

of greed are everywhere and nothing is safe from their rummaging claws.

They come in all shapes and bearings. They might be called Phil Morford or Bill Naito, but their actions are always the same.

How many homes does one need? Even Sybil with her eighteen personalities could only be in one place at a time. But these hoarders aim to possess what was once held in common and what will one day be free again.

"The grownups are certainly altogether extraordinary," said the Little Prince simply, as he continued on his journey.

In the film "Shoah" a Polish ex-railroad worker, speaking of piloting the death trains to Treblinka, bursting with their human cargo, wipes his forehead, smirks and tells of how "I just did my job."

Driving thousands to their appointment with cyclon-B gas and a fate as soap bars and lampshades is nothing more or less than a job.

And it's 9 to 5, and I've just got to make a living.

I've seen it before. Psychologists applying new torture techniques on prisoners and kids in the Argentine dungeons. Scientists measuring new pain thresholds in laboratory mice. Bankers repossessing homes for unpaid shark-loans. Government officials sterilizing indigenous women. Loggers ripping through thousands of years of forest life, destroying forever a delicate ecosystem. And here in NW Portland, workers driving machines into homes and lives.

Tonight the bulldozer driver will return home. The cop who told me that he, too, cares about old houses but that he "must" do his job of arresting people, will be back with his family and friends.

Loving arms will perhaps cradle the men and women who earlier were busy obeying the gods of war and destruction. A tender word might be shared with a loved soul. A laugh. A whisper.

These men and women are not monsters. They too want to live. They too need a place to sleep, food in their bellies, a lover by their side.

They could be you or me — scrambling for scraps of subsistence in the last days of a dying empire.

Even when not taking into account crimes committed by the multi-death corporations (or forgetting capitalism, the real organized crime), Portland has a very high crime rate. Murders, rapes, beatings are daily occurrences in our fair city.

But try and find a cop when you want one around. "Budget cuts" is always brandished as a handy excuse.

Oddly enough, there was no shortage of our public defenders at the Overton Street houses. Cops in blue, cops in brown, cops in cars, cops in vans, cops on motorcycles, cops on foot. I even thought I saw a cop on a skateboard. Cops here, cops there, cops everywhere. Busy doing their job. Upholding the law. Fifteen cops per one block — whoever said that we were not protected in this city? They were even arresting hardened criminals, citizens who were trying to save the houses. The cops were defending us from ourselves.

"Our laws are still for war/ and gold rings are preferred," wrote Attila Joseph in another era and place. But here too, the police were propping up the cadaver that is private prop-



erty. Why don't their chariots carry on their sides the logos of corporations, for which they stand?

The cops were arresting people with much zeal, and as usual, arresting the wrong people. I am 30 years old. Will I live to see the day the truly guilty are made to pay for their crimes against the earth and against its living creatures?

On Monday night hundreds came for the memorial service. The S.O.S. singers sang of the important connections. Several gentle souls spoke of healing.

But I did not feel healed. The pain is still too intense, too unresolved.

Letting go of anger is essential. Anger consumes, distorts, imprints one with the mark of the beast. Anger's face is yellow and mocking.

Yet anger, combined with resolve and care, is necessary. The clearcutting of our neighborhoods is part of the same sickness that views ancient forests in \$\$\$\$ signs and the universe as the white man's domain.

In Berkeley in early May a remembrance for the twenty year old People's Park turned

into a riot. Banks and other death institutions were targeted.

In Berkeley people brought torches to the march. In Portland, candles. We are more mellow, more willing to believe in Santa Claus.

Anger is destructive. It must be transcended and transformed into a long process of resistance and the creation of alternatives.

There are memorials for those killed in past wars but not for those killed in future wars. Memorials celebrating the great deeds of trigger-happy presidents and generals, but not for war resisters. Memorials honoring captains of industry but not for the wage slaves who create all wealth.

A memorial should fit the crime. A Viet Nam memorial for American soldiers that omits the names of all the Southeast Asians slaughtered is nothing but an exercise in willful historical amnesia.

A war memorial ought to be a pit of stench, an open ending scream, a mixture of blood and burning flesh that will cry out loud: No more!

On the land where once houses stood there is a big open gap. People have left dozens of candles, flowers and notes. An unofficial art gallery was created in one of the remaining homes. In the razed block much destruction has taken place, but also much that is life affirming and life sustaining. This celebration of life must continue. A garden, a park, an oasis. A continuous birth of living green creations. Or perhaps also a mural full of passionate images and colors, helping us to remember. A memory of what once was and of the green future we long for. A green land of dreams and hopes.

Tuesday night and it's the neighborhood association meeting. The historic compromise is presented. After being kept in the dark for days so as not to "endanger the negotiations," we are given three hours to vote. Let's make a deal — behind door #1 are empty promises; and behind door #2 more of the same. But let us maintain this facade of democracy. Several firebrands make impassioned speeches but too many of us are tired. We want to believe in the system, in decency, in the victory of the humane and noble. I too want to believe, but I have learned to trust my feelings and I feel revulsion.

We vote and approve a deal: the remaining houses could be bought by rich folks and moved, or else torn down. There will be some nonbinding community input into the "aesthetics" of the project (deciding the color of the toilet seatcovers in the new houses?). The row-houses will be built.

As the smug NWDA reps announce this victory to the press, I recall the words of Adrienne Rich in "21 Love Poems":

"Writing of the worst thing of all —
not the crimes of others,
not even our own death
but the failure to want our freedom
passionately enough."

I step into the night, wanting that freedom more than ever.

This has been an excerpt from a pamphlet written by Alon Raab, published by the Albanian Poodle Press, POB 40112, Portland 97240. Pat Tippet and Roger Cathey illustrated the pamphlet.

Old Town

922
Commercial
Astoria
325.522

Framing Co.

EQUATOR
THE STORY AND THE LETTERS

"Cunningly constructed, touching, and oddly moral... The novel is as intelligent as it is outrageous."
David A. Holloway
PSC English Dept.
The PSF Vanguard

"A marvelous read. I unqualifiedly recommend it. I couldn't put it down. The novel is wonderfully written."
Walt Curtis
"The Talking Earth"
KBOO - FM

"An extremely thought-provoking book... I wondered if I should accept the voice of this novel as prophetic or the voice of doom."
Marsha Weber
"Between the Covers"
KBOO - FM

"Dark illuminations, equatorial shifts of morality seethe in this novel."
Tim Barnes
PCC English Dept.
The Downtowner

Available at Parnassus Books
Cannon Beach Book Company
Turnaround Books



Offering a complete line of
affordable quality gift baskets.

254 11th Street
Astoria
325-1039

