

THE PROMETHEAN

Symposium for Liberal Religious Youth

SPECIAL SUMMER ISSUE
1965

I think of our earth home . . .
Of those we live with and of ourselves . . .
Of what we must say and what we must do . . .
And the wonder of it all . . .



THE PROMETHEAN

A SYMPOSIUM FOR LIBERAL RELIGIOUS YOUTH: Special Summer Issue

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The ideas and opinions expressed by contributors to THE PROMETHEAN do not necessarily represent the position of every LRY'er nor of Continental LRY. This is a symposium which welcomes diversity of opinion and invites letters to the Editor from youth and adults.

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Liberal Religious Youth, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108

MISSISSIPPI

The bridge stood stark against the mills.
 There was wind;
 The river was wind: cold, dark, and swift,
 Rounding the hills.
 At night the river is streaks of light;
 Dam lights,
 And the moon.
 At mid-afternoon, the million-lighted dancing things
 On the water.

The sun---

The waves---

And a sail.

Two people, like white stumps on a white bluff
 Giving foot to an ancient trail,

The caves---

And a falling stream.

Let me die with the river.

From the high, white cliffs, let me fall;
 Through the wind, the water, and the mud

Let me fall---

And breathe the river---

Till it fills my lungs and every pore.

Let me be Natchez, and New Orleans, The Harbor,

And the Gulf.

Let me swing out from the great gray serpent's mouth;
 And taste the mud of the delta.

But let me be the river.

And let me die the river.

Summer

And its days are passing
While in my mind time stands still
And emotions leap on in the youth of
Seventeen years.

Here for a while am I
Trapped in a summer of dreams and
Endless days that end,
Stretching my youth through minutes and molecules
Aging me in the black night of my room

where my window frames a night of
cheeper's cries and summer grass.
Alone in a silent field of summer am I
down in the dark on the damp earth
seeking the quietness of the wild.

O Bless me, summer god,
You of crumbling Roman walls and lily pads;
Release me from the apathy of summer days
Yet when fall has come, and winter
When people slip on the ice
and their words in their emptiness
fall to the ground,
When this has become life for me,
Let me think of summer grass
In a meadow at night
Where the fireflies confuse themselves with the stars.

HILLS

Green hills,
 Soft,
 Flowing hills;
 Hills,
 Curving
 With the quiet breath
 Of a sleeping baby;
 Hills,
 Covered with
 Toe-tickling grass
 And nose-tickling flowers;
 Hills,
 Home of gentle sunshine
 And gentler breezes,
 I love you.
 I love to lay
 In your hair,
 As the wind blows
 Your wispy green tendrils
 Around me.
 I love to
 Roll down
 Your slopes;
 Flaying my arms about me
 And sitting up startled
 At the bottom,
 Grass stained
 Touseled,
 And utterly happy.
 Then I gaze upwards
 At the clouds,
 The hills of the sky
 The fluffy hills
 Of cotton candy,
 And I roll down
 Their sides...
 Home

The rain came and washed away
the anger, the sorrow, the guilt,
And all that was left were a bright, beautiful boy,
A tall beautiful girl
And a tousel haired child.

The rain came and soaked the parched earth
with new life
but washed away some top soil
So that some people
who were sadly ignorant
Thought that the rain was bad.

The rain came and after it
new green grass
And the three of them
the boy, the girl, and the child
Danced on the new grass
And waited eagerly for spring.

THE LOTUS EATERS

We all live in a private world
Singing down the hours of cushioned time,
Surrounded by white trees and sad-colored
Lakes of ether; surrounded by thought.

See the Blessing Hand, the Buddha's hand.
It is relaxed, in perfect harmony,
With Fingers soft as Fruit, thin as Willows.
We reach for it across the pearly mist
And someday we will touch it.

Gently blows the wind,
We fall onto the grass as if drugged,
Half-drugged and muddlehead.

we move
touching the lives of others
for brief moments
but like the flame of a candle
snuffed
in an otherwise black room
whose image remains in the eyes
memories
of contacts
brief though they may be
remain
and perhaps grow more beautiful

Of those we live with and of ourselves . . .

