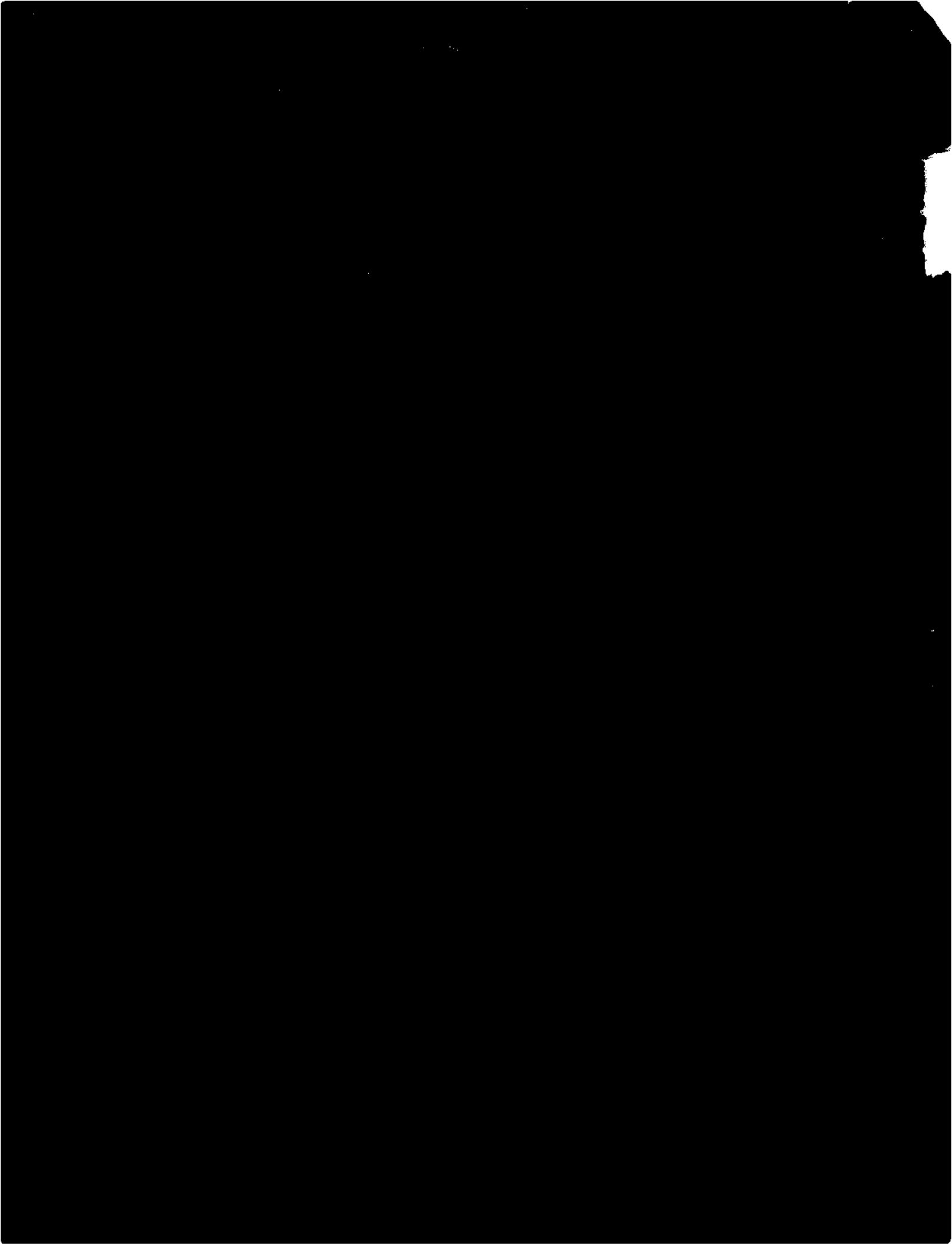




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VENUS

VOL. 1

NO. 2

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This issue mimeoed by Walter J. Daugherty



OUR FAINT BRAYS FROM A TIED JACKASS DEPARTMENT

brings us WHO?

EDITED VOM'S

MAMMA?



I have noticed Bruce Yerke doing a lot of drum thumping for himself over a period of years, blustering that he was the editor of the original IMAGINATION! He has repeatedly claimed fame for being the progenitor of LA fan-mags via "Madge". I have done little or nothing to disabuse fandom of this fanciful notion, and Bruce, thru repetition, may have come to believe this pleasant fantasy himself.

But his hokum is as hollow as the drum he's been beating.

When I read in Le Zombie a semi-official account of early mags and am told by Tucker that Yerke edited Madge and that when it died the death (after 13 issues) Morojo & I snatched the letter section and began publishing Vom.... well, 'tis a bit too much. Too many new fans are going to accept Tuck's no-doubt honestly intended explanation.

I would ask you to refer with me, if you could, to IMAGINATION! #1. There were less than fifty copies originally (it being hekto'd) so it is unlikely you have one handy in your file. But: just who do you think named the mag, exclamation mark and all, in the first place? YHOS---meaning,

in this case, not Art Widner, but Your Humble Obedient Sfforry. I did.

I can no longer give you the breakdown on the typing but I am reasonably certain that of the 19 pages with typing, Morojo & I did 18 between us. Yerke wrote and carboned "Ye ED Says Foo" himself and contributed another page. Other articles in the issue attributed to Yerke and Ted Berk (a pseudonym I devised for him) were either considerably re-written by me or ghosted.

I ghosted Hodgkin's column, in the issue; in fact, I always wrote "Way out West". I had just about every editorial thing to do with 16 of the 20 pages in the first issue.

I did not run them off. Yerke may legitimately call himself publisher (of the first Madge only). He did lay the master carbons on the hekto gelatan and pull off half a hundred copies. As he related in the 2nd issue of IMAGINATION! he completely wrecked the first 2 pages he pulled off #1; and after a conference with Morojo & Vodoso (now known as Morojo & Vodoro), myself, himself, and Hodgkins, 8 further pages,... (which he had typed himself) were

continued on page 15

EBEY

-3-

OBJECTS

Fans are odd people.

