



In Old Blood

Edited by Martin Levin

History Repeats Itself

"... It suddenly occurred to me that a crime might be an excellent subject to make my big experiment with. 'In Cold Blood,' you know, is what I call a non-fiction novel. It's a peculiar sort of hybrid form. I think it's a great unexplored art form." —Truman Capote.

IN 1842, it occurred to Edgar Allan Poe that crime might be an excellent subject to make a big experiment with. In a letter to a publisher, dated June 4 of that year, Poe described a tale that he had just completed, *The Mystery of Marie Roget*, as something "altogether novel in literature."

Poe had selected a murder for the basis of his tale—the "assassination," as he called it, "of Mary Cecilia Rogers, which created so vast an excitement, some months ago, in New York." As the murder was still unsolved, Poe felt impelled to lend an air of fiction to his factual analysis; he accordingly shifted

the locale to Paris, while remaining faithful to the events as they occurred in New York. He also introduced his fictional sleuth Dupin into the case; "thus," said Poe, "under pretence of showing how Dupin unravelled the mystery of Marie's assassination, I, in reality, enter into a very long and rigorous analysis of the New York tragedy. No point is omitted. I examine, each by each, the opinions and arguments of the press upon the subject, and show that this subject has been, hitherto, unapproached."

The tale was published in November 1842 and excited, as Poe had hoped, considerable attention. Parallels to the actual murder were quickly recognized, and when Poe reprinted the story, in 1845, he appended twenty-four footnotes identifying the parallels—the *Rue Pavée Saint Andrée* was Nassau Street, the Seine the Hudson, a quote from *Le Mercurie* actually from the New York *Herald*, etc. In the initial footnote, Poe summarized his method, noting that he "followed, in minute detail, the essential, while merely paralleling the inessential, facts of the real murder of Mary Rogers.

Thus all argument founded upon the fiction is applicable to the truth: and the investigation of the truth was the object."

Poe remarked, in the letter, that the usual magazine price for a story of this length was \$100. Though rather long, Poe's story is barely one-seventh the length of *In Cold Blood*; simple arithmetic, plus a thought on the value of a buck in 1842, will show that, though things weren't really so different then, they are tending to look up a bit.

—JOHN ARNOLD.

Last Game

It is almost evening now. The garden Is deep in shadow. Sounds are slow. Time to stop playing. Some have left me,
Gone on home an hour ago.

Fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty—
Where are You hidden? In back of what?

I'm sure I've counted enough already;
Here I come, God—ready or not!
—ROBERT NATHAN.

Joyce, Italian Style

LIKE most Dubliners of his time, Mr. Leopold Bloom, whose wanderings we follow in the pages of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, liked vocal music. Music was in his mind as he moved about the city on that memorable day of June 16, 1904: intrusive melodies, vagrant airs, fragments of operatic tunes, popular ditties.

Thus, when he encounters Mrs. Breen on his way to lunch and tells her he has been to Paddy Dignam's funeral, a song floats into his consciousness:

Your funeral's tomorrow
While you're coming through
the rye.
Diddlediddle dumdum
Diddlediddle . . .

In the Italian rendering of the work, called *Ulysses*, this comes off well enough as "*Domani ti sotterano/Mentre vieni dal campo di segala*," but the translators jib at "diddlediddle dumdum" and turn it into "*trallerallera tamtam*."

It is a small point. *Trallerallera tamtam* may be more tuneful than diddle-diddle dumdum, but I doubt it. I also doubt that the Italian "Pfff!" expresses Paddy Leonard's scorn for gingerpop at the bar of Davy Byrne's pub as well as the original "Prwht!" Pfff! demands an accompanying gesture whereas Prwht! can stand alone.

But even if one accepts pfff for prwht I don't think tolerance should be extended too far. The gust of wind that hit Molly Bloom at the corner of Harcourt Road and raised her skirts went



