

festered in his vitals. A man, after all, can only endure so much.

Then one year, as he began to anticipate Christmas, his dread mounted. He started examining counters and magazines and catalogs himself to see what might be in store for him. He encountered a key chain which had a medallion embossed with "I am an alcoholic—in case of accident get me a martini." He read about zebra wallets, "hand-sewn by skilled tribesmen in Nairobi and guaranteed to last forever." He found a true-to-life picture of poker-playing dogs—"canine cronies as human as your own gang itself." He noticed a JFK face mask—"slip on these famous features and be the hit of the party."

The closer it got to Christmas, the more despondent he became. Finally, word leaked out that his friends were planning a surprise party for him. Each was to put special care into selecting a unique present.

The night before Christmas, Richard Cory went home and started brooding over the packages he would have to open. He pictured himself unwrapping a special little brush for cleaning lint from the navel. After a bit, he got up from his leather chair, stumbled over the six-foot plastic mermaid with raffia hair which he had received the previous Christmas, opened the desk drawer, and took out his authentic replica of U. S. Grant's personal pistol. Then he pulled the trigger and put that bullet through his head. In his place, any of us would have done the same.

—MARGARET BENNETT.

THE CLICHE AS TERMINUS (being a sampling from a hobbyist's collection of endings culled from popular fiction)

He had a lucid interval and took her in his arms. The lips that had lately touched a rose met his.

"Oh, yes, yes!" she interrupted, laughing through her tears. "I will, I will!" She turned up her face. "Oh, Walt, kiss me."

He did.

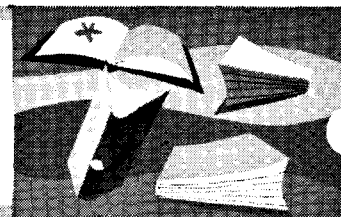
This was not the end.
This was the beginning.

"Yes," she said, and her eyes were enormous, eclipsing her face, diamond-bright, tear-jeweled. "Yes, Tienne! That's all there is. Now." Her lips, moving, made small flames inches from his bearded mouth. "Ah, yes—now. Now. Now! Tienne! Now!"

All he said was "Cathy." But it was a good thing the car was parked.

—F. DESALES MEYERS.

Trade Winds



THERE'S BEEN A CRISIS in California over the Cuban situation. According to my Manhattan Beach informant, the supermarkets have been jammed with women trying to get refunds on hoarded groceries purchased at the height of the scare. This is okay with the stores in most cases, but managers want their trading stamps returned, too. The gals can't oblige, for they have pasted them all in the books already.



In Hermosa Beach an argument is now raging. When nuclear death seems a possibility, should a housewife go on pasting trading stamps in the books?

AND BACK ON THE other side of the nation another serious matter is brought to my attention by the 1962 report of the president of the Save a Cat League, Inc., which numbers among its sponsors such names as Orson Bean, Una Merkel, Jack Carter, and Phil Rizzuto. "As New York City undergoes a face lifting," President Judith Scofield writes, "the situation of the city's cats becomes worse."

She points out that when old buildings are torn down vast numbers of cats are left behind "to starve, freeze, or be crushed to death in the demolition process. Cat workers in one recently razed six-block area estimate that over 400 cats were left homeless in this small space."

The League has a sort of Peace Corps going, and they send out volunteers with food to certain underdeveloped cat districts. But they can't keep up with the problem. They need clerical helpers, transportation, rescue workers, and money. Under-privileged felines are highly susceptible to subversive propaganda in their present condition, and at the rate of 400 every six blocks they may very well bury us. (The organization's address is 245 West 25th Street, New York 1.)

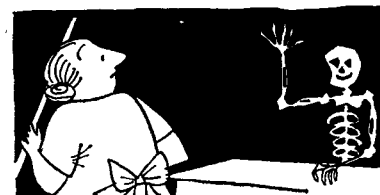
LOYAL READERS: Thank you for your consistent efforts, but please stop sending me the photograph of Greek mogul Onassis looking at the residence of

Buster Keaton with a view to purchasing it. The caption: Aristotle Contemplating the Home of Buster.

HERE'S ANOTHER ONE I have refrained from printing until now. Don't write me any more about the prominent Communist named Rudolph who announced it was raining. When contradicted by his wife, he sternly replied, "Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear."

