

A Poet Lives in Indiana

by Jay Lesandrini

KNOWLEDGE

My book-
shelves are
empty.

For,
within my
fresh grave
I have

read
everything.

MEMORY LAPSE

I opened a book today and read twenty-six pages. I don't remember the title, or even what it was I read. I don't remember anything about it. I do remember listening to Bob Dylan ("Positively 4th Street"). I must have been high.

EMOTIONAL NEWSPAPER

The newspaper cries every morning as it rests on my doorstep from 6:30 a.m. until I wade out of bed to get it. It cries harder as I read of an earthquake in Mexico, and a rape in Indianapolis. It laughs as **Funky Winkerbean** slides through life, never growing old; and it cheers for the Yankees (only 4½ games out) in their quest for another pennant. I comfort its anxieties by reading its life, and soon it dies: lost in the memory of the 12 o'clock news.

INTELLIGENT ERASERS

Imagine all of the knowledge
that is learned by
a chalkboard.

And then is taught
to its erasers.

ANDY GRIFFITH VERSUS MA BELL

The telephone rings quietly as I lay stoned, watching reruns of **Andy Griffith** and eating potato chips. Barney and Otis, the drunk, have just had a run-in, and Otis went home. Andy's talking on the phone, and Opey's at school. Lord knows what Aunt Bee is up to. Floyd hasn't been on all week, and I'm anxious to see the rest of the show. They'll call back if it's important.

THE SCOPES MONKEY TRIAL REVISITED

Still stoned (a half-hour later) watching **Barney Miller**, the phone rings again—loudly. I look at it as it rings, and debate as fiercely as Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan once did. I answer the phone. It's Marcia; she wants to come over to talk. I want to drink a few more beers—alone. An argument ensues, and I win. Now I know how Bryan felt after the trial.

FRESCO POETRY

In words
 too dramatic for television,
 a poet redeems himself in a lost art.
 Just like a fresco
 his black words mesh with white paper
 to form a masterpiece that even
 Da Vinci might smile at.

But then,
 Da Vinci's frescoes
 aren't worth a damn.

LIVING ROOM BLUES

Cheap art surrounds my interior like a hated animal not ready to be turned loose in the world. My cheap art has not been tamed by years of expressionless looks, and no replacements. My cheap art knows only the cheap art across the room and has never met a Van Gogh. It's never even heard of him. It only knows Winston Taylor, the cheap artist who cares more about food than art.

JESUS

On a wooden cross which slides open to reveal holy water and candles, Jesus dies a thousand deaths on my living room wall. I don't notice him often, and when I do, I feel sorry for him. No one should have to die on a cross, at least not on twenty billion of them all across the world. I'll still keep Him on my wall though. He seems happy there.

MY VOLKSWAGON BOOKENDS

My books are held together
 by Volkswagon Bookends.
 The rusted hubcaps show the age
 of my literary lovers;
 and the compact style of my bookends
 shows the limits of my existence.
 Deep blue on the left, and black on the right,
 my bookends don't match;
 but they explain my novel lovers
 as no critic can.
 A sunroof could rejuvenate my bookends
 with a slight glimmer of sunshine,
 but even the sun refuses to enter
 my Volkswagon Bookends.
 My Volkswagon Bookends drive thoughts
 from my mind at obsolete speeds
 While their AM car radios croon
 Glen Miller tunes until my twilight.
 Permanently parked on my shelves,
 my Volkswagon Bookends never need waxing.

AND PARKED GENTLY, THE AUTO OF MY THOUGHTS

Halfway between tomorrow and last week I dreamed of next Easter. Rising above myself, I looked down only to feel my own heart beat, and realize the creation I am. Waking today, I write with vivid realization that never again will I dream such a dream. Tomorrow is another re-statement of the weeks of sorrow that have paved the driveway of my soul; and parked gently, the auto of my thoughts.

TOMORROW I WILL WAKE UP AND GO TO WORK; AGAIN.

Inside tomorrow there are many new days that shall forever be awaited, new dreams that will not quite be fulfilled, and old lovers whose boredom is overshadowed by great love making. I want to die in the arms of the Virgin Mary, so that someday maybe someone will make a statue of me. But, tomorrow I will wake up and go to work; again.

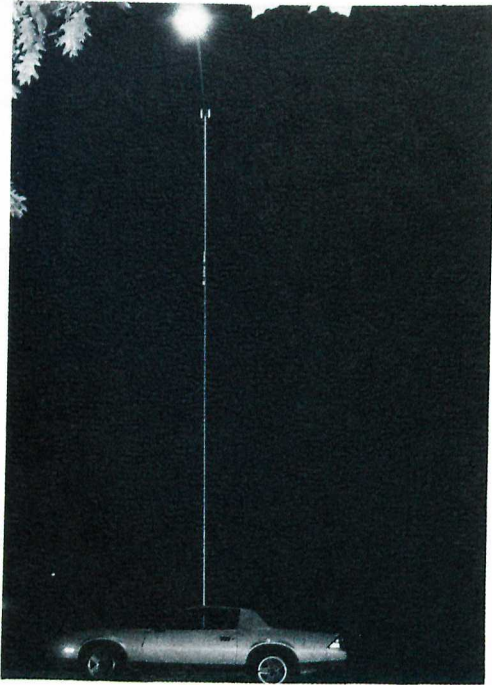


Photo by Ivy Flescher

A Poet Lives in Indiana

A poet lives in Indiana, where he was born, where he grew up, and where he will remain. He writes not only of Indiana, but of nowhere, and of no time, and of no thing which is not found anywhere, at any time, with anyone. A poet lives in Indiana, dreams in Indiana, and thinks in Indiana; but writes in a universe of expanding ideas within his own pen, within his own mind, within himself, within Indiana.