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The Sound of Mimeographs

Depression

~~In some~~

Sometimes as I look back ~~on them~~ I tend to equate the Thirties ~~with~~ with the Depression, and the Depression, ^{with the return of} with the return of Booz. ^{In those days} There were some fearsome whiskey taste birds ^{new} which one could titillate ^{the remnants of} one tattered taste birds called Crab Orchard, Wolf Creek and Long Harbor ^{for} at a buck fifty a quart. One could ^{also} get a big brown bottle of beer (looking like the dung of a nursing squaw) for fifteen cents, and ~~one~~ ^{still recalls} one sitting around a tavern ^{table under a 25-watt bulb} ~~with~~ ^{whole families} ~~listening~~ ^{drinking} ~~to the~~ ^{the} 7DR on the radio or per chance to Joe Fainz ^{or} ~~shutting~~ ^{draged} out to induce sleep in another ^{opponent}.

abroad in the land to

still recalls

hypnotic

Everybody ^{seemed to} work on WPA and ^{all} their children ^{dwelt} in CCC camps busily planting pine trees too close together ^{then some} ~~of~~ which ^{now} get time - and - a - half for thinning out. It was a time of perpetual Golden Gloves ^{for} regional finals, during which our local hero, a muscle-bound non miner, used ^{monotonously} ~~regularly~~ to get knocked on his can in the first round; a time when second-hand Model A's ran ^{around} ~~on~~ rag tires, a pint of gasoline, and ~~lost~~ ^{resolutely} ~~year's~~ ^{expired} license plates.

expired

+

I tend also to equate the Depression with a kind of personal locking and unlocking; the time for ~~locking up~~ ^{showing} some old ~~and~~ ^{old} ~~wisdoms~~ ^{wisdoms} I ~~had~~ ^{had} ~~about~~ ^{had} ~~success~~ ^{had}; a time for ^{struggling} dabbling with the notion -- as a current popular song had it -- that the fundamental things apply as time goes by...

~~Occasionally~~ ^{Only} I remember a young lawyer squatting over the dime store in a little iron-mining town in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, wondering ^{badly} what had happened to ^{trying} the ^{young} ^{men} ^{of} ^{the} ^{twenties}, wanting to ^{wanting} ^{to} ^{write} ^{about} ^{things} ^{like} ^{they} ^{really} ^{were}, and ^{obviously} ^{not} ^{being} ^{able} ^{to} ^{write} ^{about} ^{it}, finally ^{writing} ^{about} ^{it}. True, he couldn't spell or punctuate, but still he yearned to write about it.

Almost instinctively he didn't send his things to the Post or to Collier's; ^{he knew it was no use;} instead he sent them to the new burgeoning crop of "little magazines" he ^{read} ^{about} in Edward J. O'Brien's annual collection of ^{the} ^{best} ^{stories};

obscure magazines like Winterland and Paganry Contempo and Literary America; rather better known ones like Contempo, Story and Prairie Schooner --

and dozens ^{upon} ^{dozens} ^{and} ^{scores} ^{of} ^{other}. There was a whimsical ^{old} ^{guy} ⁱⁿ ^{New} ^{York} called Lawrence C. Woodman ^{who} ^{lunched} ^a ^{half} ^a ^{dozen} ^{new} ^{little} ^{magazines} ^{out} ^{of} ^a ^{broom} ^{closet}, American Scene being one of them; and a young poet, Jose Garcia Villa (only recently "rediscovered") who ^{launched} ^{almost} ^{as} ^{many}, and ^{moreover} ^{accepted} ^{took} ^{everything} ^{the} ^{young} ^{lawyer} ^{wrote}.

In fact during the Depression there seemed ^{to} ^{be} a million "little magazines"; the poorer we got the more little mags were ^{got} ^{born}. The writers sole pay was the privilege of ^{of} ^{subscribing}; that and the hope that the magazine might ^{would} ^{survive} ^{to} ^{carry} ^{one} ^{story}, of which a few even ^{actually} ^{did}. By and by the young lawyer's office grew ^{to} ^{be} ^{swash} ^{with} ^{little} ^{magazines}; more even than law books, and still he wrote and wrote -- ^{trying}

And when one felt two more spring up in its place; the sound of mimeographs ringing in the land.

