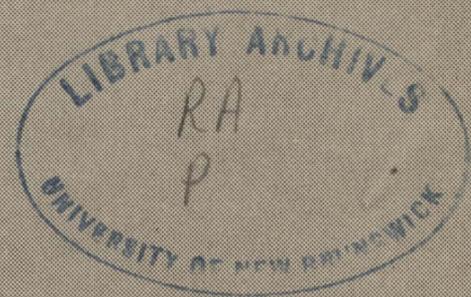


PREVIEW



18

P.K.PAGE

B.RUDDICK

P.ANDERSON

F.R.SCOTT

*** BURN ***

The patient in bed 20 said, "You don't have to tell him nothing Cassidy. He's only a student and they're always poking around."

"Don't mind him," said Cassidy, "He's bugs."

I explained to him how we had to work out the cases assigned to us. He was co-operative. His right arm was in a cast so the whole story was right there in front of me. Still I had to get a complete history and give my diagnosis. Dull. Routine.

Cassidy, J. Male. 64. Labourer. Verdun Avenue.

No Previous Admissions.

Phelps came up to me. "Come on up to Ward E. Emergency burn just admitted."

I excused myself and went with him.

Miss Newton was standing outside the door to the small Operating Room off E. She is a dark, thin, pert thing who shouldn't be spending all her love in the day-time. The kids think she is wonderful, and she loves children, but she still makes me unhappy. Sometime I hope she busts the hell out of her starched blouse and gets what she needs.

"If you're going into the O.R. better wear masks."

We took the small bundles and unrolled them and tied them over our lower faces.

"Lookit the sojers," one of the kids shouted.

Phelps turned around. "Booo," he said.

"Either of you assigned to this case?"

Phelps didn't want to exclude me, but he had to say something. "I guess I am."

"Better go out in the hall and get the history from the parents."

"Sure," said Phelps, dropping the mask around his neck.

"Hell," I thought, "I wonder if he thinks I'm horning in?"

"Can I go in?" I asked Newton.

She opened the door and peeked around it. "Sure."

In the centre of the room a pale plump child was lying quietly on a small operating table. He was covered from waist to ankles with a thick padding of pressure bandages. The only sign of burns was a pink blistered mass the size of a plum representing his tiny genitalia.

Two men from surgery and an interne worked over his right ankle trying to cut down on a vein. One of the Chiefs was there trying to get an Oxygen mask working. A "pinkie" was sterilizing instruments in a corner and her peppermint-stick blouse was the only colour in the whole white room.

"This little bugger is so small and fat that I can't find a decent-sized vein anywhere," said Lyons, the resident.

"Come here doctor," the Chief flattered me. "See if you can feed him this stuff. Cup your hands over his face and make a mask. Bloody rubber in this one is all shot." He threw the useless mask on top of a cabinet.

I stayed there guiding the oxygen to the child's face. Latour came in and arranged a mechanical unit that supplied a steady stream of moistened oxygen. He put a rubber tube into one nostril and forced it gently down through the pharynx until it flowed directly into the kid's throat.

The child had been having slight twitching spasms. I held his small cold hands to stop them from flailing around. With every spasm his fists would

tighten round my thumbs. His pale finger-nails were chewed short and ringed completely with a dirt-line. I could feel his rapid pulse pounding through his plump wrists. The spasms gradually grew worse until he had one terrible convulsion, rising off the table on the arch of his back, arms outstretched, breathless, blue.

Then he fell back and whimpered.

"Can't take many more of those," said the Chief. "Better anaesthetise him and control it."

The child's breathing was irregular, slow, laboured, and even the "pinkie" in the corner could hear the rales, of fluid bubbles bursting in his airways. His eyes were open and the pupils were pin-points.

"Why the pin-point pupils?" I asked Latour.

"Morphine. Some doctor gave it before he got here, and we don't know how much and we are afraid to give him any more ourselves."

He put a gauze mask over the child's nose and mouth, and sprinkled it with something. I asked him what it was, but I couldn't understand what he said. After a while the convulsions ceased.

The Chief waited around till a vein had been located and the intravenous plasma circuit was working. Then he left. Lyons went with him.

With a long pair of tongs the "pinkie" was placing sterilized instruments in neat rows on a white covered coaster table. Latour and I teased her about Cape Breton.

"I wouldn't of left there, but I always wanted to be a nurse."

Henry, from Surgery, sat down on a stool, leaned against the wall and peeled off his rubber gloves. He came from a little Ontario town and wanted to get back to take over his father's practise. But he was in the Medical Corps and he didn't know where he was headed.

"How'd you like to be Medical Officer for a bunch of CWACS?" joked Latour.

"Ugh. Jesus." said Henry.

