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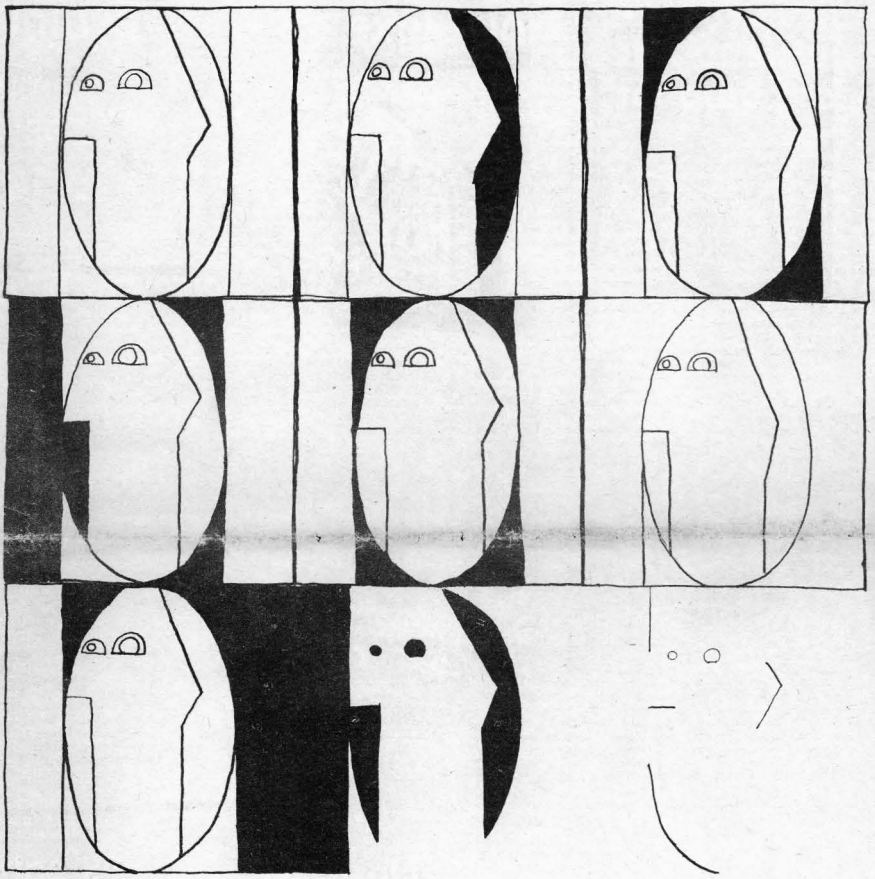

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INTERVIEW

WFMT's KERRY FRUMKIN

Photo: Jess Brodnax

WFMT, 98.7 FM, is *the* classical music station heard on Chicago radio, and Kerry Frumkin is a program host and producer for WFMT; this makes Mr. Frumkin one of *the* radio program hosts and producers in Chicago — I would imagine him to laugh and shake his head if he heard that description. Almost anything more I could tell you of him seems best expressed through his words, spoken softly, quickly and crisply. The following excerpts are from our conversation held last spring.

Kerry Frumkin . . . I worked at a top-forty station for a while, where they changed my name to Kerry O'Neil because they thought it would be more palatable than Kerry Frumkin to the type of audicence they had. I did various summertime, part-time stints at a lot of small stations. I should also mention that even in high school I worked in radio, or played in radio. I went to New Trier; they were, I think, one of the few high school radio stations in the country — at that time, anyway. And so, I was breaking into it at a pretty early age. I was always interested in it; guess I'm sort of a ham. But a the same time I'm a little shy, so it's sort of nice to have that microphone between you and the people out there. So that it seemed to be the perfect —

JAP: You're not face to face, as it were —

KF: Right.

JAP: — As stage or television would bring you.

KF: Right. I worked in television for a while, but mostly behind the scenes. I worked in television production.

JAP: Do you consider yourself to have a good voice?

KF: Oh, I don't know. I guess people like it. That's what they tell me, anyway.

JAP: Did you always sound like this?

KF: Well, it changed in high school. [Laughs] You should have heard me before.

JAP: Was it radio that brought you into classical music, music announcing?

KF: Well, no, I had an interest in classical music from the time I was a kid because my family was always oriented that way. My father was a violinist, an amateur violinist. Everybody in the family plays an instrument. My mother played the piano, and I played the piano for a while. My sister played violin. My

continued

brother is a very fine cellist with the Berkeley Symphony when he's not practicing law. And I played brass instruments as well. It sort of fell by the wayside when I got to college and got very busy, something I still regret. Occasionally I dabble with it, but not anything serious. I can't really call myself a musician at this point. But I keep vowing to myself that I'm going to take some lessons and get back into it.

JAP: But you certainly are musical.

KF: Yes.

JAP: Through knowledge.

KF: Right; it's always been there. In fact, there was always a minor in music wherever I was in college. After my bachelor's degree, which was at the University of Wisconsin, I then went to Northwestern and got a master's, also in communications — and journalism as well. There, I taught television production for a while, as a Fellow. That's really the only time I touched base with that medium. I found it to be, as I think my students found it to be, a difficult medium to work in because there are so many people involved in every phase of production. Now some people, you know, are very good at organizing other people to do their bidding. And that's what I think it really takes in television: you start out with a conception, and then by the time it gets translated onto the screen there are all these interim stages and all these other people that have to understand what you're up to. And that can get pretty complicated and sometimes pretty frustrating. Whereas in radio, you can have an idea and pretty much do it yourself.

JAP: How much freedom do you have?

KF: At FMT, a lot. Within the framework of classical music.

JAP: Well, you just paid homage to Duke Ellington.

KF: That's right. Of course, I think Duke Ellington is being recognized more and more as a great composer, just generally a great composer. And I'm awfully glad to see that because I think a lot of people have known that for a long time. Classical music listeners, perhaps, have not been as exposed to his music as they should have been over the years. But it's certainly great stuff.

KF: This is my sixth year at WFMT. I think it's six. You can count. I came in 1976.

JAP: Was it very exciting at first? Is it still that way?