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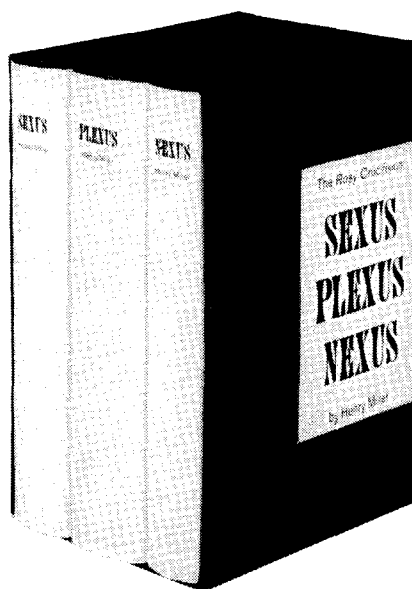
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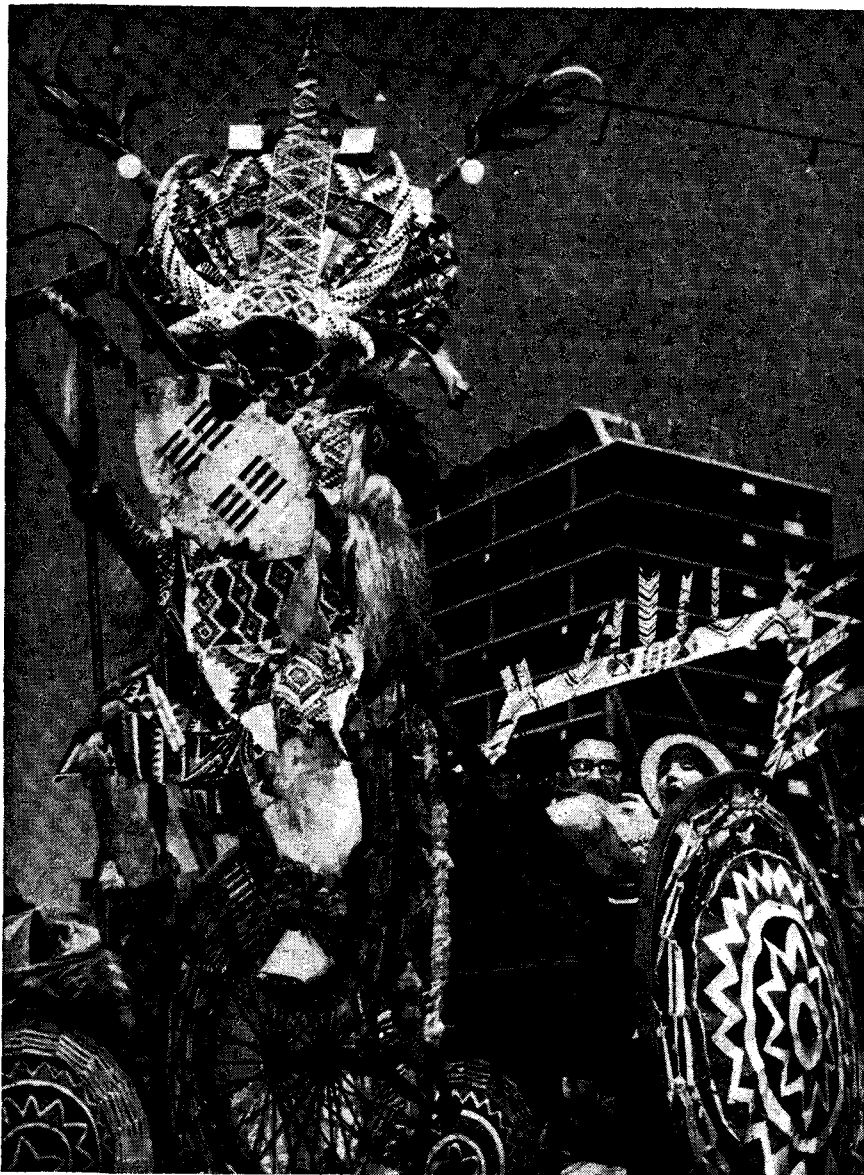
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"Brrfoo!" The Italians soften this to "Brrfff" which is not a gust at all and not much more than a puff.

But to revert to diddlediddle dum-dum-trallerallera tamtam: a little later in the day when Bloom's memory falters as he hums the Statue's greeting to Don Giovanni, he slips into "The rum the rumdum," a natural and not unmelodious way of finishing the basso's terrifying words. I had thought the Italians would accept "The rum the rumdum," or possibly alter their own "trallerallera tamtam." Nothing of the sort happened. Having succeeded with trallerallera tamtam, they went after something new, and so "The rum the rumdum" becomes "Para ponzi, ponzi, po," words I find most difficult to hum. Sing para ponzi, ponzi, po, yes. Hum it, no.

Lest I be thought unfair to the Italians I'd like to note that Joyce's "Jiggedy jingle jingle jaunty"—words that remind Bloom of the impending visit of Blazes Boylan to Molly at 7 Eccles Street—come off better in the Italian version: "Ballonzolo tintinnante del calessino scarrozzante," or roughly, a tinkling gay dance of a bouncing careering gig.

I also think the Italians have done extraordinarily well with "Her wavyavy-eavyheavyeavyevyevy hair un comb: 'd." A rude hand could easily have ruined that. What we get is so brilliant that one is moved to cry *Bravi!* to the several translators. Here it is: *Le sue abbondantondantondantabbondanti chione non pettina: te.* —JOHN FERRIS.

Coup de Grace

By A. D. Hope

JUST at that moment the Wolf,
Shag jaws and slavering grin,
Steps from the property wood.
O, what a gorge, what a gulf
Opens to gobble her in,
Little Red Riding Hood!

O, what a face full of fangs!
Eyes like saucers at least
Roll to seduce and beguile.
Miss, with her dimples and bangs,
Thinks him a handsome beast;
Flashes the Riding Hood Smile;

Stands her ground like a queen,
Velvet red of the rose
Framing each little milk-tooth,
Pink tongue peeping between.
Then, wider than anyone knows,
Opens her minikin mouth

Swallows up Wolf in a trice;
Tail going down gives a flick,
Caught as she closes her jaws.
Bows, all sugar and spice.
O, what a lady-like trick!
O, what a round of applause!

