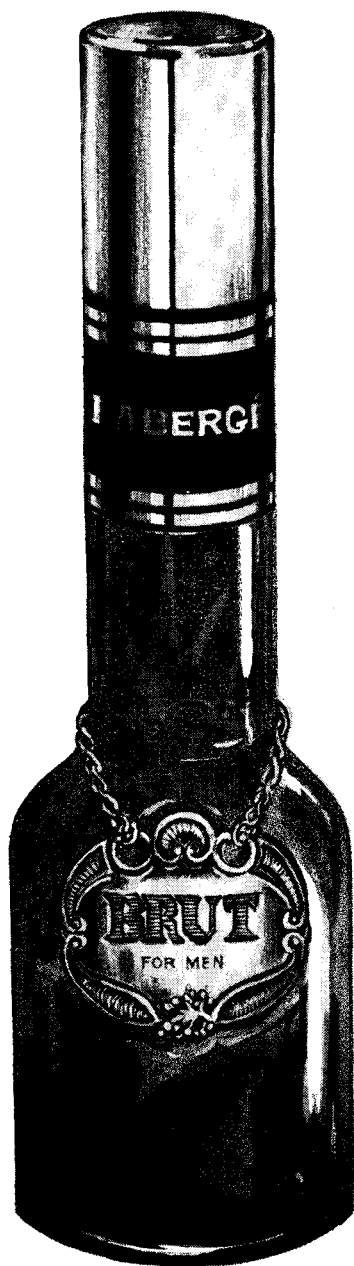


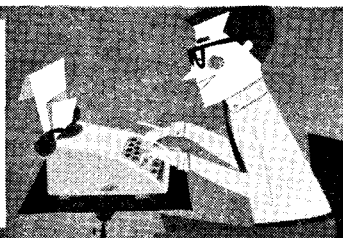
**Bold new
Brut for men.
By Fabergé.**

**If you have
any doubts
about yourself,
try something else.**



For after shave, after shower,
after anything! **Brut.**

Top of My Head



Scrooge Comes Down the Chimney

IN THE SPIRIT of the season here I come with a Ho Ho Ho and a sackful of cheer for the Hundred *Really* Neediest Cases. Every one of them is a TV star, living in upholstered squalor in a vast depressed area known as Fool's Paradise.

My bag is stuffed with something these needy cases covet most and are desperately in need of: thousands of rating points to be distributed among these children who toil week in and week out in the cobalt fields.

The other Santa Claus has taken care of the good little boys and good little girls. The rest are left to me. As far as I'm concerned there are no bad boys or bad girls. There are only bad scripts and bad concepts with which the tots keep company. To them I bring these Goodies. And who is to say who is the real Santa Claus and who isn't?

I fly low over the home of Lucille Ball and drop my first little packet of Goodies—5.2 points. These she may add to her rating if she will abandon this thing she has about scrubwomen. Almost every special in which she appears shows her with mop and pail, swathed in a tattered garment, her crown of red hair in disarray.

This attraction which attractive TV women have to making themselves appear slovenly also bedevils Carol Burnett. And to her goes another Goody—5.2 rating points—if she will but forgo the little old lady who scrubs offices after hours and sings a mopey little song into the stringy yarns of an upended mop.

In the hushed dawn of a Christmas morn I fly low over the homes of Dean Martin, Phil Harris, Jackie Gleason, and Frank Sinatra. I find them coming home, weaving their ways up their walks, trying futilely to fit their keys into the doors, and wondering if this is the place.

This thing about public TV confessions of over-indulgence in alcohol has so beset these stars that it is difficult to tell one from the other without a balloon test.

Mr. Harris has been publicly describing his intake since the days of early Jack Benny programs. His TV career lately has been confined to guest shots. So he has more time to load up for his appearances.

Mr. Martin seems not to drink before

or after his show. It's during his hour that he seems to be supplied with potions so potent that one wonders if he will make it to the top of his piano, where he sits and talks to Ken Lane about a lady named Jeannie to whom he vaguely remembers he's married.