KF: It's still exciting. The nice thing about it now is that I've gotten to the point where I know enough about what I'm doing, in a physical sense — knowing the environment, knowing the various aspects of the equipment — so I'm more comfortable with that, and I can think more about the programatic things, production things. I think for every person coming into a new place it's pretty hectic for a while. As a matter of fact, we're going through a situation like that now. We have a new announcer who is just starting out. This doesn't happen very frequently at WFMT because we search for a long time to find people that will work out. But, you know, it's difficult for her, and I'm in the process of taking her through the process and I'm sort of remembering what it was like for me at the same time. It's pretty rough, it's pretty rough.

JAP: Just fighting the nerves, I would imagine.

KF: Yeah.

JAP: Do you still get nervous at all?

KF: Oh, sure. I think everybody who does something which is very public is sort of nervous underneath.

JAP: Is it a feeling of one big, happy family at WFMT?

KF: Yes, very definitely.

JAP: Very close.

KF: Yeah. And a great bunch of people to work with.

JAP: You work off each other, with each other.

KF: Yeah, yeah. But as I say, the thing is we *learn* from each other, all the time. But the projects that we're involved in, because of the nature of radio, can be very independent. We can more or less generate something and then do it ourselves.

JAP: Especially last-minute things on the morning program.

KF: Right. That has to be last-minute and spontaneous. It's quite a process. It involves writing the news and keeping it up-to-date every forty-five minutes, and also choosing music depending upon the announcer's mood that morning. And sort of hoping, with all this stuff going on — and commercials of course, mustn't forget commercials — with all that going on, sounding bright and cheerful and hoping that it comes across to somebody else that way.

JAP: Do you have any complaints about WFMT, or things you think could improve it?

KF: Uh, not really. Part of the reason I think I'm so positive about the station is because I have worked in so many other places and have seen what it's like elsewhere. I mean, sure, there are times when you get down about anything; I think those times are mostly personal. But, by and large, I can't think of a place that does a better job at what it sets out to do.

The station really is, in many ways, an extension of Norm Pelligrini's personality. Norm being our program director. I don't want to sound like I'm a booster, but I think, objectively speaking [laughs], subjective as I can be, he's probably the finest you'll find anywhere. And I've worked with many others, and I was a program director myself with the Public Radio Network in Wisconsin for a while, before I came to WFMT. Norm has an exquisite sense of taste, and sensitivity, toward what he's doing. I think the people who are there now, the core people who are on the air, by and large are there because they are in some way congruent with Norm Pelligrini's feelings about the presentation of classical music. That's why I'm there, I'm sure. It's very nice.

JAP: I must say that I find all the announcers to come across *very* sincerely.

KF: Well, the idea behind that, really, is to share this music with our listeners. It's not — we don't want to be pretentious about it, and we don't want to pontificate about it, we just want to share it with people. I think that's been the creed of the place since it started under Bernie Jacobs, many years ago.

JAP: . . . Do you ever feel like you're in a vacuum?

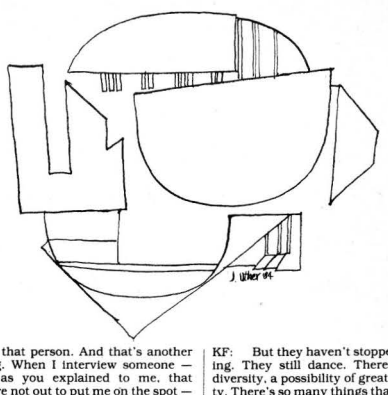
KF: Yes, that's one of the frustrating things about a mass media, generally. The fact that, ah — I mean, you're putting your personality and your feelings into what you're doing and you don't know how people are reacting to you. Occasionally you'll get a letter. But most people don't really take the time, to let you know.

JAP: There's not much correspondence from the audience at large?

KF: Well, not considering how many people are really out there. I mean, I think the general rule is, I've heard this, for every one letter you get there are probably five hundred people out there who feel in a similar way. That gives you an idea of how many people really take the time to write. And of course that's just a statistic somebody came up with, you don't know how legitimate that is. It would be nice — for instance, I produce these "Profiles" programs, which are interviews with musicians of various sorts. I've spoken with many classical musicians, some jazz musicians. *I* enjoy it very much, and I put a lot into these programs. But I don't hear that much about them from the audience. Occasionally I'll get a very nice letter, from someone who really enjoyed it, and that really makes my day. But that doesn't happen as often as I would like it to happen. I'd even like to know if someone absolutely detests something, at least just to know that someone's heard it.

JAP: It makes on wonder how one goes about programming and selecting. I guess one is relying heavily upon oneself.

KF: Yes. I think I rely on my own interests. If someone strikes me as being just fascinating, someone I really want to talk to, I'll try to get an interview



with that person. And that's another thing. When I interview someone — just as you explained to me, that you're not out to put me on the spot — I'm not out to put that person on the spot, either. Generally, I come to that person because I'm genuinely interested in that person. And want to learn more about him. In the process, I share *that* with my audience.

JAP: . . . Why do you think it took the Chicago Symphony Orchestra so long to catch on? With the fervor that it did?

KF: There are all kinds of aspects to the classical music business. In the case of the CSO it was the bringing together of that orchestra with Georg Solti. Now, it was a great orchestra before Solti came, probably as great as it is now. But, as you say, not too many people caught on to that fact.

JAP: Why do you suppose that is?

KF: Well, I think it has to do with Solti's skills as a publicist. He really knows how to get his orchestra into the forefront. He decided when he came here that he would take the orchestra on tours of Europe on a regular basis, tours of the United States on a regular basis, and tours of New York City where, of course, they have a fine orchestra. In other words, just generally making the orchestra more visible. There wasn't much touring going on under Fritz Reiner, although Fritz Reiner was just a superb conductor/musician. And the orchestra never sounded better.

JAP: There are still several members left of the Reiner —

KF: Oh, plenty.

JAP: regime.