A NEW WAY of learning is the twelve-inch long-playing "Hear How" instructional record. "You simply turn on your phonograph and relax in the comfort of your home while you listen and learn," goes the spiel. Not only can you pick up conversational French or German but you can also study touch typing and bridge. There is a "Hear How to Be a Better Bowler," which may be hard on the living room furniture. Yankee Manager Ralph Houk narrates "Hear How to Play Better Baseball." You can hear how to skir dive, fish, golf, and train your dog. There's a "Hear How to Achieve Sexual Harmony in Marriage" and "Hear How to Tell Your Children the Facts of Life."

I hope the series doesn't stop there. I'd like to play a "Hear How to Clean Cold Oatmeal from the Saucepan," "Hear How to Post a Letter Without Jiggling the Mailbox Slot," and "Hear How to Let the Telephone Ring Without Answering It." There are probably a lot of other fine instructional record ideas. Got any?

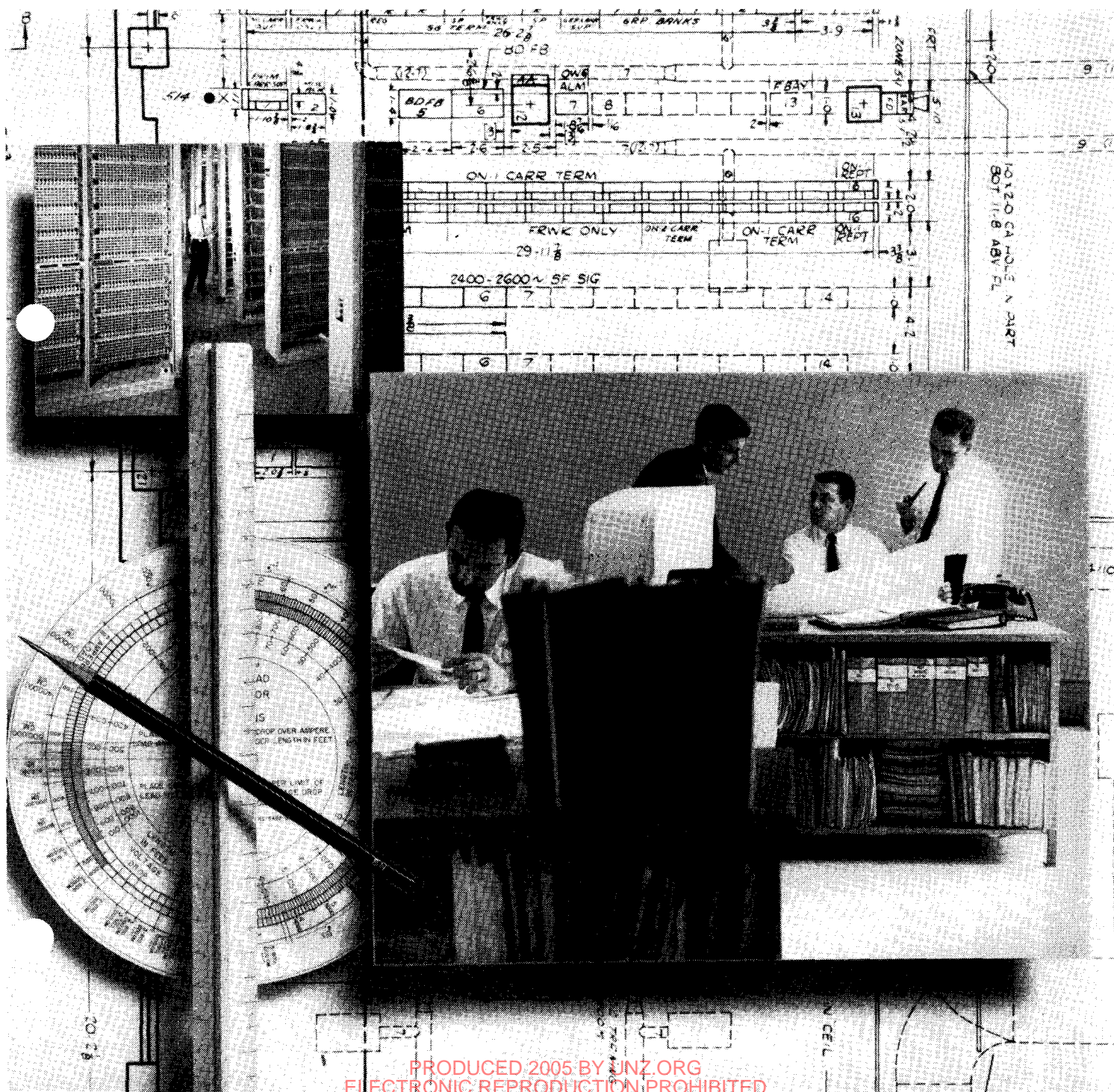


ABOUT A YEAR AGO the Johns Hopkins Press put out a scale model of the human skeleton. It's a foot and a half high, an articulated polyethylene structure that looks and feels like real bone. The supervisor of science education of an Eastern state kept one in his office until about a week before Halloween when he came to work one morning and found a note that said:

"Dear Dr. B: Would it be asking too much to please put the 'Specimen' away which is on the bookshelf. I work at night here and it bothers me. You

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could always bring it back out at daytime. Thank you. The Cleaning Lady."

A NEWLY PUBLISHED Doubleday novel has aroused some reviewers. "Most libraries would not wish to make this book available to the young people who might be interested," declared *Library Journal*. Others made such comments as: "Enough to give many a parent second pause" and "conveys perfectly the temper of our sick age" and "completely amoral" and "leaves a sad, sick feeling in the heart."

Who wrote "Short Pleasures," this first novel that stirred up horrified responses? Harold Robbins? Mailer's younger brother? A real beatnik? No, a sweet thing named Anne Bernays who has three good children and who lives on a quiet professorial street 100 yards from the Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge. She is the daughter of public relations counselor Edward L. Bernays and the grand-niece of Sigmund Freud. Her acquaintances believe she is well adjusted. (But, most of them don't know she's written a book.)

A FEW WEEKS ago I said that "Four Great Battles of World War II," by Andrew Rooney, was a very good book. I then received this note from the author:

"Considering my pleasure over your having mentioned my book at all, try to imagine the happiness that would have been mine had you called it by its right name.

"But that's the way things have gone with 'The Fortunes of War.' It was published September 6 and I spent several sleepless nights worrying over what the Sunday book review sections would have to say about it. I need not have given it a first thought. It has never been mentioned in the Sunday *Times* or the *Tribune* in New York.

"Friends have been what they must have thought was nice to me. They say, 'Your book looks great, Andy.' I appreciate the position of someone who has to make a comment about something they have not read, but I wish they'd realize that I had nothing to do with what the book looks like. It and the jacket were designed by Betty Binns.

"One of the pleasures of writing a book is seeing it on shelves or displayed in bookstores. Doubleday at 52nd Street and Fifth Avenue has 'The Fortunes of War' hidden on the bottom shelf under the art books, between 'The Vanishing Landscape' and 'The Art of Making Paper Flowers.' They have one copy and it has remained unsold. It occurred to me, hopefully, that they were only bringing one at a time from the stockroom as the copy on the floor was sold, but I made an unobtrusive pencil mark



Boo Nam is no longer hungry

Having enough to eat is still a miracle to Boo Nam and his family. All their lives they have faced the "starvation period" whose spectre haunts Korea every year. Spring floods. Summer drought. Meager harvests. So many mouths to feed.

Then the "miracle" happened. Through Save the Children Federation, Boo Nam and his father learned that a family in America wanted to help them. This family's contribution enabled Boo Nam's father to obtain certified seed potatoes—a new crop for Korea. He planted potatoes and then, encouraged by the Federation's counselor, worked with the other villagers to enlarge the reservoir so there would be enough water all year.

When the next "starvation period" arrived, it held no terror for Boo Nam and his family. The new potato crop supplemented their regular diet of rice and brought in additional income.

The miracle of friendship gave this family hope. It filled their hearts with pride. They like that feeling. They like Americans.

There are many children in Korea, Greece, Lebanon, Tanganyika and France who need help. Your contribution can perform a "miracle" like the one in Boo Nam's life.

**Will you be a miracle worker
in the life of a child?**

SCF

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in the copy there and this turns out to be untrue.