And still young

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to tell ^{about} things the way they were -- and ~~the~~ the little magazines
took and took, until finally he achieved the dubious
immortality of ^{seeing a story of his} having ~~one of his stories in Story~~
sandwiches between Stegner and Sarayan. ^{type all,} ~~he was~~ ^{he was}
learning to spell and punctuate a little.

Time passed, and then it happened. FDR
went and spoiled everything. Almost single-handedly
he brought back Prosperity. Whereupon ^{all} the little
magazines ^{promptly} faded and died; they could stand almost
anything but that. The brayers of platitudes ~~came~~
out of hiding ^{again} the Post and Collins were back in the
saddle -- and the scribbling young lawyer suddenly
lost ^{with} his audience. To try to make people listen he
was forced to write a book; it impregnated ^{an unwary} publisher
on the twenty-third try, ^{and} still ^{no one really listened,}
for the little magazines ^{where people spoke his language, also} were dead and gone.

gradually
^ crept

* * * The contemplation of their ^{to} ^{the}
application and ^{novels or}

Eighty Years Later

Eight books and thirty years later the
aging ex-lawyer wonders what young writers do these
days to get listened to. ^{Do} ^{can} they still write the way it is? ^{really?}
And if so ^{where} ^{do} they send their stuff? ^{can} The little magazines
exist now only in doctorates; ^{most} ^{campus} magazines ^{take}
Miscellany are devoted largely to ^{memorializing of} ^{the}
dead; national magazines that ^{carry} ^{on} ^{occasional} ^{stories} can be
counted on the fingers of one ^{hand}; and, worse yet
the writers that ^{they} ^{carry} ^{can} be counted on one ^{hand}.
Where do young writers get to ^{spare} ^{it} these days? Who
out ^{there} ^{is} listening to them? ^{Maybe} ^{they} ^{don't} ^{make} ^{it}. ^{Maybe}
nobody listens to them. ^{Maybe} ^{people} ^{are} ^{tired} ^{of}
seeing ^{things} ^{the} ^{way} ^{they} ^{really} ^{are}. ^{Maybe} ^{we} ^{need} ^a ^{new}
Depression.

and I see again

In some moods I equate the Depression Thirties with the

and Crab Orchard all on WPA,

time when one could buy a big brown bottle

Depression and the Depression with the return of Booz, a something called Wolf Creek for a buck a quart, a quart of beer (looking like the dug of a morning squaw) for fifteen cents, with five people sitting around it all evening until closing time, listening on the radio to FDR or Joe Louis shuffling out to make a dozen payment on another annuity, a border of youngster planting pine trees too close together (now we're paying guys to weed them out), of the Golden Shovel regional funds, of gas stations that sold it by the quart, when our local favorite, a guy called Boxcar, got knocked on his car, of Model A's running on rag tires and last year's plates...

I equate the Depression with a locking and unlocking: a locking up of some crazy, notional about Success, of the unlocking of the nation, as a current song had it -- that the fundamental things apply in time goes by. I remember a young lawyer over the dime store in a little mining town in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan who yearned to write; he couldn't spell or punctuate but still he yearned to write. Instead of sending his things to the Post or Collier he sent them to the "little magazines." During the Depression there was a million "little magazines," the poorer we got the more little magazines we got, sprang up.

Let's see, there was Antarland and Continuity and Literary America; there was Prairie Schooner and American Scene and Broom; there was a guy called Lawrence C. Woodman who lunched a half-dozen of his coveys out of a broom closet; called Jose Garcia Villa, who accepted everything that sent him. One's pay was (hopefully) that the magazine would survive to carry one's story. Some occasionally did.

still trying to tell ^{about} things the way they really were --

got ^{was} ^{awake} with ^{office}

By and by the young lawyer had more little magazines, ^{he had more of than} ^{And} ^{law books.} He wrote and wrote and the little magazines took and took and took ^{on and occasionally} he saw himself in print.

Time passed

By and by he was bound to spell and punctuate a little. Then ^{it happened} ^{who could stand anything but that, and then} ^{single-shoulder} ^{he brought} ^{books} ^{Prosperity} and the little magazines faded and died; the Post and Collins men back in the saddle again, and the young young lawyer had ^{lost his} ^{to make people listen} ^{audience.} He was forced to write a book. The book after 23 tries the book was published, but ^{still} ^{rather} ^{lost} ^{and} ^{lost}.