KF: The core of that orchestra is still Reiner's bunch. It's been a great orchestra for a long time. And it really is about time it was recognized by the public at large. There's just a certain thing that seems to click between an orchestra and a conductor. It clicked with Reiner, in the best way possible. Even though he was really quite an authoritarian when it came to the way he dealt with the orchestra. And yet they had tremendous respect for his musicianship. And it's clicking for Solti. . . . I'm thinking of authoritarian situations now, where music perhaps is the only art form that thrives because of the fact that it is so abstract. I mean that you can't say a piece of music attacks the state, necessarily, because what does it really mean? What is it really saying? Of course, you know the perfect example is what was going on with Shostakovich in the Soviet Union for many years, ups and downs, you know. One year he was condemned, the next he was praised, depending upon what the authorities thought he was trying to say musically. They never really *knew*. Music is a pure abstract extension of the self, of the human being. Of course, it can begin with singing and then instruments evolved from that. But it all began with the human voice, with sound, produced by a human being, eventually becoming organized, I suppose, in one way or another.

JAP: And at some point people moved to it. They started dancing. But then at one point they stopped dancing and they sat down to listen to it.

KF: But they haven't stopped dancing. They still dance. There's great diversity, a possibility of great diversity. There's so many things that can be done.

JAP: It's wonderful that people started sitting down —

KF: Yes.

JAP: — to listen.

KF: Of course, jazz came out of dancing; it came out of the black work song and then evolved from that point into a dance music, then from that point into a concert music; nothing wrong with all of that, just various ways it can be appreciated.

JAP: I suppose you dislike breaking down music history into special periods.

KF: Well, it's bound to be artificial. History always — whenever you try to break things down into eras it becomes something that's convenient for historians, not for people trying to grasp what happened. It's hard for us to put into perspective the music of our own time. That's always been the case with any human development. You can't analyze it when you're close to it. You may not even be capable of analyzing it with some distance, but at least it's a little easier.

JAP: Do you think there is too often over-analysis of contemporary music?

KF: There's nothing wrong with analysis if one always keeps it in perspective, as on person's feelings about where music is going. You have to keep that in mind. It could be John Rockwell talking about contemporary music or anybody else, and if you find yourself agreeing with what John Rockwell is saying, then that's fine. If you disagree, read something else, read a lot of other things and try to come up with something. And maybe you don't have to make sense of it, necessarily. Everything doesn't have to be explained. Some things can just be appreciated.

JAP: That's what I was thinking with "over-analysis."

KF: Especially with music, which has such a strong emotional dimension to it. You don't necessarily have to be sitting in a concert hall following a score to appreciate it. You can perhaps appreciate it on another level if you are following a score; whatever you choose to do. There's another thing: I do so many of these interviews, and of course you do, too. And you may find yourself in a situation where you're talking about something which is on such an emotional plane that you almost wish you weren't talking about it at *all* because it *really* can't be explained verbally. Sometimes you wonder what the hell you're doing there.

JAP: What makes a good interview?

KF: A good interview, to me, is one that makes the listener feel that he is privy to a fairly enlightening, intimate conversation with a great musician, a conversation that somehow illuminates that person's personality, what it is that makes him special. If I can somehow bring that out, then I think I've succeeded. It's not always easy. I remember interviewing one contemporary composer, who shall remain nameless; I couldn't get to first base. Every question I asked he would dissect in his mind, and in many cases

"Conductors must give unmistakable and suggestive signals to the orchestra — not choreography to the audience." — George Szell

decline to answer because he was wondering what I was getting at. You can't conduct an interview on that basis, in other words, a very analytical approach to everything. His analytical mind would not let him really express what he was all about, on another level.

JAP: Foreigners who have a limitation of the English language in your interviews: do you find this more helpful, or negative? Or superfluous?

KF: It depends. In the case of Klaus Tennstedt [music director for the London Philharmonic], for instance, it didn't seem to be an intimidating factor at all. For one thing, his very charming wife was sitting right next to us, and whenever there was a problem with vocabulary she would just translate into German and he would gush forth with an answer. He's a very warm, wonderful man. At times he'd just kind of stop and say, "I don't quite understand." But then, it didn't seem to really inhibit him or bother him. Other people can be very self-conscious about their problems with English. At those times I just wish I could conduct the interview in another language to make that person feel more comfortable. That can inhibit a person from being himself and being able to express himself. So it varies. I've been pretty lucky, as far as that goes. I think maybe many musicians are so warm and so expressive that they're able to get beyond that barrier because we're talking about what they love so dearly; they still communicate.

. . . I'm fascinated by conductors, more and more. I think it's because there's something very mysterious about the whole process and about conductors somehow being able to make that big ensemble follow him. It can't necessarily be something purely authoritarian because that's not enough to make people really put themselves into the music. A conductor somehow has to be able to convince this disparate body of individuals that his conception of the music is what they should believe in as well. I don't know what kind of magic that requires. It's pretty mysterious to me. So it's fascinating to hear a conductor talk about the way he relates to his orchestra. And you can often sense it: there's something about many of these people that is very convincing. As you talk to them you can see why that orchestra believes in this man.

JAP: There seems to be some sentiment that WFMT sometimes is a little too biased towards the CSO, to the Lyric Opera.

KF: This, of course, came out during the Claudia Cassidy thing. [Claudia Cassidy was released from her position as one of the critics on WFMT's "Critic's Choice" due to disagreements with Norm Pelligrini. Immediately following this news, rumors spread alleging the radio station's prejudices towards the CSO, the Lyric Opera, and other major artistic institutions in Chicago. These allegations remain hearsay.] I don't know. What is wrong with a classical music station, that has its roots in Chicago, being a booster for the arts in Chicago? And the premier arts organizations in the city? It's not that we're just supportive of Lyric Opera and the Chicago Symphony, but we're supportive, I think you'll find, of the smaller arts organizations in the city as well. We've always been sensitive to that. I think one of the strengths of the station really is that we've always been concerned with what's going on, in a musical sense, what's growing, in a musical sense, in the city. We've tried to help that along as much as possible. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. You know there was all this speculation that there was some influence from the Chicago Symphony or the Lyric Opera, with respect to the Claudia Cassidy thing. But that, I'm convinced, is not so at all. It was Norm's feeling, and Norm has very strong feelings about that, and he's the program director; he can have strong feelings about what is on the air at WFMT.

JAP: I think the complaint stems from trying to hit a fine line. I think no one minds the boosting — the audience knows that FMT steeps itself in Chicago's big and small institutions. But they'd also like it to allow itself to criticize negatively those which it supports; some people feel there's not room for that.