It is hard to make a statement trite and dogmatic at the same time, yet my opening sentence is meant to achieve that effect.

"Okay," you snarl, "It's an old gag. So what? Fans do funny things, like writing letters lambasting and flattering each other and they hold conventions and form clubs on the basis of common interest in a shakey pulp subject. So they are odd. Everyone knows that."

The minor quirk I am devoting my rave to is, to my mind, the oddest oddity of them all.

'Tis the peculiar lack of perspective that is typical of fans---they're all alike in this respect---they show it in judging their favorite reading matter. They rate science-fiction stories by science fiction standards.

"The guy is wacky," I hear you shout, "What other standards matter? STF makes its own standards!"

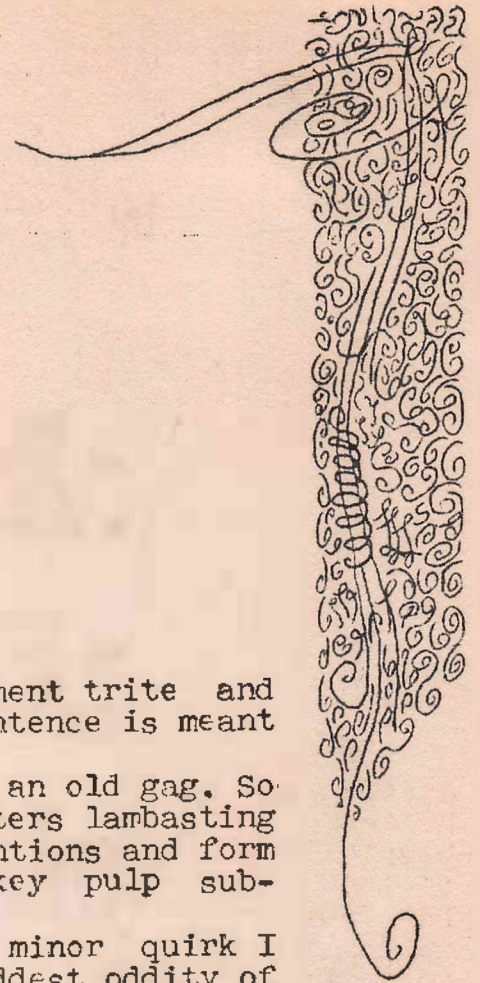
Consider.

STF, with the exception of a few yarns that hit book publication, is strictly pulp, and has achieved recognition as little else. What your dyed in the glasstex fan considers a good yarn would not impress the average reader, who admires things like characterization, style and color in their stories.

Personally, I find more smoothly narrated and solidly constructed writing in the average detective magazine than in the average STF. But I like STF, but only because of what it is, because it is tinged with more real imagination than westerns or detective stories.

Examples abound. Take Campbell's MIGHTIEST MACHINE with its streams of windy, weighty, sentences and technical phrazology. It's modern counterpart is any George O. Smith opus, or any of C. L. Moore's recent atmosphere dripping, unweildy "classics"; or E. E. Smith's ponderous nonsense or Van Vogt's stupidly overdone melodramatics. None of this stuff would get by for an instant in an "outside" publication.

continued on page 14



IF

by

M. F. CRAWFORD

The clock raised his eyes,
so large and clear
And ordered himself
a second beer.

Then gazing out
at the loading dock
He said to his friend,
the Hollyhock,

"I wish I were as old
as the hills
With plenty of money
to pay my bills."

He guzzled his beer,
so pale and cool
And stated sadly,
"I hated school

There were so many problems..."

"Large or small?" queried the Hollyhock.

"Both," was the mournful reply of the clock.



HAVE YOU HEARD THE ONE ABOUT — ?

by

ROBERT BLOCH

Black Art is throwing a party, see? His real name is Arthur Lucentro, but we call him Black Art on account of him being a wizard. Sort of a gag, see, because he is really very serious and raises the dead, and all that stuff.

But every once in a while Black Art knocks off and throws a big party with a lot of magic. He is a good guy, even though screwy and he has a lot of liquor, so we always come to his brawls.

Well, this time we are all sitting around in the big French parlour he calls the Louis O room. There is F. Gregory Coprophalia and Doctor Groinberg and Bishop Shapiro and a lot of other big shots, and we are all drinking Pernod out of paper cups.

Black Art won't allow any mirrors or glassware in his house, because if he sees his reflection, old John Q. Satan will foreclose the mortgage on him. So we are drinking out of these paper cups, and talking about Gilles de Retz and the Marquis de Sade and Darryl Zanuck and other guys Black Art knows in the old days.

I notice Black Art is nervous tonight, and when he gets nervous something always happens. I can

always tell. To begin with, his beard usually stands up, like there was a wind blowing on it from across the stars, he says.

Well tonight, Black Art's beard stands up so straight it damn near hits him on the nose. He gets up and walks over to the window to hide his embarrassment but I see it. He is shaking all over. I sneak across the room and stand next to him. He is looking up at the moon. Something is flying across it. Seven figures.

"The seven geese!"

I hear him whisper it, and then there is an awful squawk as the birds fly by and the moon goes behind a big black horned cloud.

"He is coming," Art whispers. "I see the omens."

Sure enough, a minute later there is a big thumping on the front door. Everybody shuts up and looks while Black Art goes and opens it.

A stranger comes in.

Now there is nothing really wrong with this guy and the way he dresses. He is tall and thin and he has big sad eyes----but lots of finks look that way. He wears a black suit, plenty dusty, like a burlap bag with lapels. He carries

a big bulging suitcase that is also dusty --- but this isn't so queer either. Anyway, the two things together make me feel dust and sadness.