Thirty Years Later

Ernest looks back the aging lawyer wonders what ^{the} young aspiring writers do to get listened to. Little magazines ^{now} exist only in doctorate; places to print ^{his} ^{stories} ^{is} ^{commonly} he counted on the ^{margin} of one hand; and ^{the} ^{writers} ^{they} ^{publish} ^{can} also be counted on the ^{margin} of one hand. How do the young writers make it these days? Who listens to them? Maybe they do. ^{Maybe} ^{nobody} ^{listens} ^{to} ^{them.} ^{Maybe} ^{we} ^{need} ^a ^{new} ^{Beethoven.}

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2 final
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where THE SOUND OF MIMEOGRAPHS?

As I look back I tend to equate the Thirties with

the Depression and the Depression with the return of

Booze. In those days there were some fearsome new

whiskies in the land to titillate the remnants

of one's tattered taste buds: brave new whiskies gaily

called Crab Orchard, Wolf Creek and Snug Harbor

buck fifty a quart. One could get a big

brown bottle of beer (looking like the

squaw) for fifteen cents, and one still recalls

whole families sitting around a table under a

25-watt bulb nuzzling away at one until closing time,

listening to the hypnotic FDR or perchance

to Joe Louis shuffling out to induce sleep in another

crazed opponent.

*Old, Old, I lost, I grieved....*

*omit for some reason*

*Upon us*

*was launched*

*Distilled and bottled in the land, the sound, the sound, the sound*

*calculated dissolve tattered*

*ardent distillates*

*gaily called*

*all you could encompass for a*

*swollen*

*fruddled*

*whole*

*entaverned*

*entaverned crouched*

*swollen*

*communal*

*his bloom*

*but of these glass udders*

*on the radio*

*none of*

Everybody seemed <sup>to be working</sup> to ~~work~~ on WPA and ~~all~~ their <sup>progyny</sup> ~~children~~ <sup>lived</sup> ~~dwell~~ in CCC camps busily planting pine <sup>seedlings</sup> ~~trees~~ too close together--which their sons now get time-and-a-half for thinning out. It ~~was also~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~a~~ <sup>seemed</sup> time of Landon buttons and perpetual Golden Gloves regional finals, <sup>-- tickets twenty-five cents --</sup> during which our <sup>flailing</sup> local hero, a muscle-bound iron miner, used monotonously to get knocked on his can in the first round; a time when second-hand Model A's ran around miraculously on rag tires <sup>and thimbles</sup> ~~a~~ <sup>last year's</sup> ~~pint~~ of gasolene, and ~~resolutely expired~~ license plates.

I tend also to equate the Depression with a kind of  
personal locking and unlocking; the time for <sup>abandoning</sup> shelving  
<sup>had</sup> some old whimses I nourished about Success; a time for  
seriously dabbling with the notion--as a current popular  
song had it--that the fundamental things apply ~~as~~ as time  
goes by... Dimly I <sup>recall</sup> can remember a <sup>puzzled</sup> young lawyer squatting  
over the dime store in a little iron-mining town in the  
Upper Peninsula of Michigan, wondering what had happened  
<sup>wondrous and</sup> to the dizzy Twenties, wanting ~~to~~ <sup>all</sup> to tell about it,  
<sup>badly</sup> wanting to write about things the way they <sup>he thought</sup> really were,  
~~and actually finally trying to write about it.~~ True, he  
couldn't spell or punctuate, but still he yearned to <sup>describe</sup> ~~write~~ <sup>tell</sup>  
~~about~~ <sup>this new ferment.</sup>

↑ the sudden  
↑ (back) new authenticity



Almost instinctively he didn't send his things to the  
Post or to Collier's; he <sup>sensed</sup> knew it was no use; instead he sent them  
to the new burgeoning crop of "little magazines" he <sup>learned</sup> read about  
in the back of Edward J. O'Brien's annual collections of  
Best stories: obscure magazines <sup>called</sup> like Hinterland and Clay and  
Pogany and Literary America; rather better known ones  
like Contempo, Story and Prairie Schooner—and dozens  
upon scores of others <sup>which he no longer recalls.</sup> There was a whimsical old guy in  
New York called Lawrence C. Woodman who <sup>painted</sup> himself launched  
a half a dozen new little magazines <sup>from</sup> out of a broom closet,  
American Scene being one of them; and a young poet, Jose  
Garcia Villa (only recently "rediscovered," <sup>we are charmed to note,</sup> and still <sup>miraculously</sup> young)  
who <sup>started</sup> launched almost as many, and moreover took everything  
<sup>can</sup> the young lawyer wrote.