KF: I don't think that's ever been stifled in a conscious sense. I don't think there has ever been a situation where something negative about the symphony, for instance, came out in the news and we would bury it. Never. In fact, our newscasts generally, I think you'll find, are — you probably get more news from them and more objective reporting than from any other source in town. It's very straightforward and we just report all the news we feel to be of significance. It's all there. I don't think the Claudia Cassidy thing had anything to do with her being specifically critical of the Chicago Symphony or the Lyric Opera. I think it just really had to do with Norm Pelligrini's feelings.

JAP: . . . Did you catch any of the Wagner on Public Television?

KF: Yes, yes. What did I see? I saw "Das Rheingold."

JAP: How did you find it?

KF: Well, I don't want to get into a situation where I'm just pontificating about various productions of works. I think, you know, everybody has opinions and mine are not necessarily any more valid than anybody else's. With that in mind, I'm not too crazy about the Public Television Wagner "Ring" that's been on. But again, you know, who am I? I don't object at *all* to the fact that it's on television. I think that part of it is marvelous. The more people that have an opportunity to see this music, the better. See and hear it. I guess what I didn't care for was the production itself, as it was done at Bayreuth. And again, that's just personal. A lot of people just love it.

JAP: You're getting to the contemporary changes that were made?

KF: Yes. I think there's a tendency now — it swings like a pendulum, it goes back and forth. I think that the new production that's being done for Solti at Bayreuth this summer — you know he's going to be doing a *Ring* cycle at Bayreuth — that's going to be again in the traditional mode with more elaborate sets and more elaborate staging. And ah, that's my personal preference. That's the way I like to see Wagner performed. And I think the Public Television Production came off a little bit too dry, for my taste, too cold.

JAP: What is the greatest waste of time?

KF: I don't know. I suppose in my profession there are a lot of logistics involved in getting a program on the air, and, although I recognize that those things are necessary, I guess they come close sometimes to making an impression of wasting time, especially when they don't go smoothly. But it's no big deal. For instance, the complications of setting up an interview. It'd be nice to have a personal secretary to do that so you could worry about other things, but I don't have that luxury. So sometimes I find myself making phone calls and making arrangements which subsequently fall through and then having to make new arrangments. That can be — I guess it's not really a time waster, though, because eventually it results in something that is worthwhile.

JAP: Do you see less and less serious youth interest in, not just fine music, but fine arts, with an integrity that must accompany the study of fine art?

KF: Well, I haven't taken my own survey. The problem with my making any sort of evaluation that way is because, I guess you know, I lead a sheltered life. I mean, the kinds of people that I wind up surrounding myself with are genuinely interested in what I'm doing. Some of them are very young but they seem interested, or they seem interested in learning more and more about it, if they're only tangentially interested at this point. So I don't know. I feel good about it. I know a lot of people my age and younger who are interested in classical music. In fact I know some people who have, for a long time, only listened to rock and roll and eventually come around to liking what they hear on WFMT.

The biggest, the best source I guess I have would be letters and phone calls from people, in terms of evaluating that thing. Often we get calls from people who say, "Hey, you know, I've never heard that piece before. I don't know much about classical music but God, that's beautiful. What's the record?" And they obviously don't know. They don't know that it's a symphony. They don't know that it's a string quartet. They don't know what it is, they just know that they *liked* it. And *those* calls make me very happy. And they say, "I want to get that record. What was it?" And I tell them and they say, "That's really great. I'm going to listen some more to you guys." You know, this is Studs Terkel's favorite thing. He thinks that, you know, people just sit down and listen to good things, or see good things. You don't have to have an expert's background to appreciate it. I mean it is great, it is beautiful, on whatever level you appreciate it, you know? That's fine. And if you become interested in it maybe you'll pursue it further.

JAP: Do you think this is a tougher time than ever for artists to develop?

KF: Well, it is because there's less federal funding coming. And a lot of the opportunities for young artists to perform were funded by the National Endowment of the Arts, and that sort of thing. So, it's hard. One of the things that's nice, for instance, is what Al Booth is doing in Chicago; Al, who has organized the "Do-It-Yourself Messiah" and the Dame Myra Hess concert series, which focuses on young artists who may not otherwise have an opportunity to perform in front of an audience. He brings in these people form all over the country and they love it. And we, of course broadcast it, and Taiman-Home sponsors it, they underwrite it. So there are opportunities. There are people who, in their small ways, are doing what they can; but it sure would be nice if the federal government were more involved.

JAP: It always seems less and less.

KF: Yeah, it's sad.

JAP: I wonder sometimes if competitions, rather than to help foster talent, end up in burning up talent by not allowing it to mature, by making it into something great before it is.

KF: Yes, it becomes something of a rat race, I think. I've talked with a number of young pianists on this subject. Andras Schiff is one, a young Hungarian pianist who is just terrific and who has quite a career going for himself now. Andre-Michel Schub is another, who won the Van Cliburn competition. His is an interesting story because he decided, pretty late in his career, considering, to enter the Van Cliburn competition. He already had a pretty good career going; he had been engaged at Ravinia a number of times, and played a lot of chamber music. But he wanted to have more versatility. He wanted to be able to play a greater variety of works, to expand his repertoire and to have the opportunity to play an expanded repertoire. He had been sort of typecast, he found, as a pianist of the Mozart and Beethoven mold, you know, playing Mozart and Beethoven music. And he wanted to play the warhorses. He wanted to play Tchaikovsky and he wanted to play Brahms, Rachmaninoff. But he knew he wouldn't have the opportunity unless he had greater visibility. So, fairly late in his career, he decided to enter the Van Cliburn; and it was a big chance he took because if he would have lost it, it could have hurt his career. But he did in fact win the Van Cliburn competition and he is a marvelous pianist. Since then he has had more opportunity to play whatever he wants to play. And his bookings have increased considerably. So competitions can help. But he freely admits that it was hell going through it.

The pressure is just unbelievable. I mean, everybody that enters that competition is a great pianist. And you have to be virtually perfect. And that sometimes, striving for perfection, can inhibit your musical expressiveness. Because what you're striving for is technical perfection, sometimes you can't take any of those emotional leaps, in that sort of situation. That can be a tremendous strain. I mean, everything is riding on this one performance so it has to be flawless.