Everybody gets it. Here is somebody who travels a long, long way for a long, long time. A little cold wind runs around the room as Black Art shuts the door behind the stranger, Black Art looks at the dust on the guy's shoes and at the dust in his eyes.

"I expected you," he says.

The stranger sighs. It sounds like somebody lets the air out of his tires.

"You see the signs?"

"Yes."

"Then you know who I am?"

Black Art nods. "When the dogs howl and the seven geese keen mournfully afar, I know. A man would be stupid indeed not to recognize you for what you are."

"Yes." The stranger looks at us all. "I am the original Traveling Salesman."

He sets the suitcase down with a thump, and dust flies all over the room. Bishop Shapiro comes up to him.

"The original Traveling Salesman?" he asks. "But there's lots of traveling salesman, you know."

The stranger smiles his tired little smile. "Yes, but there's only one Traveling Salesman known all over the world --- the Traveling Salesman of all the smoking-car stories, the Salesman of all the jokes. And that's who I am."

He sits down on the sofa very carefully, as though part of him is made of expensive glass he is afraid of breaking. Black Art hands him a drink and we all stand around.

"Thanks," he says. "It's swell to rest like this. Haven't been in the city for years, you know, Just one damned rural route after another. I go from farm to farm, year in and year out. What an awful life I lead!"

"Yeah?" says Bishop Shapiro. "What about all those farmer's daughters?"

"Nyaaaaa!" yells the Traveling Salesman, real loud. He jumps up like he is being gnawed by mice. "That's all they ask me. What about those farmer's daughters? I'll tell you what!"

"I'm sick of farmer's daughters and I'm sick of farmers. I'm sick of their wives, their rickety farmhouses, their squeaky beds, their outdoor plumbing!"

"Then why travel?" asks Bishop Shapiro.

"Why?" snarls the Salesman. "Because I am cursed, that's why.. Like the Wandering Jew."

"Cursed?"

"By men. Men like you, that tell stories about traveling salesmen. You created me --- you and your mass thought through the ages. After millions of men, their minds sensitized through telling absurd tales, had thought about me in groups for hundreds of years -- I just materialized. All those mass thoughts created a physical being. Me --- the Traveling Salesman! And so I am cursed to wander.

"To wander. Every night, I visit a new farmhouse. Never a change of routine. Greasy supper. A fight over where to sleep. Then to bed. And there's always some damn' daughter.

"Those daughters! Dumb, fat, ugly, but insomniacs. Or they have halitosis. Or cold feet. Or they snore."

The Traveling Salesman began to groan. We got closer.

"It's my fate to live through the details of every one of those thousands of stories men have invented around my legend. I must engage in a hundred foolish acts, a million excesses. In barns, in haylofts, in horse-stalls, in silos and even in cow-pastures! I have to take a million dizzy wise-cracks from farmers, a billion stale payoff lines from women. I have been accused, abused, subjected to every indignity by the demands of those cursed jokes. Nyaaaaa!"

Everybody looks sympathetic, and drinks while he shudders.

"We understand, old man." says continued on page 15



IN THE GARDENS OF MU LUNG*

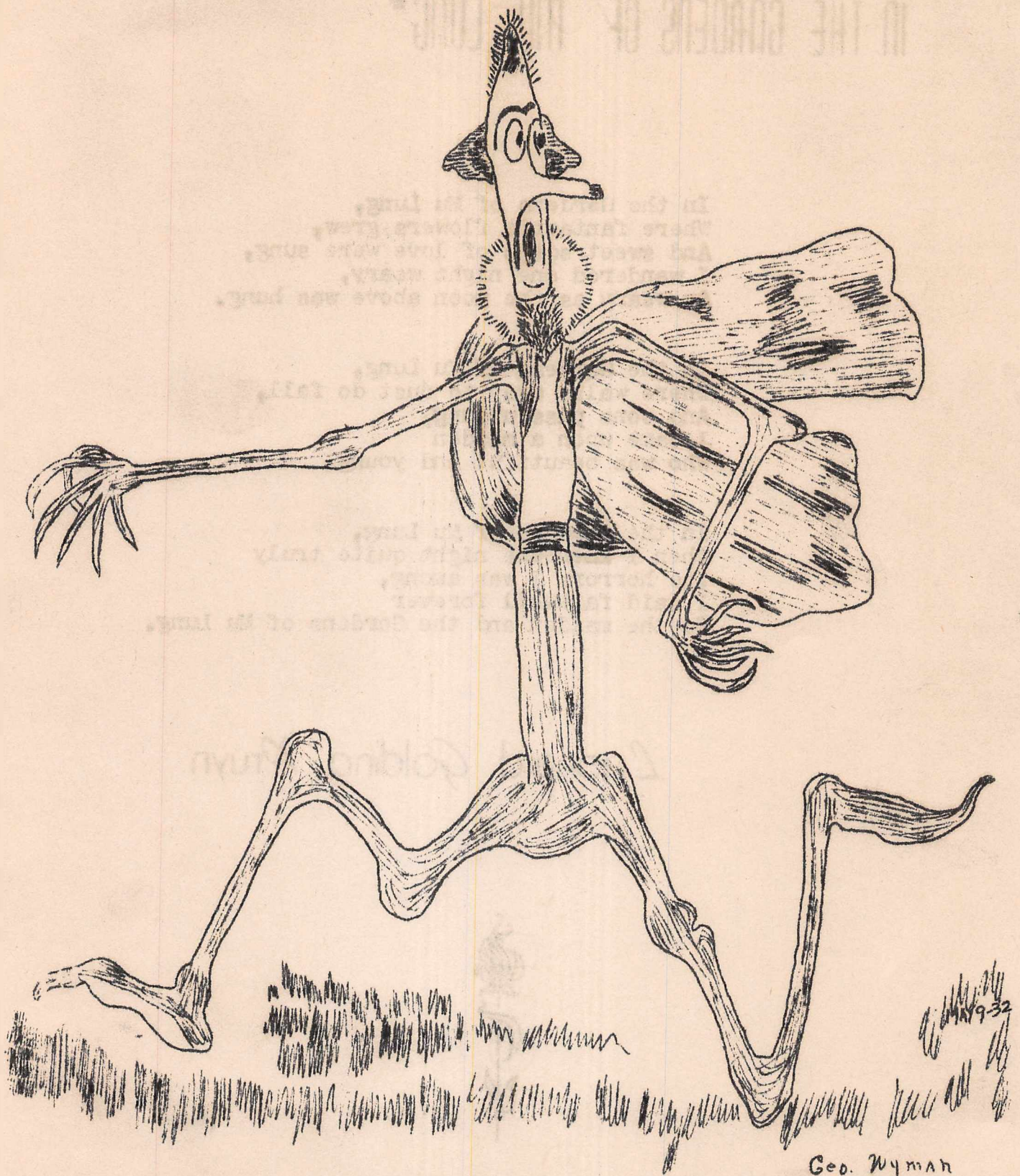
In the Gardens of Mu Lung,
Where fantastic flowers grew,
And sweet songs of love were sung,
I wandered one night weary,
As weary as the moon above was hung.

