

chafed his skin till it bled. When he fell once again, he was perhaps near the frontier, only a few hundred yards, because he noticed some yellow, vaporous sparkling above the snow, which he found after a long, absent-minded examination to be the light of a mighty Christmas tree. It was Christmas Eve, a white Christmas. For a time he remained lying on the ground. With a great effort he could still have crawled on all fours under the Christmas tree, but he had no taste for this disgraceful exhibition. Let us stay in this little country! Shots sounded from a great distance, then, somewhat nearer, the receding rattle of a motor-cycle. The old man struggled to his feet, turned his back on the frontier, and as it were symbolically retraced his steps a few paces, towards the interior. He sat on the edge of a ditch filled with snow. He was very tired. He scarcely felt the cold any more.

He closed his eyes and yawned again and again. Incipient degeneration was his diagnosis, after feeling his pulse several times. He knew the process. Fatigue, sleepiness, breathing becomes faint. The muscles grow stiff; that too makes breathing more difficult. The amount of carbon dioxide in the poorly oxygenated blood steadily increases. Disturbances appear in the metabolism, the body temperature control fails. Visual and aural hallucinations follow. The functioning of the heart grows irregular, with frequent extrasystole. The temperature in the rectum drops steadily; when it reaches 24 degrees, there is nothing practical that can be done. The liver ceases to produce glycogen, the blood sugar falls. The heartbeats grow ever fainter. The pulse becomes intermittent and imperceptible. When the blood sugar necessary for the nutrition of the organism falls to nil, the end comes.

### Watch This Space

When they placed in position de Witter's "Adam and Eve"  
 On the front of the Marriage Counsel Office block—  
 Two low-relief panels with a space between,  
 Two oblong verticals, asymmetrical—the shock  
 They gave us was (presumably)  
 Something to do with his cock  
 And her petals. Both showed, certainly.  
 But even after they'd been taken down  
 And his knocked off and hers smoothed in,  
 Their modified presences still disturbed our town.  
 What is it about them? We don't believe  
 In this of course, but isn't it odd  
 That in the uncarved space between the figures, some god,  
 Some kind of superstition, appears to stand  
 Guarding a silence with an empty hand?

*P. J. Kavanagh*

*Herbert Gold*

# A Dog in Brooklyn, a Girl in Detroit:

## *A Life Among the Humanities*

WHAT BETTER CAREER for a boy who seeks to unravel the meaning of our brief span on earth than that of philosopher? We all wonder darkly, in the forbidden hours of the night, punishing our parents and building a better world, with undefined terms. Soon, however, most of us learn to sleep soundly; or we take to pills or love-making; or we call ourselves insomniacs, not philosophers. A few attempt to define the terms.

There is no code number for the career of philosophy in school, the Army, or out beyond in real life. The man with a peculiar combination of melancholic, nostalgic, and reforming instincts stands at three possibilities early in his youth. He can choose to be a hero, an artist, or a philosopher. In olden times, war, say, or the need to clean out the old west, might make up his mind for him. The old west had been pretty well cleaned up by the time I reached a man's estate, and Gary Cooper could finish the job. Heroism was an untimely option. With much bureaucratic confusion I tried a bit of heroic war, got stuck in the machine, and returned to the hectic, Quonset campus of the G.I. Bill, burning to Know, Understand, and Convert. After a season of ferocious burrowing in books, I was ready to be a Teacher, which seemed a stern neighbour thing to Artist and Philosopher. I took on degrees, a Fulbright fellowship, a wife, a child, a head crammed with foolish questions and dogmatic answers despite the English school of linguistic analysis. I learned to smile, pardner, when I asked questions of philosophers trained at Oxford or Cam-

bridge, but I asked them nonetheless. I signed petitions against McCarthy, wrote a novel, went on a treasure hunt, returned to my roots in the Middle West and stood rooted there, discussed the menace of the mass media, and had another child.

By stages not important here, I found myself teaching the Humanities at Wayne University in Detroit. I am now going to report a succession of classroom events which, retrospectively, seems to have determined my abandonment of formal dealing with this subject. The evidence does not, however, render any conclusion about education in the "Humanities" logically impregnable. It stands for a state of mind and is no substitute for formal argument. However, states of mind are important in this area of experience and meta-experience. However and however: it happens that most of the misty exaltation of the blessed vocation of the teacher issues from the offices of deans, editors, and college presidents. The encounter with classroom reality has caused many teachers, like Abelard meeting the relatives of Eloïse, to lose their bearings. Nevertheless this is a memoir, not a campaign, about a specific life in and out of the Humanities. Though I am not a great loss to the History of Everything in Culture, my own eagerness to teach is a loss to me.

NEWS ITEM of a few years ago. A young girl and her date are walking along a street in Brooklyn, New York. The girl notices that they are being followed by an enormous Great Dane. The dog is behaving peculiarly,