An artist has to be very careful about the way he or she manages a career. The reality is you're only human, and you do have to sort of pace yourself and know what you're capable of doing at a particular point, and when it's time to move on to some thing else. The artists who have been around for the longest time are both talented and *wise* in that sense. They know, for instance, they shouldn't tackle a heavy Wagnerian role; their voice just isn't cut out for it, at this point. Maybe it'll change. But they have the sense to know what to do and what not to do, or how many concerts to sing before they become so fatigued and burned out that they can't continue. You've got to really treasure that talent and manage it wisely. You can't just go whole-hog all the time.

JAP: . . . Do you ever listen to yourself?

KF: I listen to myself when I'm on the air because I've got headphones on, so I sort of know what it sounds like, electronically. And that can be very different [laughs] from the way you think you sound. I've often been criticized for dropping my voice at the end of a sentence to the point of inaudibility [laughs], and that does happen, you know? And I have to be aware of that. I may think that I'm coming across in one way but in reality I'm coming across in another one.

Also, when I produce these programs, the "Profiles" programs, I do usually wind up going home after they're finished and listening to them on the air — they're all produced on tape. It's different — being involved in the production of a program; it's different to be able to go home and be somewhat detached from it and hear what you did.

JAP: Do you study other interviewers?

KF: Sure. I listen to other people in the station frequently. I'm not always listening critically, necessarily, but it often winds up that way. I will hear a particular intermission feature that is done in New York, for the Met or something, and think, "Oh, my God, those questions are horrible. How could he ask that? What have we really learned from this conversation?" Not very much.

JAP: . . . What do you get from classical music that you don't find in other art forms?

KF: I would not limit it to classical music. I would say music in general is just the most pleasurable thing in the world. There is nothing I get greater pleasure from.

JAP: Do you know why?

KF: How can one say why? I really don't know why. It's obviously something that has been a part of me for so long. That has a good deal to do with it, I'm sure.

JAP: Just is.

KF: Yeah. It's hard for me to understand people who cannot appreciate music, who do not get great satisfaction from it. Maybe because it's such an abstract thing. It's just pure beauty. And you can, you can appreciate it on that level, or you can delve more deeply and appreciate its structure. Great stuff. [Laughs] Great stuff, that music.

Jeremy A. Pollack
1983

"Life can't be all bad when for ten dollars you can buy all the Beethoven sonatas and listen to them for ten years." — William F. Buckley. Jr.

FICTION

SCOTTY

Morning. Sound of running water in sink, stops, then clicking and sliding of various combs, brushes, perfumes, etc. upon vanity, stops. Mara, a graying but well-preserved woman in her mid sixties or so, enters into kitchen from left gently patting her permed hair, making imperceptable adjustments. She turns to look above the doorway through which she has just come.

Mara, somewhat put out: "Seven fifteen — behind schedule again. I knew that crazy old geezer would forget to set the alarm clock properly." Corrects the time on her watch. Walks around the room, making the motions of preparing breakfast. "Every day go through the same thing. God knows I try to be patient with him, let him do what he wants, *"I'll* set the darn clock if you'll just give me the chance, Mara!" And *he'll* paint the house, and *he'll* mow the lawn, and *he'll* work the garden — but *I'm* the one who has to go out and lift him back to his feet when he teeters over trying to pick a tomato . . . and he can't even be just a little bit gracious when I offer to help him. Lord, you know I do my best to keep loving him: drools on his shirt — fine; urinates in his trousers — fine . . . oh, but this business with the alarm clock, now he's just playing with me, just wants to see how far I'll go. Well if he thinks he can get the upper hand with me, he's mistaken — I can always get back on schedule, no matter what the old fool might come up with. He wants to make it a game, fine!" She sets the table, pours two cups of coffee, checks her watch again, then the clock over the doorway, goes to the counter, reaches into the back corner of a cabinet and pulls out a worn timetable, folds it over at a particular line, reads.

Mara: "Seven forty two, let's see . . . ." Looks at the clock, then her watch. "That leaves only twenty two minutes — *darn* him." She puts the timetable into her pocket, calls through the doorway: "Scotty! . . . Scotty, hurry up love, your breakfast is getting cold! . . . Scotty?"

Scotty, offstage — raspy, old: "Can't hear you!"

Mara: "Breakfast, dear! It's going to get cold if you don't hurry!" She waits for a response, looks at the clock again, then sits down at the table, quickly butters several pieces of toast, folds her hands in her lap and rapidly taps them together while her eyes are intent upon the empty doorway.

Several minutes later Scotty — a visibly fragile man — appears, smiling, seemingly of senility. He is aged far beyond his fifty-nine years, the victim perhaps of a stroke or a heart attack, or any number of other combinations of events. His smile, when it occurs, is always genuine, though whether it is intentional or not is impossible to determine. And thus he stands, steadying himself within the doorway, smiling to his wife.

Scotty: "Good morning, Mara! How are you today?"

Mara, obviously relieved: "Good morning, dear; here, let me help you to your chair." She makes a motion to stand up; the old man's smile vanishes.

Scotty: "I am *not* an invalid — get back down! I'm perfectly capable of seating myself, thank you!" He releases his grip from the door jam, and with small, unsure steps, balances his way to the table, eases into his chair; he smiles again. "There." He surveys the table, becomes immediately angry. "Where are my eggs! And where the hell is the marmalade?!"

Mara, shocked: "The marmalade? Oh my, how could I forget that? I'm sorry, Scotty." She gets up, goes to the refrigerator and takes out the jar of marmalade, checks her watch, checks the clock above the doorway, mumbles to herself, "How stupid of me" as she closes the refrigerator.

Scotty: "Can't hear you — what was that?"

Mara, setting the jar down in front of him, loudly: "I *said* it was stupid of me to forget to put the marmalade out!"

Scotty, smiling: "Yes, it was, wasn't it?"

Mara: "You exasperate me — do you know that?"

Scotty, angered: "Well how the hell do you expect me to eat my toast without marmalade? And where are my eggs, damn it! What good is this bacon without the eggs — why do you even bother to cook it? You know I don't like bacon in the morning if I don't have my goddamn eggs!"

Mara, relaxing precisely into her chair: "I'm sorry, Scotty. We used the last of the eggs yesterday, and I haven't had the chance to go to the supermarket and get some more. If you want them so badly, why don't you run out right now and get half a carton. If you hurry, I can keep the rest of your breakfast warm . . . . You *do* want eggs, don't you?"