IN THE NAME OF LOVE

"En nombre de amor"

Mother of our merriment

Seamstress of our souls-

I weep, children,

for those who run too fast to taste the rain and eucalyptus in the air,

for those who only live in terms of calendars and clocks, children,

and for those who fly too high to speak with God---

I weep, children,

for all the sunsets which have gone unseen,

for all the falling stars on which no wishes have been made, children,

for all the tiny footprints in the grass which have been mown away,

for all the rusty jungle-gyms, and unbuilt sandcastles, and unsniffed

yellow Dahlias, children

and for all the silent merry-go-rounds---

I weep, children,

for all the thousand little deaths that we must die

but we are young and we are here, children,

(we are young and we are here)

"En nombre de amor"

THE FLYING THING

Blood relationships had become confused and insignificant to the old man. He wasn't sure if the woman was his great-niece or granddaughter. She called him grandpa, but he didn't think so. She was holding a boy by the arm. "Didn't you get the letter?" she was asking. "It will be good for you both. He'll be company."

"It's all right," the old man said.

She looked at him, then bent to hug the boy. He turned rigid as a stake. "Oh, Eddie," she said, then drove off.

"Eddie," the old man said. It was familiar, he realized with remote pleasure that it was, or had once been, his own name.

"I'm a problem, I'm bad, I scream."

"Scream, how loud is it?" The boy opened his mouth, the veins springing out. "It's all right but listen to this." It was a better scream, just all around.

"You're older than I am, a lot," the boy said defensively.

"How old are you?"

"Nine," the boy said. "How old are you?"

He stood for a while. "Ninty-one."

"Who are you to me?" the old man asked.

"Somebody." But the old man was not to be fooled.

"You ever been anything besides yourself?"

"I was a bug once. My mother yelled and squashed me flat."

"Try to be a flying thing."

"An eagle."

"Might be right for you. Me, I'm a mallard drake, just taking off, climbing at a slant."

"How about hunters? Guns?"

"There's got to be a risk, you see. I hear them and take off, climbing. But, just when they're ready, why, zoom, I'm ahead of them, and they always miss.

"You're something to me, all right. Come, want to show you something." He took the boy out to a furrowed field. The old man, using a blunt finger, brought forth a sprouting seed. "Eighty years of doing this and I still don't know what a seed is. But I know what I am to it."

"What? What are you to it?"

"Bring the hoe."

"I'm not going to work while I'm here," the boy said.

"Of course you're not!"

"What are you to the seed?" the boy insisted.

"Bring the hoe," the old man said.

They chopped weeds from the rows all the quiet afternoon. "I think I know, you're a seed guarder." As dusk approached the old man shouldered his hoe.

The milk rang sharply against the bottom of the pail and then went deep and rich as the level mounted. "This is work," the old man said over his shoulder. They took the pails of milk to the pig troughs. "I have cows to keep the barn alive. Don't want to pass on a dead barn. Things know when their wanted and used. Houses, especially. I'll tell you what. Let's have a feast tonight."

Later they went out and sat on the stoop in the warm night. "What's the best time for flying?"

"Just before you sleep."

In his room the old man undressed slowly and blew out his lamp, and used the last of his strength to pull the covers over him. He had barely settled on the lonely pond when he heard the stealthy steps. He ran on the water and rose. He felt the pellets puncture him. He would have liked his legacy to be properly signed and sealed. Now he saw the vanity of title and deed, and was content. Man had not inherited the earth. The earth has inherited certain men. He fell into a plowed field, as he had always known he would.

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well, i thought i was pretty great
last night, walking towards my dorm
i saw a star die just for me
it shot across the heaven
brighter than another light
and brighter than a shooting star
i saw another summer
my spirits soared:

 i talked of stars
 and then went out
 and watched them die for me

well
that was last night
before i slept someone came to me in tears and asked for help
what could i give to him in need?
not much, although a star had died

after breakfast
in the morning
once again a person came
and cried to me as one before
a year or two ago
again i felt a little pain
and wished to cry or help or die