In the Gardens of Mu Lung,
Where walls away to dust do fall,
And eons pass unsung,
I came upon a maiden
Who was beautiful and young.

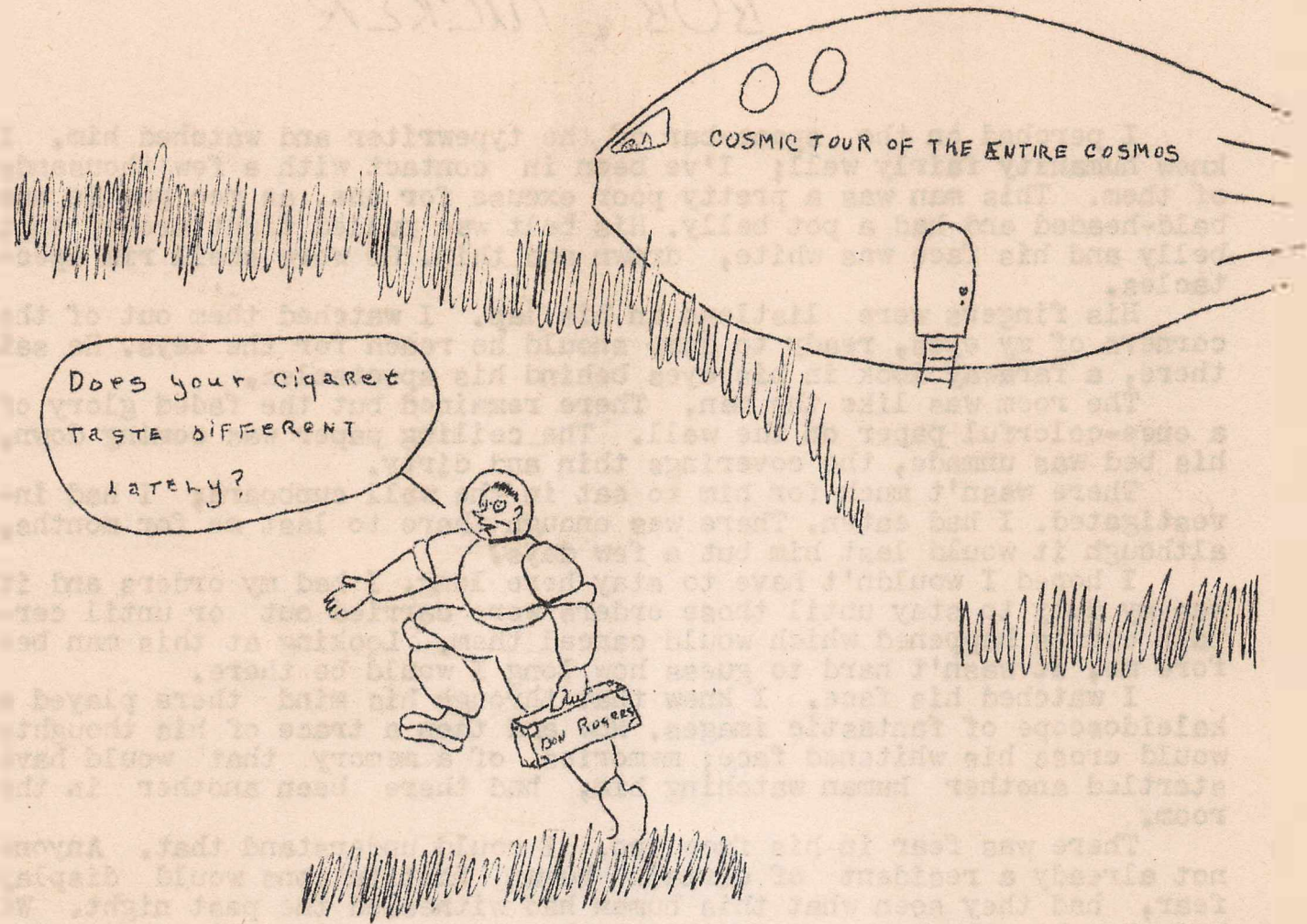
In the Gardens of Mu Lung,
When I knew one night quite truly
The horrors I was among,
I said farewell forever
To the maiden and the Gardens of Mu Lung.

Leonard Golding Pruyn





Geo. Wyman



FLYSWATTER

by

BOB TUCKER

I perched on the space-bar of the typewriter and watched him. I knew humanity fairly well; I've been in contact with a few thousands of them. This man was a pretty poor excuse for one, as men go. He was bald-headed and had a pot belly. His belt was pulled tight around that belly and his face was white, drawn and thin. He wore shell rim spectacles.