Scotty: "You know damn well I do."

Mara, going around the table and pulling Scotty out of his chair: "Well then get moving — I can't keep this food warm forever." She guides him roughly to the back door, grabbing a set of keys from the counter and forcing them into his hand. "Here, Scotty, don't forget your car keys. Come on, hurry, there's not much time."

Scotty: "What? *Can't* hear you!"

Mara, pushing him out the door: "Nothing, dear! Hurry, or the rest of your breakfast will get cold!" She turns into the kitchen, looks at her watch, then at the clock above the opposite door, removes the timetable from her pocket, reads it, clasps her hands. Momentarily, the sound of Scotty's car backing out of the driveway; a screech of suddenly breaked wheels, a horn sounding, a vague obscenity shouted, Mara shudders, runs to the window, mutters to herself: "Blind old fool . . . . Whatever happened to you Scotty?" She walks back to the table slowly, meditatively, finds her chair.

Mara waits. And while she waits a scene whisps past, foggy, before: before whatever. A midsummer retirement party for a man who had worked hard all his life, who was strong now because of it, who deserved to end his working days sooner than some others, and who deserved some time to relax. A party of family and close friends, a party thrown by his charming wife, a party in anticipation of the years ahead. On a warm day, a content husband enthusiastically picking strawberries from his garden to go on vanilla ice cream after dinner; on a very warm day, a father teaching his son how not to play croquet; on a hot day, a proud young grandfather allowing himself to be talked into throwing the football; on an extremely hot afternoon, a little boy laughing at grandpa for falling when he went out for the bomb. And when her Scotty didn't get up, and when he didn't answer when she called if he was alright Mara ran across the yard but he just lay there and she was so frustrated because she called and called for help but at the moment the freight train came by with its horn to warn the motorists at the intersection half a mile away, and she left him on the ground and rushed inside the house screaming for an ambulance and very scared that it was too late.

The seven forty-two commuter train sounded its horn, and Mara leapt from her seat because it seemed right behind her. And she went to the back door and listened and heard the bells at the intersection telling the motorists of the train. And she strained her ears, this time hoping, praying, that it would not happen; and when the rush and roar of the train had passed on through the intersection and quieted at the station beyond, she had heard nothing. And she looked in her hands at the shredded timetable and she threw it into the garbage. And she stood still until the sound of Scotty's old car broke her trance, and her body twitched for a second. And she waited by the back door for him to enter, and when he did, Scotty found his wife weeping; and she reached out and grabbed him, and she pulled him to her breast and she cried "Scotty are you all right?" and he said that this time was close — he saw the train — and she said "please forgive me Scotty" and he said of course, and she said "is it too late to stop all this?" and he said it was never too late.

Wayne Burghardt
1984

EDITOR'S STATEMENT

JOHN MYYTH

He said his name was John Myyth. He said he had just gotten into town. Across the desk from me he sat himself, without a word from me. He was unannounced and unexplained. He was my first official visitor; I would play the patient host.

There was nothing obvious about his appearance. Nothing obscure, nothing dirty, nothing rich, nothing poor, nothing violent about his clothing. The eyes showed neither helplessness or hope. Despite the straightness with which he held his spine, I found no overt pride in his posture. There were no lines from the corners of his mouth. He asked for a cup of coffee as though I was a waiter. His accent was very brittle, very clean. He did have a mustache, a short, thick mustache, that ended evenly at his lips and was clean shaven in the middle. He did not say how he found me.

He added only cream to his coffee; he sipped at it without blowing. He asked what I thought about the war. I asked which one. He said I should take my choice, the difference was slight. After we discussed one, I inquired as to his occupation, but he never really answered my question. From his topcoat he produced a package of camel cigarettes, a box of matches, and he laid them to the right side of his coffee. I was tired and enjoyed his distraction; I had decided to wait for the visitor to explain himself.

I related an off-color joke, taking great pains to emphasize the scatology, but I saw no reaction of any sort on his part. He referred to a film I hadn't seen, politely abandoned the cinema, and began speaking of psalms. It was during a recitation — he must have sensed my indifference — that he asked for a piece of paper. I waited.

Carefully, without leaning over, he wrote down my name, address, and phone number. He then wanted to know if I was monetarily happy. I did not answer, at first. I took a moment to drink my coffee, one sip, then another. I placed the cup back upon the desk. I then said that I was, monetarily happy. What would you have said, dear reader? What would you have had me say? What did he want me to say? By this time, you see, I was beyond being baffled. No longer felt I any puzzlement. Patient I still remained. Dumbfounded must be precisely how I felt.

He skirted any and all personal questions, implied personal questions, even the most remote questions that would have even vaguely told me something about him. I asked if he would care for a second cup of coffee. He tapped his fingers calmly upon the edge of the desk. I inquired as to the quality of the coffee. He stood.

By this time, I should inform you, I had stopped anticipating his next move. Although inconsistently, I had been trying, up to this point, to predict him; I was now without any ideas. I knew, with all assurity, he would act in a civil manner; for this reason I felt at ease.

He stood, across the desk from me, his back very straight, and he looked quite serious — he had always looked serious, but now even more so. He then withdrew one cigarette from the package of camels, placed it between his lips, struck a match, and lit the camel. He had not taken his eyes from mine.

"I read your first statement," he said.

The one about the beginnings of the magazine?

"Yes," he said.

Where the most beautiful woman I had ever heard told me to "Do it for Mann"?

"The desperate dance, in which thy fortunes are caught up, will last yet many a sinful year; we should not care to set a high stake on thy life by the time it ends. We even confess that it is without great concern we leave the question open. Adventures of the flesh and in the spirit, while enhancing they simplicity, granted thee to know in the spirit what in the flesh thou scarcely couldst have done. Moments there were, when out of death, and the rebellion of the flesh, there came to thee, as thou tookest stock of theyself, a dream of love. Out of this universal feast of death, out of this extremity of fever, kindling the rain-washed evening sky to a fiery glow, may it be that Love one day shall mount?" And he picked up the package of camels and the book of matches, and he placed them in his overcoat, and he walked to the door.

Nothing else?