i am so small

i am so weak

call out to me all ye who suffer, if you will

scream to me ye drowning men

tear your hearts and bleed into my hands

and throw you souls unto my feet

because i am wonderful

because i am strong

because i thought i could help you

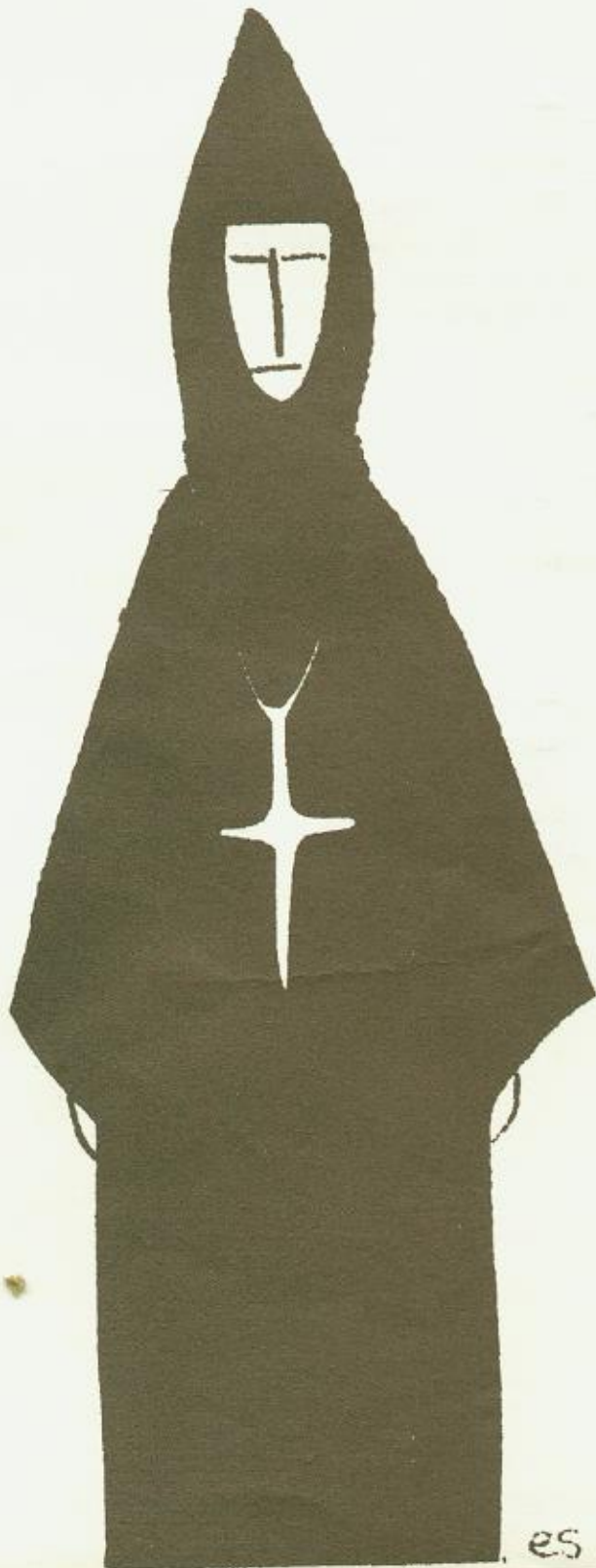
once,

before you asked me to, i thought that i could help

cry to me

cry to me

i'm sorry that i can't



es

MOTHER'S GOOD BUTTERSCOTCHY PIZZA

oh, homeward bound once more, again, again
to mother's good butterscotchy pizza.
quack, quack, quack cried the foxie-o in pain
and the broccoli hail falls, falls again,
and the broccoli hail falls, falls again,

cauliflowers from the land of okra,
we sacrifice thee to the god unit.
with deep purple grackle tapioca,
and soda cracker hooka tooka,
and soda cracker hooka tooka.

hayley's ham on doughnuts rolling uphill,
make for axolotts in my conch and swords.
cutting of bouncing frog pancrease with skill,
and of 98031 dirt, phil,
and of 98031 dirt, phil.

chorus: big brother is watching you,
emanuel goldstein with oligarchical blue,
he will turn to a fibrovascular bundle too,
and eat lots of toothpaste stew,
with his free shoe horn i knew.

I wonder if one might wander in the dark;
In aimless action, abrupt patternless ways
To express the blindness that is always the mark
Of former blindness haunting all our days.
To cast off the smiling concrete bonds of form
And rigid reason when by it one is led
To see beneath the smiling face of the norm
God's ever-smiling face---the death's head.
Perhaps by plunging into manic pools
One sees reflected light and what one is
And by drowning and closing one's eyes to the blinding black
One sinks in one's depth of secret darkness and dies.

Ah, but far better he who with open eyes
Lives and sees the blackness and defies.

Of what we must say and what we must do . . .

On a bright spring morning,
In someone's war,
A useless skirmish not limited for the dead,
An average kid,
A mediocre no one who
Still writes letters to some
Shy, laughing girl in Akron,
Strains to hear the fading notes of
Mother, Home and God,
And discovers death in the pit of his stomach.

BLACK MAN

Mommy, why is that man crying so?
Did someone hurt him? I'm sure I don't know.
He's black, mommy--not like us,
Is that why everyone's making a fuss?

God made him, too--didn't he, mother?
To live on this earth, just as a brother.
Then why do others treat him so bad?
Because he's a black man, they make him sad?

Someday soon, I hope there'll be
Peace for the black man, just like me.
He's not so different--he cries, too.
I feel sad, mommy--don't you?