In fact during the Depression there seemed to be  
a million "little magazines;" <sup>fecundity was rampant and they spread like spores;</sup> the poorer we got the  
more little mags were born. The writer's sole pay was  
the privilege of subscribing, of course; that and the <sup>nourishing</sup>  
wistful hope that <sup>it</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>thing</sup> magazine might survive to carry his  
story, of which a few even did. When one ~~magazine~~ fell  
two ~~more~~ <sup>and</sup> sprang up in its place, the sound of mimeographs  
rang in the land. By and by the young lawyer's office <sup>grew so far</sup>  
~~was~~ <sup>grew</sup> awash with these "little magazines," <sup>so that they outnumbered</sup> he possessed <sup>rather</sup>  
<sup>of them</sup> ~~more~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~than~~ law books, and still he wrote and wrote--  
still trying to tell about things the way they were--and  
the little magazines took and took, until finally he  
achieved the dubious immortality of seeing a story of  
his in Story, <sup>wedged</sup> sandwiched of all things between <sup>Farrell</sup> Stegner  
and A Saroyan. <sup>Progress was being made, you see; our hero</sup> ~~You see;~~ he was learning to spell and  
punctuate a little; <sup>the benign</sup> O'Brien even <sup>him with</sup> sprayed a few stars, ~~on him~~.

Time passed, and then it happened. FDR ~~went~~ and  
<sup>ruined</sup> spoiled everything. <sup>that old spoil sport</sup> Almost single-handedly he brought

back Prosperity. Whereupon all the little magazines  
<sup>went out and fetched</sup> promptly faded and died, they could stand almost anything

but that. The brayers of platitudes gradually crept

out of hiding, <sup>trade</sup> ~~again~~, the Post and Collier's were back

in the saddle—and the scribbling young lawyers <sup>had</sup> suddenly

lost ~~both~~ <sup>his</sup> his outlet and audience. ~~To try to make~~ <sup>him</sup> ~~get~~ Trying to make  
people listen he was forced to write a book; it impregnated

an unwary publisher on the twenty-third try, but still no

one really listened, for the little magazines, where

people <sup>had seemed to speak</sup> spoke his language, alas were <sup>gone with the wind</sup> dead and gone.

\* \* \*

Eight books and thirty years later the aging ex-lawyer

*sometimes*

wonders what young writers do these days to get listened

*not excitedly or indignantly; just wanders in all.*  
to. Do they still dare write the way it really is?

And if so where can they send their stuff? The little

magazines exist now only in doctorates; most campus

*practicals* magazines are devoted largely to *unpublished* *contemplating* ~~the contemplation of~~

their navels ~~or to the explication and~~ *and* memorializing ~~of~~

the dead; national magazines that *even* carry an occasional

story can be counted on the fingers of one hand; and, worse

yet, the writers ~~that~~ *court* ~~they seem to~~ *in terms of* carry can be counted

~~that~~ on one finger. How do young writers get to make it these

days? Who out there is listening to them? Maybe, dark

thought, they don't *ever* make it. Maybe nobody listens to

them. Maybe people are tired of *facing* ~~seeing~~ things the way

*Could it be that what is* *five-star?* they really are. ~~Maybe~~ we need a brand new Depression.

Robert Traver

March 13, 1964

## WHERE THE SOUND OF MIMEOGRAPHS?

As I look back I tend for some reason to equate the Thirties with the Depression and the Depression with the return of Booze. In those days there was launched upon us some fearsome new whiskies calculated to dissolve the tattered remnants of one's taste buds: ardent <sup>young</sup> ~~new~~ distillates gaily called Crab Orchard, Wolf Creek and Snug Harbor, all you could encompass for a buck fifty a quart. One could get a big brown bottle of beer (looking like the dug of a nursing squaw) for fifteen cents, and one still recalls whole entwined families <sup>crouched</sup> crowded around a table under a 25-watt bulb nuzzling away at one of these communal glass udders until closing time, listening on the radio to the hypnotic voice of FDR or ~~perchance~~ to Joe Louis shuffling out to induce sleep in another crazed opponent. O lost, O grieved....