The "pinkie" laughed louder than the rest of us.

The interne left and went down to his ward.

Latour was getting worried about the kid's breathing. He set up suction apparatus and worked it in and out of the kid's mouth. We stood around, not saying much, while the suction tube slushed and hissed and sucked out the saliva and mucus from the kid's mouth and throat.

"Will you phone down for another oxygen tank?" he asked me.

As I went out I heard Henry say, "This goddam plasma isn't going in."

A priest was standing red-faced and scowling by the door. When I came out he asked me if he could go in and see the patient.

I went over to where Newton was trying to coax a kid to take a cathartic.

"What's burning his nibs?" I asked her.

"The parents want him to administer the last rites."

He came over to us. "May I go in now?" he said, "I have been here over an hour and I can't waste time like this."

"Sure," said Newton.

He looked at us helplessly. "What do they expect I can do for the spiritual comfort of a two-year-old?" He went into the O.R.

I phoned, and came back to where Phelps was curled over a table writing out the history forms.

"What's the story?"

He fiddled with his pen. "I wish I spoke better French. They live in the east end. The mother was doing the laundry. Six kids in the house. Jean-Louis in there backed into a pail of boiling water. It took them three hours to get him here."

I went back in and passed the priest as he was coming out the door.

The plasma was dripping down into the tube very slowly. Henry detached the tube and stuck a syringe into the canula which was ligatured into the vein. He pulled on the plunger gently and finally a dark red clot came into the syringe, followed by a gush of blood.

"Hah." Henry took off the syringe and hooked up the circuit.

A nurse's aide poked her head round the door. She came in. Debutante on an errand.

Latour was engrossed in giving oxygen, anaesthetic and sucking the fluid out of the kid's throat. She walked up beside him and stood watching.

"Got to get this stuff out or he'll inhale it and drown himself."

She went over to where Henry was still trying to get the plasma flowing easily.

"Goddam it," said Henry, "he's not getting one bit of this stuff."

Latour was bending over the head of the table. I could hear him clucking and talking to the child. "Come on gamin. We got it all right now little friend. Chuck, chuck."

"You're a sloppy sentimentalist Latour," I said.

"Ah, you wouldn't understand."

Henry was looking around for an available vein in the arms. He tried to get a needle into a couple but had no luck. The arms were so plump and the vessels so small it was almost impossible to see them. That was why they had gone into the ankle in the first place.

"I think his veins have collapsed," said Henry.

Phelps came in and said, "His father wants to see him."

"In a few minutes," said Henry.

Phelps turned to me and grinned, "He thinks you and I are burn specialists from the Army or something. These uniforms. Who am I to disillusion the poor guy." Gentle Phelps.

Henry was filling a syringe with plasma.

I put my hand under the blanket covering the kid. His chest was very hot. I told Latour. "God yes," said Latour feeling for himself. "Get Newton," he said to the "pinkie".

The "pinkie" went out of the room.

Henry attached the syringe to the canula in the kid's ankle. He started forcing the plasma slowly and easily into the collapsed vein.

"Now he's getting what's good for him," said Henry.

"Bright idea," said Latour. "Hard as hell to work on kids. Can't see to get into a vein on a normal kid, never mind one in shock."

The "pinkie" came back with Newton who took his temperature.

Henry kept giving more plasma from large sterile syringes.

"107," said Newton.

"Jesus," swore Latour.

"Happens often in dehydrated kids," said Henry.

"Why do you get fever in dehydration?" I asked Latour.

"Best and Taylor's Physiology will tell you better than I can."

"How's it look?" I asked Henry.

"Can't say," he said, reattaching the drip tube to the canula.

"Pretty high. He was in terrible shape when they brought him in," said Newton.

"Maybe he'll pull out of it all right. Breathing well. His heart's slower and steadier," said Latour.

"Sure." said Henry.

We all stood around and waited.

After a while the father came in with Lyons. He stood about ten feet away from the child. Straight, thin in blue denim overalls and leather jacket. His peak-cap rolled in one hand. He looked at the child through his heavy tortoise-shell glasses a long time. His black hair, brushed sideways, partly covered one ear.

"I guess we can move him from the table now," said Lyons.

He must have been operating downstairs. He was still gowned, his cotton mask hanging down around his neck.

Miss Newton went out and came back wheeling a crib.

I looked at the child. "I don't think so," I whispered to the "pinkie".

Henry didn't either. He took out his stethoscope and put it under the blanket. He listened for about three minutes. Lyons was trying to move the stand holding the drip apparatus. The father looked at him. He looked up at the apparatus. The plasma was still dripping slowly into the feeding tube. He looked back at the child. Finally Henry turned from the child. He had a hopeless dumb grin on his face. He stuck out his lower lip wryly. "I guess that's about all," he said.

