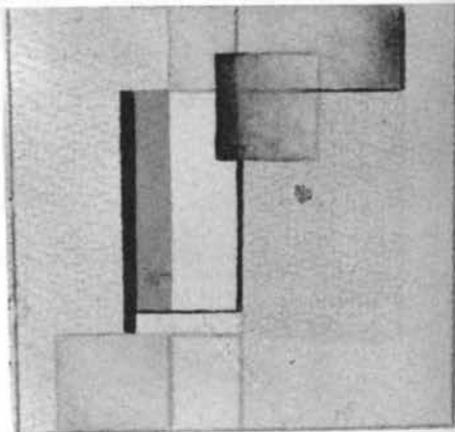
Move!
Pick up the direction
Then step up the pace
Agony, pain, frustration
Again, but this time harder
This time self (isolation, direction)
loneliness, bitterness, searching and fears
Walking on slender threads of fears
Regard fate and reality as comparisons of bullshit
To begin at the break of daybreak
Now awaken unto yourself and do it baby
Make it happen!
Dig it!

- Ronald Booker

We were hereditary enemies; it had been so decreed long before our births. They could have looked upon me with hate and fear and confidence; I looked upon them with loathing, contempt, confidence and hate . . . and fear, a dreadful fear. Our armaments were equated: they spread, or helped to spread, or were around filth and disease. They reminded me of slimy, greasy, heavy, warm, choking Castor Oil. They sickened me, and I always killed them as quickly and noisily as I could, to erase the memory of them. Yet as they died, my soul revolted at the slaughter and in a few spaces of time, more of their breed would appear, and the battle would continue.

They were two, possibly the same, possibly not. They and I revolted each other, and they thought of me as insignificant. Me! A portion of my brain opened upon Ali Baba's verse to his mechanical slab, and my wall went up again. They had once again treaded upon my domain in their never ceasing search; but I had trapped them once more...My machine; made by others, was turned on, and it did its job, and it didn't give a damn. They died, and my wall was lowered a bit, and the battles would continue; and we wouldn't talk because our leaders said it was too late; and we had never taken time to learn a common language anyway; and they would be slaughtered till I lost my mind and someone else would take my place; and we will all listen to our leaders... And I write my sickening fears.
I DARE TO WRITE!

- Denise Hampton



(0)

I

You promised me

balloons,
red, yellow, orange, pink,
no blue or green, please;
honeymoons are brighter, hotter,
not to be pacified. I'd promised you
forever, never thinking there could be
a world beyond our closed elastic
sphere. But I have changed, dear,
my time no longer spent forgetting you,
my days are filled with
sun, my nights with
round surprises found
at my new carnival.

II

At breakfast, I discover that
eggs have regained their flavor,
especially hard-boiled
with a little salt
and coffee, dark and smiling from the
cup. Across the table, someone's
eyes surprise themselves by opening,
his yawning mouth a nearly perfect
circle, sleepy, but a certitude.

III

He is a quiet fellow, brings
me his dirty dishes with a kiss.
At this I make my daily marvel
for small wonders, and he greets
the morning with a short analogy
on life and then a wink. I laugh,
my fingers busy bursting detergent
bubbles in the sink.

- Ava Stern

"BORICUA, DEFIÉNDETE"

PROMESAS Y MAS PROMESAS

Año tras año los políticos, los pseudo-políticos y sus aliados alza coña nos prometen el cielo, la luna y las estrellas. Aprenden dos palabras en español para agraciarse más con nosotros.

DEMAGOGIA

Nos comen el cuchifrito y salen corriendo a tomar alka-seltzer, porque así no se mueren, para así demostrar lo mucho que nos quieren.

HIPOCRECIA

Salen electos y al otro día se olvidaron de nosotros y de sus promesas, y entonces seguimos siendo del montón - como siempre.

Nuestros niños, los más abusados del sistema escolar siguen siendo anal-fabetas tales como entraron. Se nos impone una cruenta huelga ilegal. Nosotros perdemos.