Everybody seemed to be working on WPA and <sup>live</sup> ~~their~~ progeny <sup>were</sup> lived in CCC camps busily planting pine trees too close together--which their sons now get time-and-a-half for thinning out. It was a time of Landon buttons and perpetual Golden Gloves regional finals--tickets twenty-five cents--during which our local hero, a flailing muscle-bound iron miner, used monotonously to get knocked on his can in the first round; a time when second-hand Model A's ran around miraculously on rag tires and thimbles of gasolene and last year's license plates.

I tend also to equate the Depression with a kind of personal locking and unlocking; the time for abandoning some old whimsies I had nourished about Success; a time for dabbling seriously with the notion--as a current popular song had it--that the fundamental things apply as time goes by...

Dimly I recall a puzzled young lawyer squatting over the dime store in a little iron-mining town in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan wondering what had happened to the wondrous and dizzy Twenties, fearful and yet stirred by this sudden bleak new austerity, wanting to tell all about it, wanting badly to write about things the way he thought they were. True, he couldn't spell or punctuate, but still he yearned to describe this <sup>exciting</sup> new ferment. <sup>on paper capture a little of</sup>

Almost instinctively he didn't send his things to the Post or to Collier's; he sensed it was no use; instead he sent them to the new burgeoning crop of "little" magazines he learned about in the back of Edward J. O'Brien's annual collections of Best stories: obscure magazines called Hinterland and Clay and Pagany and Literary America; rather better known ones like Contempo, Story and Prairie Schooner--and dozens upon scores of others which he no longer recalls. There was a whimsical old guy in New York called Lawrence C. Woodman who painted with one hand and with the other launched a half a dozen new "little" magazines from out of a broom closet, American Scene being one of them; and a young poet, Jose Garcia Villa (only recently <sup>rediscovered</sup> "rediscovered," we are charmed to note, and still miraculously young) who started almost as many, and moreover took everything our young lawyer wrote.

In fact during the Depression there seemed to be a million "little magazines;" fecundity was rampant; they spread like ~~mushroom~~ spores; the poorer we got the more little mags were born. The writer's sole pay was the privilege of subscribing, of course; <sup>perfect</sup> that and nourishing the wistful hope that the magazine might survive to carry his story--of which a few even did. When one fell two sprang up in its place and the sound of mimeographs rang

→ "R. Traver is a rising young notary from <sup>in</sup> Suptooth, Mich." He was also permitted to nourish

in the land. By and by the young lawyer's office grew so awash with "little" magazines that they far outnumbered his law books. Still he wrote and wrote--still trying to tell about things the way they were--and the little magazines took and took, until finally he achieved the dubious immortality of seeing a story of his in Story wedged of all things between Farrell and Saroyan. Progress was being made, you see; our hero was learning to spell and punctuate a little; the benign O'Brien even sprayed him with a few stars.

Time passed, and then it happened; that old spoil sport FDR ruined everything; almost single-handedly he went out and fetched back Prosperity. Whereupon all the little magazines promptly faded and died--"folded" was the trade name--they could stand almost anything but that. The brayers of platitudes <sup>and the carcat emptor lays crept</sup> gradually ~~erect~~ out of hiding; banks began to unbolt their doors again; the Post and Collier's were back in the saddle--and the scribbling young lawyer had suddenly lost his outlet and his audience. Trying to make people listen he was forced to write a book; it impregnated an unwary publisher on the twenty-third try, but still no one really listened, for the little magazines--where people had seemed to speak his language--~~alas~~ were gone with the wind.

\* \* \*

Eight books and thirty years later the aging ex-lawyer sometimes wonders what young writers do these days to get listened to, <sup>to learn their trade.</sup> Not excitedly or indignantly, just wonders is all. Do they still dare write the way it really is? If so where can they send their stuff? The little magazines exist now only in unpublished doctorates, <sup>they</sup> most campus magazines are devoted largely to ~~contemplating~~ <sup>and in fact do everything to fiction but carry it;</sup> their navels and memorializing the dead, <sup>commercial</sup> national magazines that ~~carry~~ <sup>even</sup> an occasional story can be counted on the fingers of one hand; and, worse yet, the

writers they court can be counted it seems on one finger.  
How do young writers get to make it these days? Who out  
there is listening to them? Maybe, dark thought, they don't  
ever make it. Maybe nobody listens to them. Maybe people  
are tired <sup>fed up on</sup> of facing things the way they really are.

Could it be that what we need is a brand new five-star <sup>alarm</sup>  
Depression?

Robert Traver  
March 13, 1964