"There have been a few bright spots. Part B. Kirch in the Los Angeles Times called it 'one of the finest pieces of writing on war I have ever read.' Naturally, I was happy about this, but someone calls every war book one of the best ever written and Mr. Kirsch happens to be mine, I guess."

Andy had his tongue in his cheek part of the way through that letter. "The Fortunes of War," incidentally, is the December selection of the History Book Club.



SHARPS AND FLATS: For dull reading it's hard to beat college football programs.

►When Edwin Dudley quoted "I love my wife, but oh, Euclid" to his North Haven (Conn.) High School math class, one bright student countered with, "I love my secretary, but oh, Udall!"

►Debbie Hamilton writes cynically from Stephens College: "When 3,000 college students hold a convention at Port Lauderdale it's called a riot. When 5,000 adults stage a riot in Atlantic City it's called a convention."

►Elizabeth Jordain's five-year-old returned from Sunday school the other day and announced, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no eagle."

►The first edition of November 13's *New York Times* had a story from Moscow about the virgin agricultural areas of Kazakhstan and how they had failed once more to fulfill the grain delivery plan. The headline said: Soviet Virgin Lands Short of Goal Again. (They changed it in later editions.)

►Speaking of typos, a recent holiday ad for Jacobson's Children's Shops in the Royal Oak, Michigan, paper exhorted parents to bring their youngsters for a "visit with Satan and his helpers."

—JEROME BEATTY, JR.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S
KINGSLEY DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 1497)

BENEDICTUS:
THE FOURTH OF JUNE

A new assistant-master lopes past, measuring his strides on the paving stones so as not to kill too many fairies, slightly reassured by the salutes of his pupils-to-be. If he knows just how they are sizing him up, he'll be more than ever careful not to kill the fairies. He'll need them.

Opening Night at Philharmonic Hall. A gala, glittering evening...yet as meaningful an event as the musical world has known. We recorded it all...from the hush that fell over the audience when Mr. Bernstein raised his baton...to the wild applause at the end of the concert. This historic "First Performance" is available in monoaural or stereo, in a distinguished gift package containing two records and a forty-page illustrated booklet.



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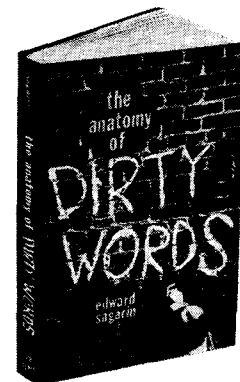
Ali R. Amir-Moëz

This book, the English and Persian translation of a play, originally written in Sanskrit two thousand years ago, quite attractively prepared, \$5.75 postage included, is now available at:

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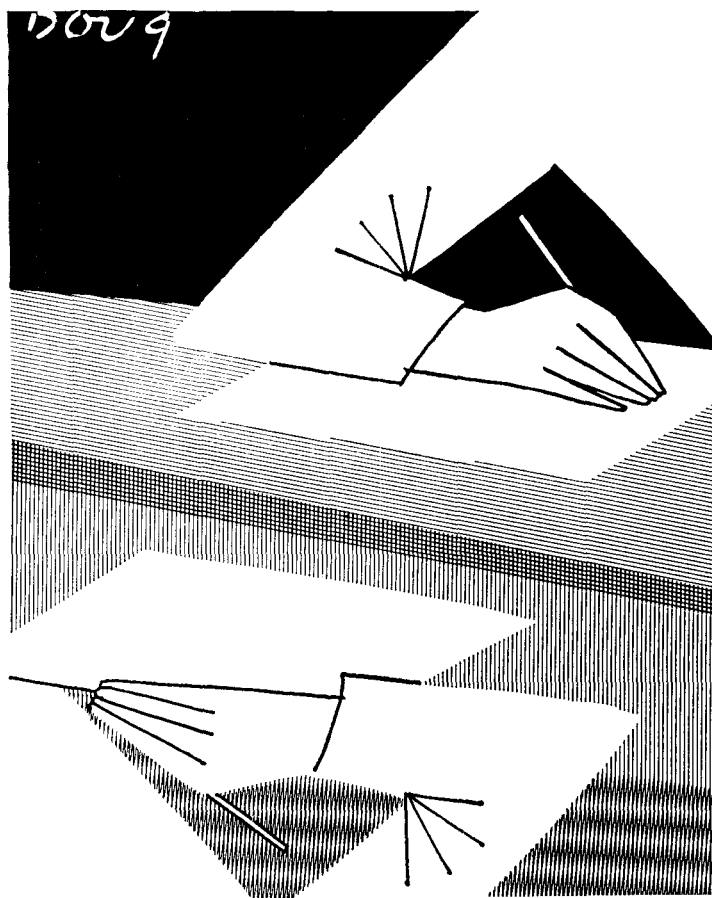
"The Anatomy of Dirty Words" by Edward Sagarin "... examines at length our peculiar uses, abuses, and misuses of just about all the words which are known to almost everyone but which may not be printed in newspapers or magazines..."—*Kansas City Star*