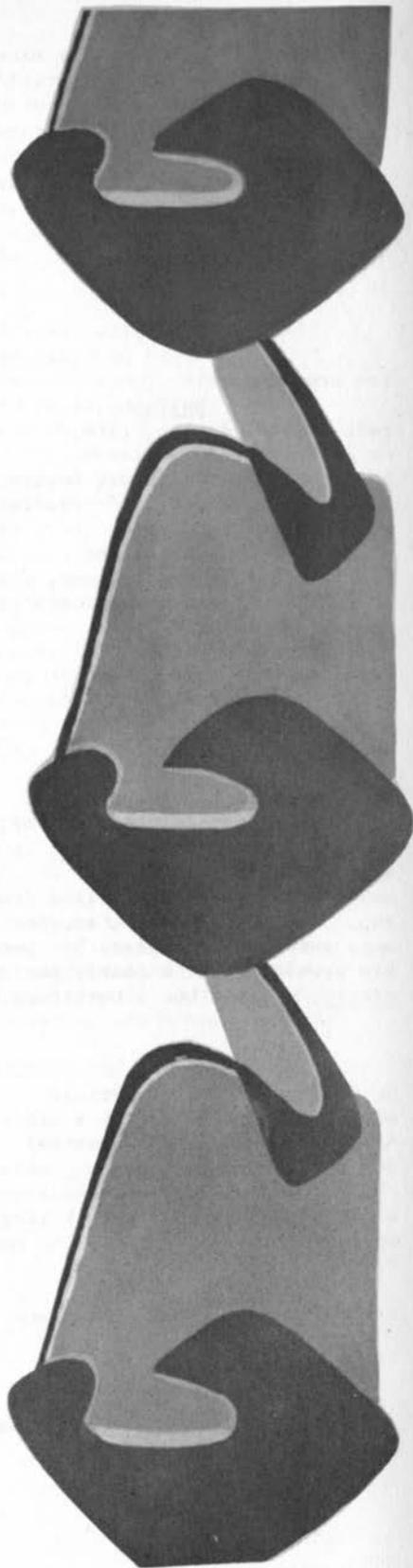
El casero sigue esquilmando a los inquilinos con la ayuda táctica del gobierno. Las cortes protegen al casero. No da calefacción, ni agua caliente y mantienen la propiedad completamente abandonada. Nadie nos escucha. Como siempre perdemos.

La policía aún sigue abusándonos en todos los planos. Y nosotros siempre perdemos.

En las cortes supuestamente protectoras de la justicia, se nos dispensan injustas condenas. Siempre perdemos.

En las cárceles se nos atropella físicamente. Y nosotros siempre perdemos.

Se nos niega la oportunidad para poder competir en la banca y en el comercio con falacias y falsas excusas. Siempre perdemos.



Las uniones con raras excepciones son bastiones de discrimen y explotación peor que el mismo patron a veces. Las uniones raqueteras se festejan con nuestras pésimas condiciones en el taller, y las llamadas uniones honestas y legítimas son a veces más crueles hacia con nosotros los trabajadores. Casi siempre perdemos.

Nadie, pero nadie, puede refutar la escueta verdad de nuestras pésimas condiciones, aunque los alza colas quieran proteger sus propias posiciones saliendo ala defensa de sus amos. Esos dejan de ser puertorriqueños convertidos en agentes pagados que eventualmente venderán su patrimonio.

¿QUÉ HACER?

Boricua, solo tú podrás poner coto a esta imperante situación. Demuestra tu fuerza, vete a la escuela y absorbe lo más que pueda de esa educación. La educación es la mejor arma del hombre para combatir al enemigo. Edúcate y ayuda a los tuyos.

Boricua despierta. Demuestra tu puertorriqueñidad. Hasta respetar del político cínico, del casero usurero, del policía abusador, de las cortes injusticieras, de los líderes obreros demagogos, del patrón explotador, del llamado líder puertorriqueño vende patria. Tienes que darte a respetar para que te respeten.

¡AL BORICUA HAY QUE RESPETARLO Y NOSOTROS TENEMOS QUE REAFIRMARLO!

* Un Jíbaro Mas

THE WORLD OF THE YOUNG

Turning back the movement of time, I seem to recall that always forgotten, happy little kid I once was. This was when not a worry or care was expected of me. All the love in the world would come to me like a king who received the respect and loyalty from all the people who were governed by him.