His fingers were listless in his lap. I watched them out of the corners of my eyes, ready to jump should he reach for the keys. He sat there, a faraway look in his eyes behind his spectacles.

The room was like the man. There remained but the faded glory of a once-colorful paper on the wall. The ceiling paper was coming down, his bed was unmade, the coverings thin and dirty.

There wasn't much for him to eat in the wall cupboard; I had investigated. I had eaten. There was enough there to last me for months, although it would last him but a few days.

I hoped I wouldn't have to stay here long. I had my orders and it was my duty to stay until those orders were carried out or until certain events happened which would cancel them. Looking at this man before me, it wasn't hard to guess how long I would be there.

I watched his face. I knew that through his mind there played a kaleidoscope of fantastic images. Now and then a trace of his thoughts would cross his whitened face; memories of a memory that would have startled another human watching him, had there been another in the room.

There was fear in his face too. I could understand that. Anyone not already a resident of certain human institutions would display fear, had they seen what this human had witnessed the past night. We had thought the room untenanted, otherwise we would not have chosen the spot for our gathering.

Too late we discovered that he had seen, had watched us. I recall his face peering over the side of the bed at us there on the floor. It would be difficult to state which was the most startled. Our ceremony was almost finished when we discovered him. At once it was certain that he knew all, had seen us from the moment we had entered the room.

Being seated in my rightful position near the Queen I made haste to whisper a suggestion to her. She thought my suggestion wise and ordered it carried out. Calmly, as if we were alone, we completed the rites we had come there to perform and began an orderly retreat. He had seen us and had done nothing, so there was certainly no reason why we should abandon our carefully planned rituals to flee. In dignified haste we finished our ceremonies and began an orderly withdrawal behind the Queen.

All except myself. While the man was engaged in watching the rest of my people leave, I secreted myself under the bed and changed form. In order to successfully carry out my masquerade I assumed a form which none of my fellows had utilized for the ceremonies. When they

were gone and the Gate closed, I came forth from my hiding place to keep watch on him.

He slept no more that night, which was as I had expected. What I hadn't expected was that he would attempt to set down his experiences, on paper. We hadn't known he was a writer, in fact, as I have just mentioned, didn't realize that he was in the room at all. It was supposed to be empty.

I knew at once what he intended to do when he sat down before the machine and rolled a sheet of paper into position. Alongside the fear in his face there was a daring resolve, and just a shadow of hope. A hope that he could forestall what he knew was inevitable; what we knew was inevitable, and what Someone thought had already happened, to judge by the error of the room not being empty when we arrived. It was perhaps this advance stage of breakdown that gave him the courage to write.

He wanted to write the story, phase by phase, scene by scene, of the rituals. And Us. His greatest desire was to write about us and describe us, but he needed the rituals as a setting to depict us. He would probably make it in fiction form in order to have full freedom in telling of our Queen, and my companions.

Which is precisely what I am here to prevent. I have succeeded so far. He has no electric light in his room. He was seated at the typewriter, ready, when the first rays of dawn entered his window.

He raised his fingers to strike the keys. I stopped him.

It wasn't hard to do. His condition is weak from days of not eating, his health isn't the best; consequently his will power, aside from the one dominating force that urges him to put his memories on paper, is almost nil. I stopped him very easily, but I knew my task would be harder as the day grew older.

He is trying to marshal his thoughts; is casting about for an opening sentence. I can keep him in this mental struggle indefinitely. Now and then he comes close to forming a sentence, but just as quickly I divert a new stream of thought into the foreground which completely defeats his purpose. Soon he will grow angry with himself. He will beat his head and swear and moan because he cannot bring himself to begin.

The paper was ready, and blank, at dawn. It is now well into the morning and still he has written nothing. There are noises of a scrubwoman outside the door. He turns his head to look at the door and watches a dull swish of filthy water flow across the sill. That reminds him of the flow that crossed the floor of his room last night. He even sees something coincident in the coloring.

This interests me. Looking at the ugly, darkened scrubwater coming under the door, I marvel at the human thought processes that he should associate that with us. Humans have such strange minds.

But---he has slipped from my control! While I was busily watching the water and contemplating his mental make-up, he has somehow become aware of his freedom from my will, and has written something on the paper. It is only the title

"THE STORY THAT SHOULD NEVER BE WRITTEN"

He is admiring it. Yes, that is good. Very stupendous, he believes. It must capture his expected reader's attention, and once they have entered into the story, nothing can tear away their attention until they have finished his account. So he happily believes.

Suddenly, a new intelligence at my rear captures my attention.

Whirling, ready to flee, I see nothing but an overlarge housefly. His appearance at this time is strange, and yet fortunate. I take control of his mind very easily.

The fly alights on the paper. I change my position from the black space-bar to the tabular key. It has a white background and I am easily seen. Presently the man notices me.

"Shoo!" he swings a hand to swat at me, impatiently. I force myself not to move, although his hand comes dangerously close. He waves at me the second time but I still hold my ground. This angers him. He raises a puny, dirty forefinger and jams it down on the tabular key. I leap just in time.

The carriage of the machine shot away to the left at least several inches, to be stopped at last by the tabular lock in the rear. The fly, resting on the paper, is now only a dirty streak. The title now reads....

"THE STORY THAT SHOULD NEVER BE WRITTEN"

He read that and his face paled anew. His mind became confused, a maelstrom of emotions and in this upheaval, I quickly inserted myself and once again gained control.

The day was miserable. The typewriter, the paper, the room swaying before his eyes, blurry, unfocused. Hunger hurt his stomach. Everything went wrong. The keys would jam. Words failed to form themselves into even simple sentences. Minutes were wasted hunting down the proper spelling of some of those words he could muster--long, multi-syllabled words he once dashed off without pause. And there comes tantalizing memories of the fame he once possessed. The struggle was terrible, wrapped in the grim silence of the room. A continuous battle was being fought, a battle that was neither seen nor heard, a battle that one side knew nothing -- yet was half the struggle.