"... recommended reading for James Jones, Henry Miller and dozens of lesser lights who, with the decline of censorship, have gone all out for what are called "four letter words."—*Newsday*

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ON WRITING AND BAD WRITING



—Doug Anderson.

By JOHN CIARDI

EVERY writer sooner or later is tempted into some sort of generalization about his art, craft, business, or whatever he chooses to call the act that takes place between him and his supply of blank paper. Those writers who have been tempted into trying to teach writing classes are not so much tempted as forced.

"How do I learn to write?" says the novice. No question could be more useless. It is almost certain (perhaps not quite) that anyone who insists upon asking it that way will never find the answer. It is a naïve question. It is a stupid one. Yet is uncomfortably central to the man who has let himself be talked into making his living by hoping that he can help another human being to become a writer.

Perhaps it is good for honest men to be badgered by the innocent, ignorant, and yet primary question. If confusion is bound to follow, praise all that sends honest men honestly to their confusions. Some things—perhaps all matters of ultimate meaning—have to live outside of ironclad conviction. Writing, as I understand it, is a mortal seeking. I no longer try to teach it, but certainly any student who ever brought full-blown certainties into my classroom was invited to leave.

I think it was Bernard DeVoto who pointed out that the best reason for putting anything down on paper is that one may then change it. His re-

mark not only suggests one sound theory of writing but identifies the writing process as a groping one. There is no end to that groping process, but in time the good writer will acquire not only a sense of *groping for* but a sense of having *groped to*: he begins to know when he has finally reached whatever he was reaching for.

Ideally, there can be no real end to that groping. To reread is to revise. In the world as it is, however, one has to leave the writing at some point: either that or stay with it forever and never get on to anything else. One gropes for, and then in hope and despair, lets himself believe that he has groped *to* it as well as he will ever be able to. But however it goes, it goes by feel, and it is up to every writer to learn his own feel for it. Only he can guess out, finally, his own sense of it.

For no man who writes seriously, and by seriously I mean as a way of life, will write in any but his own way. His way of life is, in fact, to find just his own way of writing—whatever way most nearly informs for him the emotions of experiencing this world.

A good teacher of writing ("writing coach" might be a better title) should be able to teach a bright student to write almost like Dickens, or almost like John Donne, or almost like Emerson. But it would be only almost; the same almost that unkindled wood is to the fire it could release if ignited. Any number of semipolished surfaces, and even plain brick, can reflect fire.

The starting need of the writer is to be himself the tinder.

If he is that tinder, any library is full of sparks, and almost any teacher could be his Prometheus. The hopeful beginner can burst into flame at the touch of any admired piece of writing. The good writer can blaze at the touch of any mortally glowing experience. But they must first be flammable. No amount of instruction will teach damp souls to dry themselves and to burn. And it seems also to be true that no writer really blazes until he has learned—which is to say, until he has found for himself—how to write as no one else does, to write in his own way.

But where does the would-be writer begin?

The first answer is easy: Because he is a human being and because he is sensitive to the joy and distress of that condition, he is moved to speak his feelings.

But if that is all he has to move him, it is not enough. If the human passion is first, it must yet be joined by an equal passion for the medium before good writing can happen. The writer is a man overpowered by words, sentences, rhythms, ideas, the drama of ideas when there are lives moving in them, and the forms he can shape from his medium. Language haunts him. Words, sentences, rhythms are not things to him; they are presences. The presence of his medium makes him feel more than he really knows how to think or say. He knows that he is wiser,