

OLD LANGSYNE

"the living were only curious survivors of a vanished time..."

— Nicholas Monserrat

1987. By the time most of us are able to write it without a slight cognitive hesitation, it will simply be just 1987. Already, at its birth, the new year is being dismissed as irrelevant, merely a mote of time to endure until a more significant year arrives, such as 1988 (which in political terms has already started), and, of course, the year 2000, which we fall toward like a rock into an ocean. The velocity of the biennium's approach is no longer as imperceptible as the present daily rise of the sun toward the northern hemisphere. We are increasingly preoccupied with the year 2000, now only thirteen years away, drawn by its magnetic pull, although beyond it our visions are opaque. A blasted earth between then and now is our angst.

I start 1987 with ennui. I thought a splash in Pacific Ocean surf with eighty-eight year old Bridget Snow on new year's day at Arch Cape would slap me back into reality after a few weeks of sloth during the holidays. My annual vows have evaporated faster than usual and my self-esteem ebbs. Starting over is my major illusion of a new year. I will be a better person and not get angry or hurt anyone. I will try to be more honest and generous. Maybe it is the rain that dampens my resolve, or the Christmas bills. By February I am usually the same person I was last November.

The beginning of a year usually envelops me in gloom, probably because I take a quick look at the future and see my own death down the road. Death is not yet a major consideration in my thoughts. I slip through days and weeks oblivious to my end. I think in a much narrower scope, shortterm and shortsighted, seldom beyond each day. Which is just as well. Honest and courageous appraisal of personal death does not win reprieve from it.

Rain, which keeps alive the living and regenerates the dead, provokes reflection, particularly during winter when trees taunt us with their skeletons and gray is the brightest color. I think of what to write, a pontification on the coming year. My brain stays cozy by a fire, preferring to dream. People who are poor and homeless drag through the wet streets outside my windows, standing or sitting anywhere for about as long as a fly. I am a paycheck from being among them but I rarely glimpse myself in their sad cold faces. Prosperity



WILLIAM HOGARTH, "TIME SMOKING A PICTURE"

is promised — it is always promised; and always as a divine right — but the public wealth is transferred from those who need it to those who have too much of it. Greed fuels the same reckless pell mell rush to disaster as the nuclear arms race. We try to hide in materialism from the horrors it produces. War looms as always. The danger is that we are governed by men who act like a gang of boys on a dare. They rule us with greater contempt and contradictions than usual. Perhaps the President has died in a showbiz version of the Indian curse as a result of the contra-ception arms deal with Iran. We might finally wake up from under his spell this year as if from a bad dream.

What will 1987 be like, what splendid achievement or horrible shudder might it add to history? A year from now we will still be perplexed, unsure of what happened or what it forebodes. What I most wish for 1987 is to live through it, and I wish peace and love, the end of poverty, hunger and war to give me a better chance. I like the message on a T-shirt that a middleaged man wore to the Tanglewood Music Festival in Lenox, Massachusetts last year: "It's never too late to have a happy childhood."

— MICHAEL PAUL McCUSKER



CANNON BEACH BOOK COMPANY
132 North Hemlock Cannon Beach 436-1301

EL Mundo LTD
FOR WOMEN

CANNON BEACH 436-1572

WHEN UNEXPECTED GUESTS ARRIVE
Surprise Them With Dinner At The
BRASS LANTERN
CANNON BEACH

THE
NORTH COAST TIMES EAGLE

A JOURNAL OF ART AND OPINION
PUBLISHED MONTHLY IN ASTORIA,
OREGON, 286 BOND ST. (#4) 97103.
MICHAEL PAUL McCUSKER,
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

ANNOUNCING
ON GUARD
a newspaper for GIs

Recent articles:

- 2.5 million urine/blood tests: the military's latest invasion.
- Legal first aid: How to protect your rights.
- How safe is the Nuclear Navy? An expose.
- Nicaragua contra leader tells all.

For sample copy write:
ON GUARD/
CITIZEN SOLDIER
175 Fifth Ave.
NYC, NY 10010