Grim coincidences jarred each passing hour, for him. I would light on first one key and then another, waiting patiently until he saw me, tried to wave me away. Failing that, he would hit the key with a finger, always just missing me. In slow succession then, those keys would spell out words that preyed on his conscious mind, unbelievable omens that forestalled his every attempt to write.

STOP, DEATH, NEVER, STOP, FINALE.....

At noon, despite my efforts to the contrary, he had succeeded in finishing the first paragraph as well as the title. He got up and stumbled across the room to the wall cupboard, ate dry bread and cheese and washed it down with water. He sat there so long, unmoving, unblinking, that I thought it had happened. Without thinking, I rushed into his mind to find out.

It was almost my undoing. He became aware of me. I attribute it to his acute condition. Extreme hunger, the approach of death, his mental attitude all must have sharpened his wits to an alarming degree.

Turning his head toward the typewriter, he looked directly at me; not seeing me only because I was so small at that distance, and his vision was failing. His awareness flowered to bright suspicion, and he suddenly knew. Memories of the last evening and the morning just past marched behind his eyes. He remembered that we were in many forms last night, forms common to earth. And he remembered finding me on the tabular key, of swatting me off many others.

Instantly, then, he perceived I had intelligence, else I wouldn't have chosen those particular keys.

When he came across the room I knew what was in his mind but I didn't know what method he would use to attempt it. I could not see his hands, which he kept behind him. Alert, wary, I watched his coming. He stopped before the machine and searched it closely with weak eyes. I was safely hidden inside the frame, out of sight unless he should lay his head on the platen and stare inside, but he didn't think of that.

Failing to find me, he sat down in front of the machine and brought forth one hand to touch the keys. I did nothing, for I had already arrived at the conclusion that should I force myself into his mind again, he would find me. My beam of communication with him became a two-way line, once his acutely warped conscience had become aware of me. And he knew this.

Deliberately, he used his left index finger to begin on the second paragraph. I debated what to do. I had been ordered to a duty I must fulfil...and yet I could not do that duty dead. In the end I decided upon short, jabbing, yet heavily-charged jolts to his mind. I must get in, wreck as much damage as possible, and be away before he discovered me. An ambush was necessary.

I let him finish the first sentence of the second paragraph. Some of his confidence returned. He had tapped out each letter and word, slowly, awaiting me. My failure of appearance gave him courage and at the same time caused him to relax his vigilance. Still wary of that hidden hand. I tried a short, semi-paralyzing stroke. The effect was instantaneous.

Instead of dazing him as I expected, he bolted into action. The hidden hand came forth holding a wire flyswatter which he banged down on the frame of the machine with all the strength at his command. The blow rattled the keys. Only his being unable to ~~see~~ save my life... His eyes searched the machine fervently, I knew he was seeking my dead body. Not finding it where he thought it to be, he knew then I was inside the frame at about the same spot. Bending over, he peered inside.

Anticipating him, I crawled still further down inside the machine, and stopped on a small sprocket that revolved as the carriage was moved. It was a precarious position. Next he left his chair, and was lost to my sight for a few minutes. I found him looking in the glass windows at each side of the machine. The only place of real safety near me was a small spring. I crawled inside.

There was no movement for a few minutes. I didn't dare attach my mind to his to ascertain his whereabouts. Presently, after a long silence the keys began tapping again. The spring quivered. I knew what its function was and dreaded being trapped within it, should it suddenly stretch and just as suddenly contract. My legs would be caught in its turns, and I would probably be crushed. Looking out, and up, I could no longer see him so decided he was again seated in the chair. Precariously, I made my way to a small, oblong opening at the bottom of the machine, just underneath the key bank. Reaching it, I dropped a short distance to the white, enameled table top and hid myself underneath the machine.

From this vantage spot I again hurled another charge at him, this time calling upon the very limit of my mental capacity. The blow dazed him. The typing stopped and his fingers fell heavily to the table top. They lay there, curling and uncurling spasmodically. He attempted to bring up his right hand, which held the flyswatter, but failed. I saw my advantage and hurled still another bolt. It left me weak, but determined to stop him if I could. I tried a third.

Exhausted, I watched his body fall from the chair. The noise it made as it hit the floor resounded throughout the room. A sudden commotion from the lower floor of the house told me it had been heard elsewhere too. Crawling to the edge of the tabletop, I stared down at him.

I couldn't kill him, that was beyond my province. I had used the most extreme method I dared to stop him, and should he revive now before I had regained my strength, I would be in a hopeless predicament indeed. Somewhat idly, I wondered what had happened to the Plans, why had someone so overlooked this room that he had been there when we came?

Precisely as if Someone had at that moment discovered his error, I became aware of a Presence in the room. The emanations were friendly and familiar. I didn't have the strength to seek the source, nor did I wish to. I knew the other presence.

The man on the floor died.

But what puzzled me was that the Presence remained in the room, and did not depart as was the usual case.

The door to the room opened and several people rushed in. They gathered around the body, someone took the flyswatter from his hand.

In my exhausted condition, I neglected to hide myself, but perched there on the white enameled tabletop. Dimly, I was aware of my danger in that exposed spot. And too late I realized why the Presence had remained in the room after the man died.

In the face of death or not, a female human knows but one major use for a flyswatter: the use for which it had been specifically made. And I made a conspicuous blue-black spot there on the white tabletop.

FINIS

EBEY OBJECTS

Yet in the science fiction field, writing like this is hailed by fan oracles and their compatriots, the blurb writers, as great stuff... living literature no less.

Bah!

The only thing I can suggest is that each fan obtain a textbook on fiction writing, read it carefully, obtain a good novel or collection of stories of recognized worth and devote himself or herself to finding out what is going on in the realm of letters.

When all this happens, fan ratings will reveal a remarkable difference. What's more, they will be accurate.