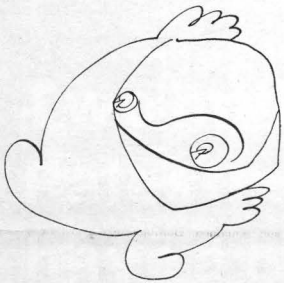
"I approve," said John Myyth. And he left.

— Ed.

The JUMBLIES

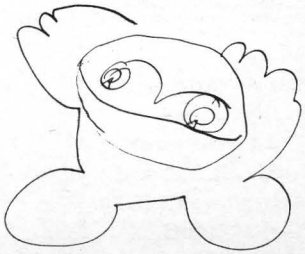
I

They went to sea in a Sieve, they did,
In a Sieve they went to sea:
In spite of all their friends could say,
On a winter's morn, on a stormy day,
In a Sieve they went to sea!
And when the Sieve turned round and round,
And everyone cried, 'You'll all be drowned!'
They called aloud, 'Our Sieve ain't big,
But we don't care a button! we don't care a fig!
In a Sieve we'll go to sea!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.



III

The water it soon came in, it did,
The water it soon came in;
So to keep them dry, they wrapped their feet
In a pinky paper all folded neat,
And they fastened it down with a pin.
And they passed the night in a crockery-jar,
And each of them said, 'How wise we are!
Though the sky be dark, and the voyage be long,
Yet we never can think we were rash or wrong,
While round in our Sieve we spin.'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.



II

They sailed away in a Sieve, they did,
In a Sieve they sailed so fast,
With only a beautiful pea-green veil
Tied with a ribbon by way of a sail,
To a small tobacco-pipe mast;
And every one said, who saw them go,
'O won't they be soon upset, you know!
For the sky is dark, and the voyage is long,
And happen what may, it's extremely wrong
In a Sieve to sail so fast!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

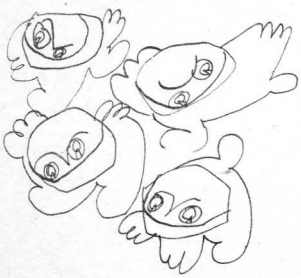
V

They sailed to the western sea, they did,
To a land all covered with trees,
And they bought an Owl, and a useful Cart,
And a pound of Rice, and a Cranberry Tart,
And a hive of silvery Bees.
And they bought a Pig, and some green Jack-daws,
And a lovely Monkey with lollipop paws,
And forty bottles of Ring-Bo-Ree,
And no end of Stilton Cheese.
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

VI

And in twenty years they all came back,
In twenty years or more,
And every one said, 'How tall they've grown!
For they've been to the Lakes, and the Torrible Zone,
And the hills of the Chankly Bore.'
And they drank their health, and gave them a feast,
Of dumplings made of beautiful yeast;
And every one said, 'If we only live,
We too will go to sea in a Sieve,—
To the hills of the Chankly Bore!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

Edward Lear
1871



IV

And all night long they sailed away;
And when the sun went down,
They whistled and warbled a moony song
To the echoing sound of a coppery gong,
In the shade of the mountains brown.
'O Timballoo! How happy we are,
When we live in a Sieve and a crockery-jar,
And all night long in the moonlight pale,
We sail away with a pea-green sail,
In the shade of the mountains brown!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

ESSAY

The PHILOSOPHY of COMPOSITION

Charles Dickens, in a note now lying before me, alluding to an examination I once made of the mechanism of "Barnaby Rudge," says — "By the way, are you aware that Godwin wrote his 'Caleb Williams' backwards? He first involved his hero in a web of difficulties, forming the second volume, and then, for the first, cast about him for some mode of accounting for what had been done."

I cannot think this the *precise* mode of procedure on the part of Godwin — and indeed what he himself acknowledges, is not altogether in accordance with Mr. Dickens' idea — but the author of "Caleb Williams" was too good an artist not to perceive the advantage derivable from at least a somewhat similar process. Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its *denouement* before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the *denoument* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis — or one is suggested by an incident of the day — or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative-designing, generally, to fill in with description, dialogue, or authorial comment, whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page, render themselves apparent.

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an *effect*. Keeping originality *always* in view — for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest — I say to myself, in the first place, "Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?" Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone — whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone — afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would — that is to say who could — detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say — but, perhaps, the authorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers — poets in especial — prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy — an ecstatic intuition — and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought — at the true purposes seized only at the last moment — at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view — at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable — at the cautious selections and rejections — at the painful erasures and interpolations — in a word, at the wheels and pinions — tha tackle for scene-shifting — the step-ladders and demon-traps — the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, with, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary *histrio*.

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell, are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy with the repugnance alluded to, nor, at any time the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of my compositions; and, since the interest of an analysis, or reconstruction, such as I have considered a *desideratum*, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analyzed, it will not be regarded as a breach of decorum on my part to show the *modus operandi* by which some one of my own works was put together. I select "The Raven," as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition — that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem, *per se*, the circumstance — or say the necessity — which, in the first place, gave rise to the intention of composing a poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

We commence, then, with this intention.

The initial consideration was that of extent. If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression — for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and every thing like totality is at once destroyed. But since, *ceteris paribus*, no poet can afford to dispense with *any thing* that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say no, at once. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones — that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such, inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a physical necessity, brief. For this reason, at least one half of the "Paradise Lost" is essentially prose — a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions — the whole being depriv-ed, through the extremeness of its length, of the

vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity, of effect.

It appears evident, then, that there is a distant limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art — the limit of a single sitting — and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as "Robinson Crusoe," (demanding no unity,) this limit may advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit — in other words, to the excitement or elevation — again in other-words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect: — this, with one proviso — that a certain degree of duration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all.

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular, while not below the critical, taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper *length* for my intended poem — a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect, to be conveyed: and here I may as well observe that, throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work *universally* appreciable. I should be carried to far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted, and which, with the poetical, stands not in the slightest need of demonstration — the point, I mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect — they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of *soul — not* of intellect, or of heart — upon which I have commented, and which is experience in consequence of contemplating "the beautiful." Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes — that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment — no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to is *most readily* attained in the poem. Now the object, Truth, or the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable, to a certain extent, in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion a *homeliness* (the truly passionate will comprehend me) which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement, or pleasurable elevation, of the soul. It by no means follows from any thing here said, that passion, or even truth, may not be introduced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem — for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast — but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subservience to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to enveil the, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as by providence, my next question referred to the *tone* of its highest manifestation — and all experience has shown that this tone is one of *sadness*. Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.