Mr. Sinatra is the latest who has added wine to his women and songs. On a recent appearance on *What's My Line?* this most talented of entertainers pounded the dais where he sat to play the game and asked, "Where is the bar?"

Mr. Gleason, who for years sipped from his cup of TNT and said "Wow," has given up this hilarious bit and shown himself to be the performer he really is in the Honeymooners' trips around the world. Having gone on the wagon for TV, he has lessened his alcohol percentage by at least 3.2, and this has been added to his rating.

So to each of these convivial gentlemen of the AA—although it's hardly anonymous—I drop a Goody—3.2 rating



—Vic Volk.

points if they will swear off. Man cannot live by whiskey alone. It's one thing to be high in the ratings, but another just to be high.

It's getting colder now and there's no heat in ye olde sleigh, so before I head home where Janie is waiting for me with the nip that warms, I fly low over the homes of those bad little boys who put that whole cluster of commercials in those old movies—before, after, in between, and sideways.

I drop a Goody of at least 6.5 if you will find a way to reduce the number of commercials between segments of a movie. It is one thing to integrate commercials. It's another to impregnate them. So numerous are they that after four or five commercials are bunched at a station break, when the movie returns the viewer is certain the girl and fellow can never get together; her hands are rough, his hair is sticky, and they both have bad breath.

And a merry Christmas to both of them. And to you. —GOODMAN ACE.



A YEAR-END DIALOGUE WITH OUTER SPACE

Do you?

Yes.

Do you what?

Whatever—

to the unqualified question the unqualified answer:
I do.

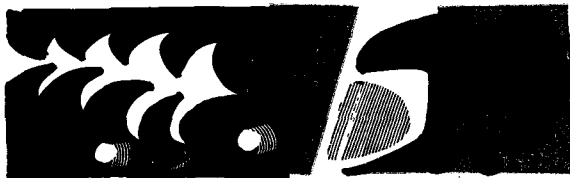
Everything?

Yes.

Everything?

I do:

in the fact or in the thought of it—everything:
what is done in fact and without much thought,
what is done in fact in place of thought,
what is done premeditatively and thoughtfully in fact,
what is done in thought only—to escape fact,
or to make it bearable, or to confirm it—everything.



And do you now confess?

To myself, everything.

To the world in practical fact what is in practical fact
convenient, except that in an anger like an assault
of honesty, I do now and then not care, and do openly
admit being and having been and meaning to be everything,
and to relive it.

You have lied?

I recall that life.

Cheated?

And that one.

Stolen?

Negligently.

What has there been that would have been worth the time
it would have taken me to steal it?

But you *have*?

sometimes there *was* something?

At times, a trifle,

and that always instantly not worth keeping.

You have killed?

Always, alas, for the worst reasons.

For what reasons?

For duty. For my captain's approval.

Not for survival?

Survival lay with my captain,
the controls his. I killed because I could.

You were proud?

For no reason I have not survived.

Envious?

At times. But I have admired many.

Wrathful?

In bursts from the sperm center. A screeing
of sensation, like a Morse code I could not read
that was in any case drowned in a cosmic whine.

Slothful?

Yawningly, when that was my mood's pleasure.

Avaricious?

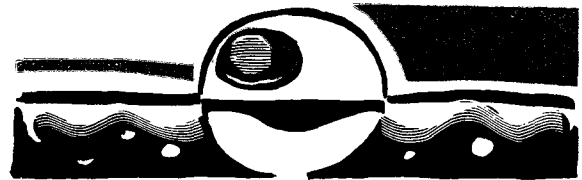
No.

Gluttonous?

Hungry.

Lustful?

Gladly.



What then do you believe should be done with your soul?

Erase its name and make room for another experience.

Why?

First, because this one is completed and time is not.

And second?

Because it will in any case be erased.

And third?

Because, though it does not matter, eternity
would be the one experience beyond mercy.

And you claim mercy?

I do.

Why?

Because I was born.
—JOHN CIARDI.