I was brought up in a home someplace upstate; being raised in the country with other boys and girls is a remarkable experience. With nature as a mother we were secure in knowing that for a penny we would get the most joyous, happiest, and most exciting experience any other man could offer us for a million pennies. The country was filled with rivers to swim and fish in. The animals were free to be hunted. The trees and their fruits passively gave way to greedy little hands that might find themselves grasping them. Frogs, turtles, and lizards all of a sudden found themselves taking part in the wondrous little worlds of the innocence of we six-year-olds. Yes, this was a time when nature, not mother, took care of us.

How extraordinary our world must have seemed at that age, the age when all the sense of value seemed twisted and misunderstood because our stubborn little eyes just couldn't see it. I remember how everybody had excited themselves when snack time came. To an outsider it would appear as if a team of cattle had just rushed a pond of water after traveling a long distance. But, to us a peanutbutter and jelly sandwich was much more valuable than a treasure chest of gold. There were other things that overjoyed our minds. The dollar, for instance, gave us the power to eat all the candy our flabby little tummies could hold. This we did every week. Story-telling time was our favorite, ghost stories in particular. Marbles, bubble gum, mud pies, and tricycles mean little to me now, but then they meant the whole world.

Successfully surviving that great obstacle we humans define as time, I now find myself in a position to analyze both my past and present life and can now come up with a solid conclusion. In this world of automation with its new and greater luxuries, there is a world much smaller and simpler which still survives. The world of the young, this is the world I want to belong to.

- Wilfredo Rivera

W.R.



Growing Up, Ghetto Style

Playground; backyards with tons on tons of garbage. Looking straight out of my back alley window, you could not see out concrete, just garbage on top of garbage, sprinkled sparingly with rodents as large as cats, and many times the cat would turn and run.

In the evening we could go across the street and look in on the fat whore from the backyard window. She would let us watch as long as we were quiet. But sometimes it was a little rough to be quiet when twenty other kids were all trying to look through three little holes in her shade, all screaming to have a look at the same time.

Or we could go bus riding, hanging from the hinges of the back of the bus by our finger tips. When we grew tired of bus hitching, we would enter in packs of ten underground-"subway." We would wait for the train to pull into the station. Just as the conductor would open the doors, we would charge over and under the turnstiles and hold the door until all were on board. When we went to the subway it meant peanuts. We would take sharp bobby pins into the shape of coins and literally empty a machine. When we stocked up good, all pockets and bags, we went back to the block to see the superintendent's daughter, Vivian, to whom we would turn over our "gold" and she would let us feel and touch and pinch her until her father came. I am convinced that he was capitalizing on his daughters goodies.

The superintendent's daughter wasn't the only girl in our lives. One of the fellows had a sister about eleven years old and after church every Sunday she would take on the gang. That was when we really got a first hand look and feel. I started noticing girls then and since. I already knew what to do with them; it made me even more anxious. But I wasn't quite sure what the pretty young girl was looking for. I was left out of the scene. I did have one plump side. She always had her eye on my portable radio. For a loan of my radio we worked out an agreement. This went on for a while until her brother, my friend, got wise and he muscled in on our little agreement and that was where I witnessed my first view of brother and sister love making. However, he was discreet enough to take the back door in. I palled out with him a lot and finally he asked me to do it to him. I tried, but

'couldn't. Something inside me seemed to freeze and it was just hopeless. He finally gave up and masturbated. When I was thirteen I moved out of the Bronx to the Lower East Side housing project. Here I found a different situation entirely. It was a pretty mixed neighborhood, dominated by the Negro.