The father turned up the palms of his hands.

"What can I do?" he said apologetically.

He stood there. I could see the metal eyelets of his rough, black boots gleaming under the strong surgical lamps.

I went over to the corner and pretended to be working at something. I wanted to wash my hands but I decided to wait.

The nurse's aide was picking lint from the large red cross on the front of her uniform.

She turned around quietly and went out.

I followed her.

I washed my hands outside. I looked at the clock. Four o'clock. Three hours in there. I had a Pathology Conference at four-thirty. The hell with it. I was fed up. Bugger it all. I was going to a show. I walked out through the kid's ward.

"Hi sojer!" said one of the kids standing at the edge of his crib and biting at the enameled railing.

"Hi there!" I said. "What's the matter with you?"

"Dunno."

"Feel alright?" I asked him.

"Uh-huh."

Newton came over to the crib. "Hernia. Did him ten days ago. Going home tomorrow," she said.

I turned to the kid, and stuck a finger in his ribs.

"You're full of beans," I said.

"An' you're fulla baloney," he said.

Newton and I laughed. The kid jumped up and down in his crib.

"Too bad about that," I said thumbing back at the O.R.

"Yes," she said.

I went out and stood in the hall waiting for an elevator.

Why do you get such a sudden rise in temperature in dehydration?

I went into the cloak-room. An Interne was there smoking. He offered me one. There was no one else around.

"Why do you get hyperpyrexia in dehydration?" I asked him.

"Reflexes. Lowered blood volume. Got a lecture?"

"I'm cutting it. Think I'll take in a show. I'm fed up."

He got up. "Go see Watch on The Rhine," he said. "It's a honey." He went into the lavatory.

I walked out and towards the main entrance.

I met the father hustling up the corridor.

I nodded to him and he stopped me, putting out his hand.

"Thank you, what you did for my Jean-Louis,"

"I'm sorry," I said.

I wanted to put an arm around him and take him through the wards and show him what can be done sometimes. I wanted to prove to him that we were not always helpless. I wanted to explain to him. I could see his big, still, black eyes through the heavy lenses. Poverty hung on him like a caul. I shook his hard dry hand.

"I'm sorry," I said.

He nodded and left me.

When I got to the street I suddenly felt again the way I had often felt coming out of the theatre late at night alone, and wanting a woman I couldn't have.

I headed for the library.

BRUCE RUDDICK.

POEM

Let us by paradox
 choose a Catholic close
 for innocence.
 Wince at the smell
 of beaded flowers
 like rosaries on the bush.
 Let us stand together then
 till the cool evening
 settles this silent place
 and having seen the hatted priest
 walk with book from Presbytery to border
 and the pale nuns, handless as seals,
 move in the still shadow,
 let us stand here close,
 for death is common as grass beyond an ocean
 and, with all Europe pricking in our eyes,
 suddenly remember Guernica
 and be gone.

P.K.PAGE

TRANS CANADA

Pulled from our ruts by the made-to-order gale
We sprang upward into a wider prairie
And dropped Regina below like a pile of bones.

Sky tumbled upon us in waterfalls
But we were smarter than a Skeena salmon
And shot our silver body over the lip of air
To rest in a pool of space
On the top storey of our adventure.

A solar peace
And a six-way choice.

Clouds, now, are the solid substance,
A floor of wool roughed by the wind
Standing in waves that halt in their fall.
A still of troughs.

The plane, our planet,
Travels on roads that are not seen or laid
But sound in instruments on pilots' ears,
While underneath,
The sure wings
Are the everlasting arms of science.

Man, the lefty worm, tunnels his latest clay,
And bores his new career.

This frontier too is ours.
This everywhere whose life can only be led
At the pace of a rocket
Is common to man and man,
And every country below is an I land.

The sun sets on its top shelf,
And stars seem farther from our nearer grasp.

I have sat by night beside a cold lake
And touched things smoother than moonlight on still water,
But the moon on this cloud sea is not human,
And here is no shore, no intimacy,
Only the start of space, the way to suns.

J.R. SCOTT.

THREE POEMS ...

PATRICK ANDERSON

POEM

Sometimes in a great public place a theatre
 ballpark or forum where the shadowy banks
 of people seem collected for surprise
 and offer, row upon row, their violet eyes
 to start and startle and suffer whatever there is,
 touchdown, puck across ice or proud Hamlet-
 built in amongst cheering strangers or a crowd clapping
 I have thought perhaps
 silence could so surmount and outmode sound
 we'd get the illegal stations of your courage,
 construct from people an acoustic shell,
 turn all the corridors into detectors,
 rip music from the auditorium,
 and so might hear a pin drop or a tear
 from Europe's mother weeping for her children.