HAVE YOU HEARD THE ONE ABOUT?

who Edited Vom's MAMMA?

Black Art, patting his shoulder. "Why not stay here and rest up for a few days? I'll give you a room."

The Salesman gets to his feet. "Thanks," he mumbles, trying to smile. "Mighty nice of you to ask me. But I really can't do it. Some party in Omaha just figured out a new story for me --- something involving a hayrick, three daughters and a horse. I have an appointment tomorrow to try it out. So I must catch my train now."

He grabs for his suitcase. Black Art lifts it for him.

"Say!" comments Black Art. "This is an awful load! What's in this grip of yours?"

The Traveling Salesman blushes. Then he looks sick.

"Bricks," he whispers.

"Bricks?"

The Salesman opens the door, and turns around.

"Yes," he snarls, "Bricks!... That's the real tragedy of it all. Here I am, a crack salesman, one of the best on the road. And it means nothing, nothing at all, night as well carry bricks as anything else. Because" -- and he begins to scream -- "because in all the gawd-awful stories about the Traveling Salesman, nobody ever mentions that I sell anything!"

Weeping foolishly, the Traveling Salesman closes the door behind him and falls down the stairs.

FINIS



Often, a good education just enables you to get into more intelligent trouble.

Nightclubs today remind one of the 'Gay Nineties'. The women are gay, and the men are ninety.

destroyed.

Morojo & I took over.

Aside from a page in #2, TEV passed out of the picture.

And ole "doc" Fassbeinder must either be passing into his second childhood or be suffering delusions of faneur if he fondly imagines he had anything to do with Madge or Vom from December, '37, on.

And that, ladies & gentlemen is the true story of "Imagination's Editor" Yerke, the stock (phrase) market crash, and the loss of Bruce's "millions".



O Say Have U Seen...
VOM for HALLOWEEN?

Featuring!

"Return of Tigrina!"

V-Mails from Speer!

Diabolicover montage

by

Harryhausen

&

Rogers

Letters from

Bloch

Warner

Temple

de Jack

Wilson

Rothman

Wilimczyk

VOICE of the IMAGI-NATION...15c

Bx 6475 Met Stn, LA-55

FROM THE MADHOUSE FLOOR



I know now what was meant by the quotation, "The Editor sits on the madhouse floor and plays with the straws in his hair." I haven't any straws, but I've run my fingers through it in desperation until the dandruff fell like new laid snow. There will be a third issue of Venus, but unless I receive some material, preferably articles, no fourth issue will appear.

I am very grateful to Robert Block for his kindness in sending me his Traveling Salesman, to Alva Rogers for the time he spent, the beautiful illustration he produced on such short notice, for the poem by Leonard Pruyn, which is his introduction in print to fandom.

At long last I found Bob Tucker's FLYSWATTER, and hope that now he will stop being mad to me and not speaking at me.

My special thanks to M. F. Crawford for IF. It took some doing to get the author to part with it. If you like it, I have a promise of more.

Ebey will probably be surprised to find his article in Venus. I threatened to put it in the Faint Brays column, and I can't repeat what he threatened to do if I did.

I was surprised at the nice letters I received from fans, and I shall boost my ego by printing a few of them instead of boring you with a long-winded account of the troubles I had with this issue.

From Joe Kennedy:

Venus arrived today. The mag was very gratefully received. An exceptionally nice job. Gad, Tho --- 15¢ to mail it. P.O. Dep't (no I just wasn't going to give them a chance) trouble, I presume. The artwork is impressive, for the most part. Nifty lithos. The verse also, is excellent. Tho prejudiced against FMZ fiction, I'll admit the Brackett tale is tops. Leigh is always good. Of other material, methinks these were outstanding: (1) 4S J's Lang article (2) the Tucker bit, (3) "How to Publish" (4) the Odd John item. Swell binding. To sum up Venus is definitely going to make a hit. Wot Else?

(Thanks for them kind words, Joe, only so far, Venus has hit my pocketbook the hardest.)

From Langley Searles:

It seemed a shame to throw Venus #1 into the waste-basket without dropping the editor a card about the matter---hence this missive. Front cover fair, back cover so-so, inner illustrations more or less mediocre. Format in general: excellent. Material in general: poor. The only readable item was Ackerman's article on Fritz Lang; not even his habitual "simplified" spelling and annoying tendency to pun could spoil it... Fiction, poor, as would be expected from nearly all fan

magazines, with their third-grade pro-rejects. "Venus Moon": Joquel omits mention of the fact that Venus' satellite was once supposedly seen by the astronomer Herschel. Page 31: "The Acolyte congratulates Venus." For daring to publish such tripe, I presume... (Why else??)

From Charles Burbee:

VENUS STINKS.

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From D. B. Thompson:

Venus is really a fine production. Amazingly you have quite good fiction; that is really rare in fanzines, Acolyte being the only regular source of such since the days of POLARIS--and even that is none too suitable to my taste, since I dislike horror stories. (Laney's idea in presenting the best in horror fiction is commendable, since relatively little such is found in the pulps, the HF there being generally rather punk--but I just don't care for HF; it never horrifies me. (Me either)

I think Brackett's story rates first of the items with me, with "Odd John" "A Song of Love and Lament", "At Lang Last," "Earthbound" and "How to Publish" ranking close thereafter in the above order. That doesn't include art, which is certainly hard to compare with writing. Backcover best in that department with Clyne's pic and the front cover tied for next. Can't say much for the nood with the overgrown alligator. I'm not an expert on female anatomy, as so many fans claim to be, but I don't believe there are members of the specie genus homo who are built like that.

The question of whether or not Odd John is fact or fiction is well handled by Daniels. (Friend, I re-wrote it almost entirely, and caught hell in couples for it. The damn' article wasn't even coherent in the form I received it. Daniels writes stuff that even Burbee rejects.) Personally, I regard OJ as a rather punk superman. And, while I admire the writing in the story, I don't care for the story itself, and certainly not for the philosophy presented there.