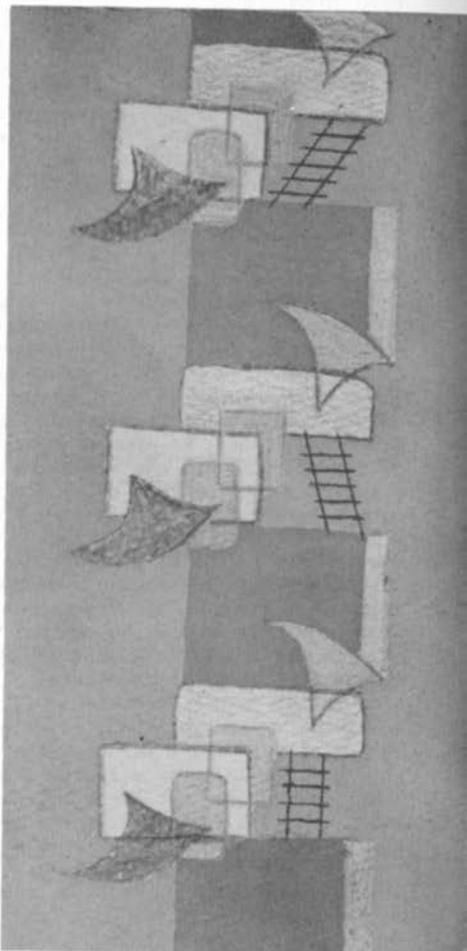
I was happy, I thought, until I was slapped around, shaken up. Basically, until this point in my life, I felt fighting was just not the key. I learned to fight for my rights the hard way. Now that neighborhood girls were game, especially when they found out I was a Puerto Rican. Unfortunately for me the boys found out too! That made all the difference in the world to some of the guys. I remember one night especially. I had just learned a new dance called the Grind from my friend Lefty. I had gotten to be good buddies with Lefty who lived in my building, and I spent hours in the afternoon practicing by myself, him coaching. That evening we went to a party and as I was wrapped up in some luscious sepi's arms, when in breaks this cooperative damsel's beau, and through sweet music I hear oh-oh! When he saw the position the girl and I were in he jumped ten feet in the air, ran over to me, and stubbed his cigarette in my face. The next thing I knew, he was wielding a straight razor in my face. His friend, who also had a knife made a dash for me. I looked to my friend Lefty to tell me what to do. He motioned for me to run while he tried to stop them. I did as he bid and ran out the door, my heart in my mouth. I could hear them just behind me as I broke through the door and I into the street. I never ran so hard in my life. When I did look back again, all I could see was cold street, which was odd because we were in the middle of a particularly warm summer. After that I became closer than ever with Lefty. I wanted to learn everything from him, dancing, how to act with girls, and last, the art of self-defense. I joined the boys club and started boxing instructions. I got quite good and was soon on the boxing team. After many months of training, I methodically, but surely, went around picking out all the brats, who had in the previous months tried to make my

life so miserable. And with great pleasure I evened the score.. Though I hated violence I now found that was the only thing that people seemed to understand. Now I was armed with the that command respect, not only with my peers but with all. And that thing was strength. Whether I liked it or not strength was the key; for friends, notoriety, popularity. I liked the respect; I was now getting it, I wasn't about to give it up! God knows how important having friends are to a guy. Especially one without a father of at the very least a brother to make reference to. Somehow it used to leave me with such a lonely feeling. It used to hit me when I was in the house with "just Mom!" Not that she didn't try, I had everything a guy could ask for. I truly loved my mother. But somehow the house always seemed to be missing something, and it's emptiness seemed to reach the pit of my stomach, and tear it to the point of pain, real pain. When it come down on me, it was impossible to keep still, never mind in the house, It would always make me think of the fellows, and what I must be missing out on. I didn't know at this point, but my over anxiusness to make chicks and friends was going to be fatal. The beginning of the end was near. I got to be pretty popular, it was wonderful, meeting lots of people, it was great. Until I met Helen, who told me she was sweet sixteen. Wow! was she tough. She was built like Elizabeth Taylor, with blue eyes and all, with a pair of boobs as big as melons. She had hair redder than Maureen O'hara, and when she stood in front of me she looked straight in the eye, and I stood five feet eight inches. So when she paid a little attention to me I jumped at the opportunity. For a while, everything was just great; she even taught me a few things I didn't know. Finally, she started hanging around me until eventually the guys started to make fun of me. It didn't ~~put~~ her in the least.

One day the hassling of the guys got too much for me, and I told her not to come around so often. She became furious and told me that if she couldn't have me then no one would. She ran off and I didn't see her for two weeks. Towards the end of the second week, I received an unexpected visit from the police at six a.m. in the morning. This sent my mother into a frenzy, when they handcuffed my hands behind my back and escorted me to the station. There I saw Helen, aged eleven, who was dressed as a little girl, with a little pink bow on her little red head. They sent me to the Youth House, and here was I, aged thirteen and a half, charged with rape. As they took down my particulars, I remember thinking to myself, "Well, I've made it, the epitome of growing up, Ghetto Style."