A CRIME AGAINST SOCIETY

I have committed a crime against society, mankind, and the world. I am a wicked, evil person and I should hate myself but I don't; and this makes it worse—very much worse in the eyes of society. My crime is not a crime, but a miraculous gift and I am thankful for it.

I was and am—I am still in the process of committing it; for I still feel the love. I loved. That is my crime. Out of this love a child was born. And it was beautiful—this child; the creation of such passion, such adoration. I have sinned because I have done this.

These things flashed through my mind as I braced myself to the wrath of my family and their friends in their suburban living room. I tried to explain, to recreate the feeling, the emotion I felt.

"You ask about my lover and I shall tell you. He is tall and strong. His touch is magic and he loves me and our child. And he is proud; in such humiliation he is proud. But he is a worse sinner than I—much worse. When he was born his crime was obvious and he had to carry the brand through his life. His parents were black. His child and my child, the product of our love, will carry the sin my lover committed at birth. I am passive. I care not. Our child is better off than my lover for he has the purity of white blood; the purity of a white girl who has sinned.

"This is my crime. Unforgiveable—yes; understandable—yes; shameful—yes. But I am not, for I am proud. Like my lover I am proud of my love, of my child, of myself. I am not the hypocrite my brother is. I do what I feel. I express the emotion my heart feels.

"You say that I have committed an impure act. Yet, all I have done is beauty and wonder. You are the evil ones. Not Mark, nor I, nor the boy child. We are the innocent. We are the pure. We are the moral, for we do not hide our passions from each other or the world. He is black and I am white—yes, but our child is neither. He is free. He contains the good of both. It is you that have sinned. I accuse you—all of you, with your morality and your condemnation of us. You would destroy the bond of love which protects this child who sucks at my breast, who thrills at his father's touch. You would destroy this for the innocent. You are the gossips and the bigots. You are the ones who hate—not Mark, not I. We love; yet we are the outcasts in this noble group.

"This is my neighborhood and I was happy here in the years of my childhood. But I grew up and saw what was around me and cursed its evilness. When I was twelve, a Jewish family tried to move next door to you, Mrs. Luke; do you remember? The neighborhood insisted they were un-

desirable. When I was fifteen your daughter came to me in tears because her parents had forbidden her to see a friend, Mrs. Korot—her friend was a Polynesian. When I was eighteen a Negro family attempted to live in our community. They were so miserably treated that they left. You are Christians! You practise the teachings of Jesus! You want your children to hate. That is why you raise them. They are the product of your love, but you raise them to continue your hate.

"Now my mother; ban me, punish me, refuse to see me ever again! This is the way to forgive, is it not?"

"Mrs. Luke, go out and tell the community of my crime. You are excellent at it for you have had much practise, have you not?"

I stopped speaking. I could feel myself becoming too emotional. The room was silent; the child asleep. Mark was by my side. He is strong, I thought. Let the strength in him be transported to me through his love and touch. He smiled. I was no longer afraid of what would come next. He was with me.

"I am through. Do as you will. You can hurt me but you cannot kill me or destroy my love for Mark."

There was a moment's silence. My mother spoke stiffly, "Let me see your child."

Mrs. Luke moved uncomfortably. "Is she your wife?"

"She is the sun and the moon, the earth and the sky. She is everything beautiful, wonderful and worthwhile. She is the gift of life who is meant to belong to me," Mark replied.

"Is she your wife?" asked Mr. Luke impatiently.

"God gave her to me and told me she was mine," he replied.

"In other words the child was born in sin," Mr. Luke suggested.

"No, our child was born in love," Mark said.

My mother's eye fell upon my no longer virgin body; I felt her contempt for me; it hurt me. My father had remained silent but now he came forward and stood with as as Mark attempted to explain.

"We feel that God looks into the hearts of people in love and makes them one. He has united us in such a way."

The Lukes would not listen to the words of love. Their ears were too tuned to the note of hate.

I looked once more at Mark and saw myself—in him—we were as one. I looked at my parents and saw them as one also. My eyes rested on the Lukes and I knew that they were separate, each alone; and I thought that it was impossible to be united in hate—it must be in love.

Mrs. Korot gazed far off in the distance. I knew somehow, that her dreams were not of her departed husband but of a lover perhaps like mine; she said nothing but began to play with the child.

How can a child slip from a trapeze and fly on?

Growing is running...

face up

arms pulling—

a leaving... a flight.

a discovery.

Growing is dying... dying hard.

A child can dream a pocket for his soul.

Life is seldom lived in pockets.

It's so lonely for a kid without a God.

But then, a young girl's breasts fill themselves.

And the wonder of it all . . .