I like the way you set up "Mad-Filled night" although it seems to me that you might as well have put the title of the verse on the page. (Jimmie Kepner cut the stencil and the printing was too high. There wasn't room.)

From PFC John M. Cunningham:

I think you have stolen a march on 4e and VOM. And to think that he encouraged you to put the fmz out. I think U put some worthwhile work into the fmz as it meets with my full approval. It stand in a place of its own. The best inner art work, cover & back, I have seen per fanzine in months.

Editorial: Good. Do let's have another issue to follow.
Tucker: Dressed up Westerns: Good, straight fact.
Daniels: ODD JOHN: Good coverage. "No more or less than the book title says, "Odd John".
JM Loring: Earthbound Ye Shall Be: Good.
Metropolis: Litho: Good.
At Lang Last (4e): Fairly good for Ackerman. Somewhat like Speer inaway.
Brackett: Shadows in the Woods: by best femme pro writer today, need I say more?
Venus Moon: AL Joquel: Condensed facts that present interesting reading.
Poetry: Fair to middlin'.
Illustrations: Better than average fanzines.

From: Leslie A. Croutch

Thanks for Venus. It was much appreciated. I've wanted a copy ever since I read about it being in contemplation. I'd send you something for the next issue but frankly right now I'm so busy with my work, and magazine, and one thing and another I'm not doing any writing to speak of. However, enclosed is a copy of LIGHT in some small repayment and token of thanks.

Yes, I can see the 4e influence in the nudes printed. Tsk tsk! LIGHT never prints such sexy trash! (Fingers crossed.) However, the whole magazine is neat, well written, the art very nice. I enjoyed all of it much better than I do most first attempts. It just goes to show the girls ('tis many a year since I been a girl.) can do as good a job, and better in some respects, than the men. If only girls would support you and keep this going, it would do fandom good. Most of the males are getting too blamed cheeky. There is a dearth of good femme material. I don't know why. Maybe they are too shy to write, or afraid of criticism from those love-lorn saps who pretend to be half-brained misogynists. I know, I've met some. Barbara Bovard, Naneck and others. I have some by Bovard, Mary G. Byers, and some coming up from Jessie Walker, an ex-school teacher. I'm also after more if I can get it for I find the girls attack problems and ideas from a refreshingly different angle.

From DAW

(I wrote DAW a nasty little postal in rehis review in FFF. That was one way to get a comment from him. I knew he would be as sarcastic as hell, and 4e, FTL & I got a big kick out of it. Hope you do.)

Why, I'm sure you misunderstood my review of your VENUS. I only meant that the fine techniques displayed, the excellence of line and mimeographing were up to the skilled standard of those other fans. I certainly had not intended to indicate that they actually had created the work--far from it. If in the editing and publication, it came to seem that way--blame it on a hurried typewriter, a tired and hot evening, a slip of a phrase, of unnoticed absence of a strategic word.

The LASFS has set a very high standard of work-- one which obviously requires more than mere handle-turning--witness the vile work turned out by Master Degler during his sojourn. Contrast that with the per-

fection of Venus, and you will see what I mean by mastery of the true LASFS fanzine.

Venus showed the true texture of the LA periodical. It had the magnificent page layout of a Daugherty, the subtle touch of a Bradbury magazine, the tongue-in-cheek dash of a Yerke, the swift biting satire, light and feathery, of a Laney Burlesque on Degler, the deep thought and solid substance of an Ackerman manifesto--in short I could have given it no higher compliment than to attribute it to all those persons..

Surely I would have hesitated to attribute it to one solitary newcomer--a female hesitantly taking her maiden step into these embattled realms. But I didn't--my typing slipped and the conspiring perspiration of that turgid evening with an Unger editorially clamoring into my phone for a review he was not to use for six weeks.

I await, await with baited (Yep, he spelled it thataway) breath, the appearance of your second number. It should be up to the first--I dare not think that it could surpass that for perfection beyond perfection is unattainable in this world. Such an ideal belongs to some other more perfect sphere.

Now had Brown and Laney turned the crank on all pages... ah, then would have been Utopia indeed!

Yours with grief,

From Charles Enrby

nin/thirtin
fourtif4

Dere Crozzeti:

I have rec'd & red a cop8 of that mag of urine, namly, venis. Gosh, I thoght it was god. Of corse I am onley 13 yers of ege, but mi eys are brite as anythig. I gess my gudjement inno't so god, but i thoght it was swel. I didnot rede eny of the storress in it yet becaus I cann't rerde so wel yet especial such bun tiping buthe pictors were swel kept the covur & sum of the oughthers. i'am working in a defennce plankt rigt now I makeing \$100 dolers a wek but wil some get a rase and ten i wil send you a ten sent dime for venis wich is gosh a god mag I think alto i2am onli thertin yers old of age.

Charles Enrby

yor pal

(This is an example of the intellectual type of readers VENUS is attracting, also of the high-type-clean-cut young men that make up the LASFS Executive Committee.)

IN VENUS NO. 3

ARTHUR K BARNES' 'Surprise Ending'

HITS VENUS THE SAME TIME AS HIS "FOG OVER VENUS" HITS
THE WINTER ISSUE OF "THRILLING WONDER"

WILLIAM PALMER'S 'The Depths'

A FANTASY TALE OF THE DEPTHS OF VENUS' SEAS

ALSO

CHARLES BURBEE

J. M. LORING AND OTHERS.

PRIZE CONTEST.

VENUS OFFERS A PRIZE CONTEST. \$5 WILL BE PAID FOR THE
BEST ARTICLE SUBMITTED TO VENUS BEFORE JANUARY 1-1945

The winning article will be published in VENUS No. 4,
and the prize money will be paid upon the decision of
the judges. See VOM #36 for details.