I was incarcerated.
What would they do to me now?

- Bernard Creache



I hugged your dark twisted shadow
Mistaking it for your substance
Trying to feel the dense texture
Only to spring back puzzled, vexed,
Not understanding that faces that
Took years to construct cannot
 be erased or reshaped by kind kisses
 or welling tears. Poor baby, father and child,
 spoonfed on doubt and clothed with cold.
Go, almost loved one, beginner without end
Try to find some saving answers
Go and bow to your many gods
I must remain kneeling to mine.

- Richard Mason

What Ever Turns You On

Now, as I heard tell there were two hippies that went by the names of Adam and Eve living on some estate that was known as Paradise Garden, or something of that sort. Exactly how these two came upon this place I've never been told, but I suppose they were running from the fuzz or something of that nature. They had a weird appearance. For example, they both wore the same hairstyle and Adam wore a beard which at the time was a sign of rebellion.

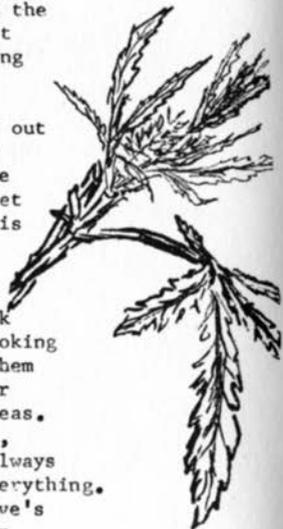
It's been said that this place was truly a paradise. There were trees, flowers and grass growing all around. The place was sort of a cross between a nudist camp and a spiritual and intellectual retreat. It was run by a guru type know as the Great One. As I've mentioned, Adam and Eve dressed kind of weird, but they were no match for the Great One. He'd walk around wrapped up in white sheets, wearing sandals, beads, a bushy beard, long hair, and at times carrying a flower between his teeth. I can't say if he liked to eat the flowers or if this was just his way of showing how hung up on nature he was. You see, nobody ever asked him about it. He was so feared and respected that everything he did was accepted and not questioned.

All in all the place was really great. After all where else could one sit around and shoot the bull without giving time a thought? Yeah, it was really a swinging place, peaceful, but the couple didn't get to enjoy it for very long. It so happened that the bird, Eve, was one to try anything for a kick and somehow she noticed that the grass growing around was not only nice to look at but some of it was great to smoke. She managed to talk her man Adam into trying some, and he too liked it.

Just as might have been expected, the Great One soon found out about Adam and Eve's new found pleasure. The Great One was set against grass smoking from the beginning. He figured that since he hadn't thought of it first, it couldn't be acceptable. He set out to look for the couple to let them know how they stood by his rules.

When he found them they were by a lake, and it so happened that they were engaged in just what the Great One wanted to talk to them about. The Great One demanded that they either stop smoking that smelly grass or leave immediately. Well, it didn't take them long to decide what to do. They both got up and announced their plans; they were leaving. Then Eve got another of her great ideas. She suggested that the Great One try a little of their pleasure, just to see exactly what it was all about. The Great One had always prided himself on being open minded and seeing both sides of everything. He decided that it wouldn't hurt to know more about Adam and Eve's new thing, so he took a drag. Then he took another, and another and wow man, it really was good! The Great One became all excited, look at all he'd been missing out on!

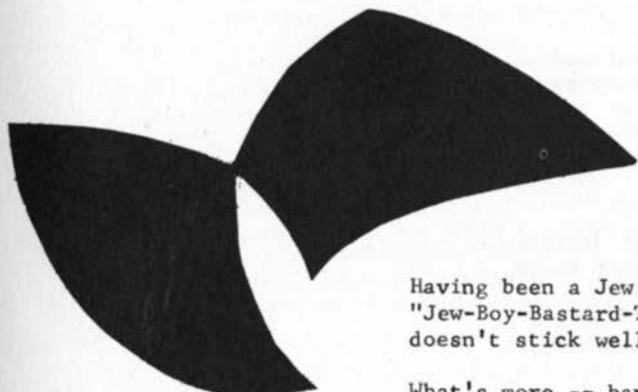
The Great One took to the weed the way ducks take to water. He loved it and nothing could interfere with his new found pleasure



It didn't take him long to forget about the estate; he just let it go to pot. He was suddenly living in a world of his own. Adam and Eve felt unwanted after a while and decided to leave Paradise Garden since all the fun was out of just smoking grass. They left the Great One and his estate never to return again

The last thing I heard about them was that they had had some kids. I think they named them Able and Cain or some weird names like those. One, Cain I think, had gotten into some mess with the fuzz for doing in his brother or something of that nature, but then, that's another story altogether.