The length, the province, and the tone, being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary deduction, with the view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a key-note in the construction of the poem — some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In carefully thinking over all the usual artistic effects — or more properly *points*, in the theatrical sense — I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the *refrain*. The universality of its employment sufficed to insure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis. I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvement, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the *refrain*, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone — both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity — of repetition. I resolved to diversity, and so heighten, the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought: that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation *of the application* of the *refrain* — the *refrain* itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried.

These parts being settled, I next bethought me of the *nature* of my *refrain*. Since its application was to be repeatedly varied, it was clear that the *refrain* itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sentence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence, would, of course, be the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best *refrain*.

The question now arose as to the *character* of the word. Having made up my mind to a refrain, the division of the poem into stanzas was, of course, corollary: the *refrain* forming the close of each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt: and these considerations inevitably led me to the long *o* as the most sonorous vowel, in connection with *r* as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the *refrain* being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had predetermined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word "Nevermore." In fact, it was the very first which presented itself.

The next *desideratum* was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word "nevermore." In observing the difficulty which I at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous repetition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the presumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by *a human* being — I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a *non*-reasoning capable of speech; and, very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superceded forthwith by a Raven, as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended *tone*.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven — the bird of ill omen — monotonously repeating the one word, "Nevermore," at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object *supremeness*, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself — "Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the *universal* understanding of mankind, is the most melancholy?" Death — was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is this most melancholy of topics most poetical." From what I have already explained at some length, the answer, here also, is obvious — "When it most clearly allies itself to *Beauty*: the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world — and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover."

I had now to combine the two ideas, of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the world "Nevermore." — I had to combine these, bearing in mind my design of varying, at every turn, the *application* of the word repeated; but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the Raven employing the world in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending — that is to say, the effect of the *variation of application*. I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover — the first query to which the Raven should reply "Nevermore" — that I could make this first query a commonplace one — the second less so — the third still less, and so on — until at length the lover, startled from his original nonchalance by the melancholy character of the word itself — by its frequent repetition — and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it — is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character — queries whose solution he has passionately at heart — propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture — propounds them not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which, reason assures him, is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote) but because he experiences a phrenzied pleasure in so modeling his questions as to receive from the *expected* "Nevermore" the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrows. Perceiving the opportunity afforded me — or, more strictly, thus forced upon me in the progress of the construction — I first established in mind the climax, or concluding query — that query to which "Nevermore" should be in the last place an answer — that in reply to which this word "Nevermore" should involve the utmost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

Here then the poem may be said to have its beginning — at the end, where all works of art should begin — for it was here, at this point of my preconsiderations, that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza:

> "Prophet," said I, "thing of evil! prophet still if bird or devil!
> By that heaven that bends above us — by that God we both adore,
> Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if within the distant Aidenn,
> It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
> Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
> Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

Edgar Allan Poe
1846

CH I C A G O

SHEET

"Devoured by some dreams as big as the Earth, we [those belonging to the Paris-based surrealist art movement] were nothing, nothing more than a group of insolent intellectuals that blustered in a cafe and published a magazine."

—Luis Bunuel

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"...and he who would destroy passion, that man deserves nothing less than pure nothingness."

—Thomas Mann

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What were you saying about the Middle-East Crisis?

Quick to ravel, quick to unravel
she's tangled in frustration anger self-
contempt but unravelling coming quickly
lying loose untangled but still not tired.
He falls asleep as he comes, heavy.
She falls and wakes terrified wakes
him up he's pissed alright she knots up
tight and stubborn as the curls in her hair.

Impossible situation.

Except for that moment of unrolling
like a ball of string falling

off a chair like a tree
shaking out all its leaves
in the wind like breaking
through a shout.
like anything finally
set free.

She walks home
alive all over.

Julie Parson
1979

I don't want anyone to admire my pants in a museum.

Frederic Chopin

I'll play it first and tell you what it is later.

Miles Davis

Telling his class that a critic had called him a second Beethoven, Bruckner said, "How can anybody dare to say such a thing!"

The notes I handle no better than many pianists. But the pauses between the notes — ah, that is where the art resides!

Arthur Schnabel

What really counts is to strip the soul naked. Painting or poetry is made as we make love: a total embrace, prudence thrown to the wind, nothing held back.... For a thousand men of letters, give me one poet.

Joan Miro
1936

How much has to be explored and discussed before reaching the naked flesh of feeling!

Claude Debussy

The fact that people do not understand and respect the very best things, such as Mozart's concertos, is what permits men like us to become famous.

Johannes Brahms

Never did Mozart write for eternity, and it is precisely for that reason that much of what he wrote is for eternity.

Albert Einstein

When I am...completely myself, entirely alone...or during the night when I cannot sleep, it is on such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly. Whence and how these come I know not nor can I force them.... Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successively, but I hear them *gleich alles zusammen* [at the same time all together].

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Mozart is the human incarnation of the divine force of creation.

Johann W. von Goethe

I write as a sow piddles.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

You are the first in the decadence of your art.

Charles Baudelaire

One day Orson was in New York, and he invited me to have lunch at 21. He asked me: "Would you work with Herman Mankiewicz on a script he's developing for me?" I knew how erratic Herman could be, but Orson said that Herman had broken his leg and it was a good time to get some work out of him.

Orson described the story: it was to be a multifaceted tale about — let's face it — Hearst, or at least some legendary publisher. I was intrigued, and I agreed to come out and work two or three weeks with Herman.

Herman and I, plus a nurse to care for his broken leg, went off to Victorville and started working on the script. By the end of twelve weeks we had produced a 200 page script. It was Herman's, really; I merely edited his work.

My work was finished, and Orson took over and visualized the script. He added a great deal of material himself, and later he and Herman had a dreadful row over the screen credit. As far as I could judge, the co-billing was correct. The *Citizen Kane* script was the product of both of them.

John Houseman

Dying is a very dull, dreary affair. And my advice to you is to have nothing whatever to do with it.

W. Somerset Maugham

I've had eighteen straight whiskies. I think that's the record.... After thirty-nine years, this is all I've done.

Dylan Thomas