Or on great avenues and where the city's
 all hubub and blowing horns
 and even the eyes of anguish
 are dusty dry like the white eye of clock,
 have thought also to cut and modle drums,
 make sea-shells out of them, search longingly
 the misery sea:
 turn marble parliament out of this kingdom
 that it's aghast facade be pale with gulls,
 ghettos, their cries,
 its speakers frozen into listeners:
 make soldiers musical also, to try
 the Atlantic wave, moving from place to place
 their trumpet like an ear in every army.

Yet should we hear, how could we weep for them?
 Not even a great forest obsessed with wind
 and with southwest weeping,
 not even a wailing wall of oaks and elms
 clotted with rain,
 not scattering its leaves and loudly scaling
 its towers of tallness and tearing them all,
 nor with sussurus being incessantly sleepless
 and sighing for them,
 nor bending its boughs and beating them senseless on the ground-
 nor with the grandeur of pines in a wild gale
 wildly seething,
 nor the crippled thorn tree nor the little eccentric
 stammering bush
 ever explain their Warsaw with wild weather.

Nor this wisteria
running with wind as with invisible water
and tensing all its twigs all night,
its eyes shut tight against the darkness,
lament one child with ragged stumps for hands!

DANCER

Under the lights, public and naked,
splayed like a starfish, flat as a map,
by sleep sainted

and lying punished in that prone that lonely
and lovely position
is published

a golden authority in our twilight eyes

not moving not moving yet all the lines will
combine with a dialectic shock
the genotype and the personal

God's great line fit in honey
and so suffers

there on the stage the young dancer
a boy in peril destined to dance
or die for us all.

This madness of being one thing and its muscle
this nude stupor
to dance the necessary and half-evil marvel

in the quick and cupboard splendour
of the flesh
the white night of the form forever sleepless.

A sad and beautiful target begins to move

Now almost awkwardly raises one leg
which simply and smilingly the light congratulates
and painfully (the drawn out moment is modern,
an example of realism, considering even the hairs,
in this assisted by the monotonous drum,
the tom tom) raises
one- slow as a pause in April- LEG
inflected upwards for a careful

examiner's interest, insisting pedantically
 upon it with a sort of grim delight
 in sex and technics. ONE
 CUBAN BOY'S LEG. (Ah so
 youth whistles morosely at the English window
 in rainy April, considering
 the poetics, the technics and the thing.) He
 observes his limits (the drums
 the tom toms throb to the baton),
 calculates exactly the slum and wonder
 of this limb erected into the realm of light
 articulates it as to function-
 one JESUS of a leg all right-
 curls and uncurls the toes,
 packs feeling in the cul de sac
 ONE OF TOMMY GOMEZ'S TWO LEGS
 mobs the crowd like Christ.
 He ends this shock by rolling over
 once or twice on his bum
 and rising.
 While in the pit
 the sunburnt instruments
 applaud
 and on the skin beats out the heart's rythm.

O not lamed with silk enter
 the girls in the ritual
 dance of the island
 (the drums the tom toms modern as anything
 and the disonance and the boy
 without ornament like left architecture)
 O not crippled the girls with any silk
 with lace maimed or water
 or the clever mirror
 but only wearing in their secret parts
 the gauze of joy.

BOMBING BERLIN

Tonight some boys were history
 moved together in a cloud of disaster
 and one released with prim precision aim
 his vertical verdict:
 below smiles burst, anger became sonile,
 houses fell down on their knees
 and made for their inhabitants a surrealist prayer.

The crime against humanity
was to consider oneself a master race:
one died because one was lonely
or too quiet to care,
became eccentric and masturbated too much
and talked to oneself all day
in the room littered with tears that were always untidy
and kept in cupboards and drawers
too many dead dear things,
too many whips and ribbons and photos of boys.

Their historical role was to play
the poor cramped quarters of their hate
against our looser concourse democracy
and make us suddenly take sides with life
and with the sun
and with the merciless seasons
until in our great antiseptic halls
statues were trees and men working
and coloured as posters children played against walls.

The young ones with daggers
paid for, of course, by the old ones with cash
duping themselves have involved us all
in so great a hope
this war's already elementary:
from their restriction our wideness-
we disintegrate the cross
they tried to bend
into a more self-contained shape.

*** NOTE ***

We would remind our readers of the PREVIEW FUND and its objective of one hundred dollars. Though the response to our appeal has been very generous, we still have a considerable way to go.
Please send all donations, literary contributions and criticism (of which we wish there were more) to Bruce Ruddick, 1455 Drummond Street, Montreal, Quebec.