- Celia Reyes



PARANOIA IN THE HALLS OF SEEK
(A Poem felt out of Context)

Having been a Jew all my life
"Jew-Boy-Bastard-Torah sucker"
doesn't stick well on the walls of SEEK.

What's more -- having worn a yarmulka,
been circumcised, married a Jewess
inflamed myself secretly with chosenness

prevents rationalizations, big word for
"I don't wear a beard," I'm not "them,"
copping out in the halls of SEEK.

Those blue-eyes Arabs were wasted on
the blue Nile and I cheered, my black
yemenite bro's wasted them on the Moses/
papa desert

and for six days, I sweated and raised
my right fist and grooved with a blood
based groove -- a yid had his id

and exulted and only wished they wouldn't
have taken so many showers for so many
years, wishing I didn't feel so
circumcised in the halls of SEEK.

- Jim Weiss

TWO FACES

Life

The survival of a crying child, a budding flower, a twisted weed, a latent force, a Brighter day, a somber night, a scream, a howl, an echo, a chance.

Discrimination

Is a white man's pleasure, and a Black man's origin.

Integration

Is a trance enhanced by sheer madness.

Peace

Is only a state of mind.

Destruction

Is evident upon the body of the destroyed.

Ignorance

Is a niggers virtue.

Love

Is an expression of mental and physical attributes endorsed by the medium of the moment.

Hate

Is the supreme epitome of the animal kingdom.

Diplomacy

Is another expression for dividing a situation in many parts of your favor.

Segregation

Is in its entirety a fulfillment of every Black being, and a Chronic Disaster of every white.

Racism

Is two bodies of flaming fluid cascading down upon each others practical sense of reasoning

Death

To join the passing winds, to envelope between the folds of soil that cultivate the very earth, and also there is the End that stains the nights with immortal appearance, whom dwell amongst the shadows of the cursed, who see, hear, feel, talk, "Yet" contain the body that decaying waste, in a atmosphere of stark raving nothingness.....

Pain

Is a state of condition, pain is Life, Discrimination, Integration, Peace, Diplomacy, Destruction, Love, hate, Segregation, Ignorance, Racism, Pain is alive.

Death is the antidote, the absolution, for to die is to suffer no more,

Life without pain is the living End.....

- E. Bourne

JUKE BOX - OFF THE RECORD

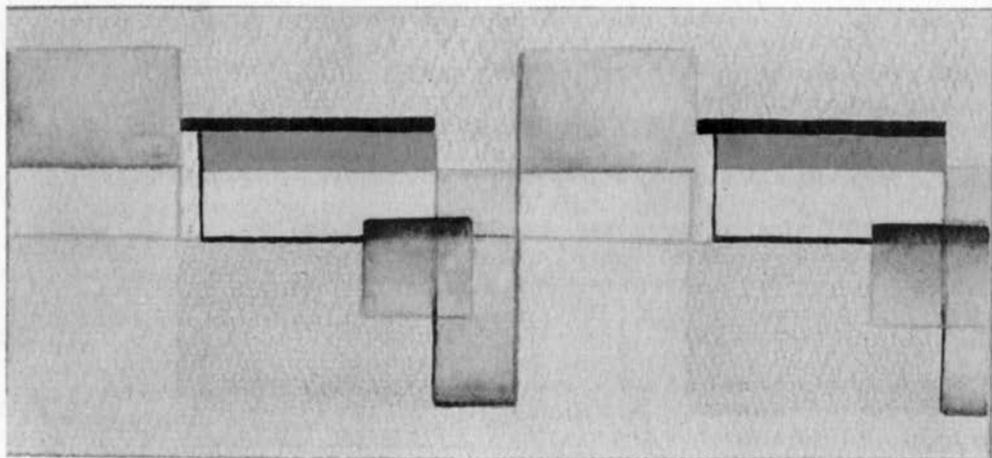
Tell me What's It All About I don't understand. They say The Whole World is a Stage, and me I'm a Puppet. The people are shouting We're a Winner yet they're still On The Outside Looking In. People Wanna Be Free. They're asking for equality; will they get it? We shall see, for Only Time Will Tell. Others sit back and say I Hear a Symphony because they have Love Power. They write Soul Themes to Uncle Sam's Boys to say there is Something On My Mind, and in the next tune I Never Loved A Man the Way I Love You. But only looking at that tune the boy writes back and says, Let Me Down Easy because Only the Strong Will Survive and My World is Empty Without You, Babe.

