

# hear and now

Arts & Entertainment

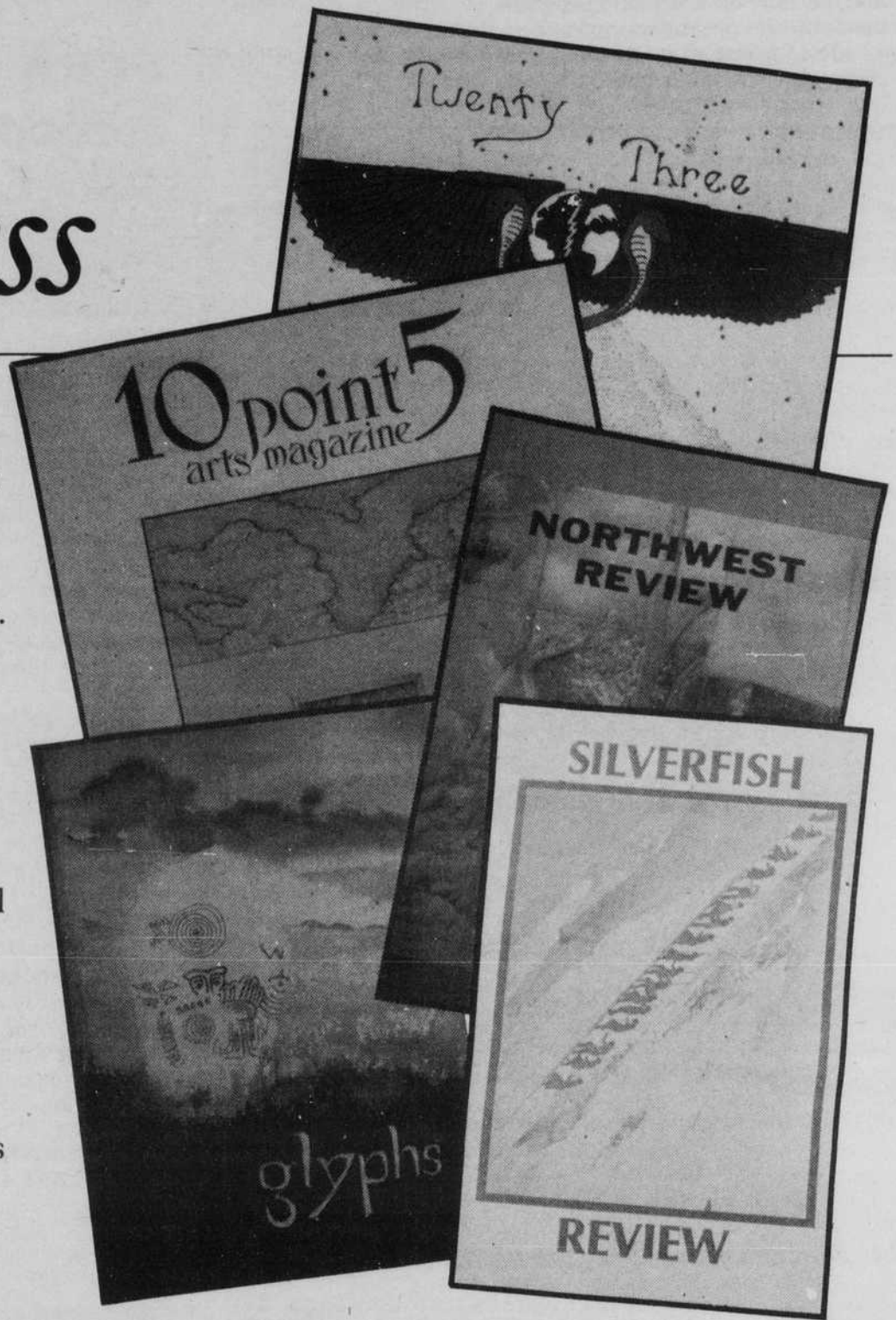
Thursday, February 21, 1980

## The Literary Press

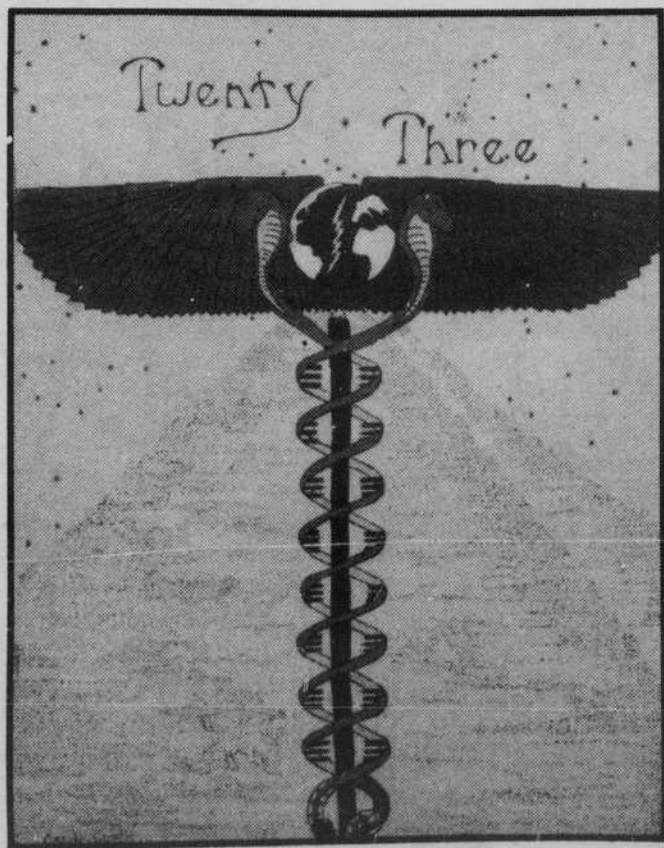
Some writers want to get their poetry and short fiction published by the most popular periodicals and book publishers in the nation. But the *New Yorker*, Scribner and Sons, *Esquire* and Simon and Schuster are not interested in every writer, even if they happen to be a potential T.S. Eliot or James Joyce.

For those who find the Eastern establishment press too much to handle, or for those who are too much to handle for the Eastern establishment press, there is an alternative small press here in Eugene.

The small presses in Eugene are looking for poetry, philosophical essays, fiction and art by talented writers and artists, whether or not they've published before. Thus far small press publications in Eugene — *Twenty Three Magazine*, *10 point 5 Art Magazine*, *Silverfish Review*, *Glyphs* and the *Northwest Review* — are not making a great deal of profit for themselves or their writers, but some of these publications are getting nationwide attention from libraries, universities and some bookstores that order them. In some instances small press publications may even act as a stepping stone for a writer's work to be picked up by the more well-known large press companies.



### Twenty Three Magazine



One publication, *Twenty Three Magazine*, published for the first time in

October 1978, is distributed both in Oregon and Northern California. A second issue, put out in spring 1979, has led to a third issue to be titled *Odin's Booty* and expected in July.

"Creative anarchism is how our magazine started," says J.T. Gillett, one of the magazine's founders and most active members. "That's a governing idea still. The contributors decide what they want *Twenty Three Magazine* to be. They decide what kind of art they want to get together. Everyone has to rap, hangout and decide what'll happen."

The name, *Twenty Three Magazine*, is derived from the number's cosmological significance. Gillett says some significant aspects of 23 are that the earth's axis tilts at 23 degrees; the mean temperature of earth's sister planet, Venus, is 23 degrees; Harpo Marx died on November 23, and the human sex chromosomes number 23.