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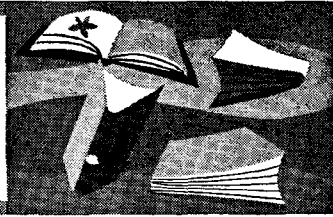
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Trade Winds



A lot of authors seemed to be wandering about New York City recently. Some came from far-off places and some simply stepped onto the streets from their urban pads.

Gunnar Sonstebj, for instance, traveled all the way from Norway with his pretty blonde wife. He is a deceptively mild-appearing chap who risked his life during World War II fighting the Nazis



underground while they occupied his country. He has written the exciting story in *Report from No. 24*, just published by Lyle Stuart. Sonstebj was never caught by the Germans. For five years he sabotaged the occupation, to become leader of the Oslo underground and Norway's most decorated hero of the resistance.

A different kind of story is that of Stephen Vizinczey, a Hungarian-born Canadian citizen now living in Rome. He showed up in New York to help plug the American publication of his novel, *In Praise of Older Women*. The message in the book is what the title suggests: a woman should be glad when she reaches thirty, for she is going to become a lot more attractive, interesting, and sexy. Vizinczey arrived in Canada ten years ago when he was twenty-three, unable to speak English. When he finally was able to write a novel, that was the theme. It came to him as a result of his varied experiences with both European and Canadian females. "The North American myth that youth is wonderful, that the 'perfect' woman is eighteen years old," he snorts, "is simply a lot of hogwash."

In Praise of Older Women led the Canadian best-seller list for quite some time last year. For a while it seemed that the whole country was debating the issue of older versus younger. Vizinczey is living in Rome for a year while he writes another book. With him is his bride, a Canadian older woman.

Every day Richard Clayton commutes from the suburbs to London, where he

holds down the job of Alien Property Custodian. His job is to track down the owners of the millions of pounds that got lost, strayed, or stolen during World War II.

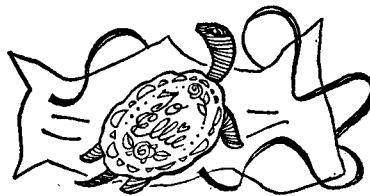
About once a year William Haggard takes a month off and hides out in a little house in the Italian hills. There he writes another spy novel and adds to his reputation as one of the most successful of such authors.

Clayton and Haggard are the same fellow. He adopted the name Haggard eight years ago when he started on this dual career, not knowing how the Civil Service would take to the idea of the Alien Property Custodian doubling as writer. A distant cousin of H. Rider Haggard, Clayton has written ten suspense novels. The last, *The Hard Sell*, is of interest here because in it the villains are Americans and the good guys are the British.

"I couldn't very well make it the other way 'round, could I?" he asks.

I am happy to report that the Americans, who do everything so well, make absolutely perfect bad guys in *The Hard Sell*.

Three writers who won't talk about their current project, because they don't want to give away the secret, are Marcia



Seligson, Mort Gerberg, and Avery Corman. But these young New Yorkers are happy to discuss the little two-dollar book they produced which came out a couple of months ago and now has 70,000 copies in print. I guess it's a non-book, really. It's called *What Ever Happened To . . . ?*, "a collection of things remembered because they once were important to us."

It's a great nostalgic treat and good therapy for old-timers to be reminded of the good old days by such as, "What ever happened to wedgies, penmanship, mailing painted turtles to people, two-for-flinching, seeing somebody actually tip his hat when he meets a lady on the street, singing cowboys, etc., etc.?"

Marcia, Mort, and Avery somehow re-

called things that seem to date much further back than they do. They claim it's in their genes. In any case, these hip Greenwich Villagers have come up with this sweet and charming book. And what ever happened to camp? And what ever happened to square?

The writer who really wouldn't discuss his new novel was Alan Harrington, sometimes known as the Dean of Black Humorists. He wrote *The Crystal Palace* and *The Revelations of Dr. Modesto*, two books that made him some sort of underground reputation. After several years of silence, except for some research into LSD, Harrington now has a new book, *The Secret Swinger*. It's all about



genetic fatigue and a guy who can't make it. When I told Harrington that his fans were eagerly awaiting this new one, he objected.

"You're putting me on," he declared indignantly, refusing to talk further about *The Secret Swinger*. Well, then, I ventured to ask, does he have any advice to give young writers?

"Yes," Harrington said. "Tell them to have their teeth fixed early. I waited, and then when my meager royalties began to come in, I had to have my teeth capped. It cost me thousands of dollars and it was expensive and painful."

Cornelius Ryan, who told me all about himself and *The Last Battle* (see page 30), described an experience he had as a war correspondent with the U.S. Air Force in World War II. Dublin-born Ryan wore an American uniform, but he was forever being picked up in the mess hall and interrogated by suspicious intelligence officers. Finally he learned to hold his fork in his right hand to stop calling attention to himself.

—JEROME BEATTY, JR.

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(THE) COURT AT WINDSOR

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* Three words replacing the great, to get one more W.