Tell me, "What's It All About?" I don't understand. Too many people want to visit another land. We have those on Cloud Nine. There some are running wild because they were a Run-Away Child. And to the mothers they say Didn't You Know You Have to Cry Sometime? What about the young ones who can't be found, those who are hiding in an alley with A Friend of Mine. The noises what are they saying, 'oh, it's a record playing. What might the name be, Baby I Like What You're Doing To Me.

What's It All About? I don't understand, Everybody Loves Somebody Sometimes. But does it show I'm singing I'm Black and I'm Proud? He's singing, It's Your Thing; they're singing I Don't Want Nobody to Give Me Nothing; Open the Door I'll Get it Myself. She's singing Ain't No Way and you're probably singing Foolish Fool.

What's It All About? I don't understand. The black man is beautiful, and the white man is the devil. One holds the handle and the other holds the shovel. The Whole Is A Stage and everybody's playing a part; the scene is set, the curtain goes up and me, I'm A Puppet.

-Janet Kersey



Black Love

Black Love is love for the new truth brought about by Black awareness
Black love is learning to love and respect our own kind
Black love is Black people saying: heroin, booze, cocaine, no thanks

We can live without it

Black love is seeing the Blackman regain his throne
Black love is Black children saying: Thank you Daddy, damn santa claus
Black love is the double crowning of the Black woman for playing

dual roles for four hundred years

Black love is Nina Simone singing "I Loves You Porgy"
Black love is John Coltrane blowing "A Love Supreme"
Black love is Black people getting Brain Power in order to get Black
Power or any other power they desire
Black love is Armageddon when it ignites to Black Fire
Black love is loving your enemy, yet killing him with kindness

Signed:

Love,

A Black Man

Ronald Watford

Fear was his first born. Emerging wide-eyed and cowering from the womb. The general instilled fear into his troops and they in turn caused it to grow among their enemies.

Famine was his second born, all hollow cheeks and gaping mouth. She was the personification of the peoples' hunger as the army dutifully marched through the farmlands crushing sprouts and seedlings underfoot. Headless of the hunger they were causing, the meals that would never be eaten.

Death was his third born, skeletal, raucous, disquieting, shrieking projectiles, missiles, bombs, bayonets, tanks, yells, screams, commands, prayers.

During these last years the general's three daughters had grown up.

- William Wilkins

Bitterness

I am not going to quote you a lot of figures and statistics concerning inadequate housing; inadequate educational facilities, for our children, inadequate sanitation conditions; limited employment, rats biting children, and the like, indigenous to our neighborhoods.

For we live in these neighborhoods, these ghettos. We live in those inadequate houses, with no heat and cold water, and peeling plaster walls and filthy urinated halls.

We see our children regressing with each ending of a school day, where it is said, they are getting an education. A sometimey--lest than mediocre--so called education would be more like it.

We see the garbage of humanity piled high on the sidewalks, in the alleyways and backyards, and wonder where the hell is the Sanitation Department.

We must contend with mediocre, menial jobs, because of the color of our skin. We don't possess the required skills we are told. Why?--because of the color of our skin, we are unable to acquire the needed skills.

We have killed that rat, who in the night, scurrying across our childrens bed, awakened them, from their slumber of despair.

Therefore I will quote you no statistics as the white man does, for you have no need of statistics. But you do have need of change, positive--meaningful--change,--. Now! This I say, to you my brothers and sisters,

- Harrison Coleman

There are times that I feel
that all the good I'm doing
is like trying to wet the ocean
with tons of hand-scooped sand.