Anybody can get involved with the magazine if they want, "but it's not only for getting your poetry published," Gillett says. "You've got to work on it as a total project. We'd like to keep it a conceptually based magazine."

Gillett and another co-founder of the magazine, Eric Meyer, operate the Eugene-based Homonculus Press, whose name is derived from an alchemical term. The first issue of *Twenty Three Magazine* provided a world of insight into alchemy and gnosticism through numerous essays, short fiction, poetry and line drawings.

"Gnosticism and alchemy are where we're at," Gillett says. "Gnosticism is where no values are constant. If the fashion is to wear long hair, a gnostic wears short hair. If the fashion is to wear short hair, the gnostic wears long hair. One of our favorite gnostics is Rimbaud. Joyce was another heavy gnostic. One of the purposes of gnosticism — and one of the purposes of *Twenty Three Magazine* — is to have people look at things another way."

The magazine's alchemical emphasis is rooted in a pragmatic but perhaps unattainable motive. "At *Twenty Three*, we're into life extension through meditation and drugs," Gillett says. "We're after immortality and researching old time alchemists for the philosopher's stone, said to bring immortality."

In his quest for immortality, Gillett has formed the Argus West Immortality Institute here in Eugene. Affiliated with Homonculus Press, the institute advertises in *Rolling Stone*.

In publishing *Twenty Three Magazine* costs have been a major factor. The magazine has no aid from government grants. In the past, all contributors, instead of getting paid, have worked on the production of the magazine and contributed anywhere from \$20 to \$100 for typesetting and other costs. The first issue of *Twenty Three*, more than 100 pages, cost \$1,000 for 500 issues. It didn't make an money, despite selling out in less than two months. The collective did profit from the smaller second issue.

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