- William Wilkins

THE EXPERIENCE WHILE HIGH

It was about 9 p.m. and T.V. had just lost its most ardent watcher. Nature had finally decided to conform to man's seasonal expectations in that the weather was quite fair. It was about 75 degrees and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. Looking out the window could not satisfy that innate curiosity activated in me in this kind of weather, so I decided to take a walk and enjoy the inception of summer.

I put my sweater on and made a few other preparations such as rolling a few joints and making sure that my K-55 was in my pocket. I went out; locked my door and checked it of course not wanting to come back and find all my stuff gone. I ran down four flights of steps. For some stranger reason I never could get myself to walk down those stairs. Perhaps it was that walking down seems so much like a waste of time.

When I stepped outside. I was met by an odor. An odor that is idiosyncratic to the ghetto in the Summer. To me, this was a confirmation that Summer had surely come to New York City. Some books say that the smell of flowers are indicative of the advent of Summer, but this odor has no similitude to the smell of flowers. It can be partially described as a combination of hot tar, cheap wine, Chicago Green, human funk, and old garbage. But a full description of this odor can never be given. This odor must be smelled. It becomes stronger as the weather becomes hotter.

After deciding on my itinerary, I lit up a reefer. Reefer differs from wine and whisky in that it lucidates reality instead of obscuring it. When I feel relatively content or elated, as I did that night, I smoke reefer, and when I feel had I drink.

As I walked through areas that were familiar to me in my childhood, I began to realize something that made me wish that I were not high on pot, but instead I wished I had been drinking. I was becoming rapidly aware of the fact that the ghetto was in fact becoming worse. I realized that progress was a delusion I no longer had. The illusion had disappeared, but it seemed as though every one else around me were still seeing it. It was a frightening experience. Not only did I realize that no progress had been made towards the removal of the ghetto or improving the conditions under which the occupants must live, but retrogression had actually taken place. There was more garbage in the streets than there was ten years ago. There were more buildings that were unfit to live in than there were a decade ago. There more and younger dope addicts. I saw the housing projects for what they really were: prisons designed to contain the expansion of the ghetto instead of benevolent gifts from big, strong, white daddy.

Every block that I went through had either a church or a bar or a liquor store, and some blocks had all three. I began to realize the true function of these establishments: they serve the purpose as did the chains and guns used by the nefarious slave keepers.



THE KEY IS IN THE SUNLIGHT IN THE WINDOW

I looked today
I will look tomorrow, the day after and
on and on
But why bother?
Is it because if I don't no one will.
Why a key?
Is it because all of man's possessions
are locked
and only a few chosen people in the world
possess the key.
Why a window?
Is it not to see what you cannot have.
Why sunlight?
Is it not here only to hide the key.
Why the world?
Is it not here for man only.
For me I must
look to find and
Ask why?

- A. Louise Wright

SILENT MOMENT

It's just a plain wooden bench with a green-leaved go-go girl around it. And a cool breeze sweeps through our hair while we receive the hot vibrations of the sun. And it's all heavenly within this park. But what about outside it? One human neglecting the other. One war too many. One million crimes committed. Only one Care package on its way to feed a thousand open mouths. How can these two worlds sit by so close? Do I sit on this plain bench all my life or do I expand this greenland further?

Rain. One puddle looks like the one before. Rain doesn't change. But I, Sylvia Maldonado, must. I have learned a lot about this uncivilized civilized world. And now I must make decisions regarding my future and that of my people. Those twelve o'clock midnight confetti-throwers are popping up ever so fast. I will have to decide now, making it a strong effort with which I can better myself, my family, and my world. Rain doesn't change. Will I?

- Sylvia Maldonado

DISPOSSESSED

Since I have lost my sense of touch,
I must ask you how it feels, the air
bristling at dawn on your bare shoulders,
the jealous daylight stinging you awake,
the silken ignorance of that foreign hand
still resting on your hungry thigh. . .
I wouldn't ask to know, but
even blind men are accorded curiosity.

- Ava Stern

TO SEE OR NOT TO SEE

Let us assume that we

were all Blind

Then I wouldn't know your

Color

And you wouldn't know mine

- Ronald Watford

