

The Game

The thing about taking this stuff  
 seriously as poetry  
 is that it is poetry  
 in the sense that art is art,  
 which includes nonsense  
     for variety- spice of lies  
     that evade a central assertion.  
 This is that we're real as punctuation,  
 realer than breathing, really;  
 real, really, as mind,  
     which is where we meet  
     like allies in an alley,  
     referring to tales that seem  
                     to wag the dog,  
 but relate to a multiple reality  
 shared by who we know together,  
 gradually, as this Literature develops.

I was thinking of analysis,  
 a word as used by a man called  
 Ulisses,  
 a Mexican talking at the time  
 in a five hundred year old garret  
                     in Amsterdam.  
 Though his last name links him  
                     to Jerry Sims,  
 the Texas windhover who Kantor sang,  
 you may know this Carrion  
     for things he has invented  
                     which we use.

Ulisses said to me in that Dutch garret,  
 We analyzed your tape, dog and baby.  
 I remembered Siltan,  
 a complete flash like many TV shows.  
 This is what happened then.  
 It will go on happening.  
 Might as well enjoy it  
     by taking it seriously as poetry.

-Dave Oz

Who Do I Write For

I write for you, real  
 remembering it, perhaps  
 for later consideration  
     and for sharing  
     on an electronic  
 clouds of Luna motns  
     to you and funny

As for me, not to worry  
 People write for me too  
 and as for funny friends  
 well (I) it (wish) could  
 be (hurry) you (up and

Of course my life is  
 or I'd never find the  
     to drink to you in

You think I don't know  
 it's not that.  
 Ancestors have a definition  
 They're more than bones  
 Thing is, if you don't  
     while you're writing  
     how can you possibly  
     write while you're

We're sitting at the  
 lying on the grass-  
 passing, being passed

Remember Roland Kirk?  
 the blind man with  
 sticking out of his  
 who wanted to be smoked

This is why I write.  
 Please hold the dice.  
 why gamble  
     with your favorite

Birthday 42

42nd year in heaven,

on this physical earth that is to say,

writing editorials about strikes,

diplomacy, rape, and the Solar Challenger,

doing pals, my colleges about

artists I have known--

and now, what next?

blindness, gangrene, mental blackout

seem possible but not likely;

there's the wife and five kids,

and the other kid in San Francisco,

to somehow raise and nurture--

career was never a concern but suddenly

now it is

and all I can think is to carry on day to day

writing poems

and living

by my horoscope.

David Zack

June 12, 1938

## My horoscope

Yes I believe there is a harmony  
all people share with stars and tides  
and a set of directions, subtle as a folded map,  
to gently swat us into patterns  
we can generally share.

That I am Gemini  
nobody can deny,  
no more than that I'm poet,  
since I know it,  
and mercurially flow from day to day  
without regard for propriety, or pay,  
arranging sentences in a logical way  
to set out, not in grey  
but rainbow tones the pattern of the future  
which we can arbitrate like clones  
or if we want intelligently assemble  
like the bones of newly drifting times  
wherein the Arctic may assume Hawaiian climes  
and similar things may come to pass in human  
minds, and so I read my horoscope each afternoon  
and promptly forget it, concentrate instead  
on life as it goes on.

David Zack

June 12, 1938

## Diabetes

Poems don't need to be useless,  
and as for diabetes, it is a name  
to cover a multitude of evils  
which modern science gradually uncovers,  
staving off the worst with insulin,  
oral agents, diet, exercise, education,  
but the most we can say about this thing  
called diabetes, is that each case is unique,  
and when a person rises to the challenge of detection,  
treatment, consultation,  
it can become an incentive to rise in life,  
like any other challenge but more common  
and less rapacious, than most.

David Zack

June 12, 1938

Would you rather be an under-water diver or a dead man afloat?

I prefer to remain afloat and in the light of the sun, which is what I have always done. I have always spoken the truth, and people find the truth offensive. And that's why I've always had more enemies than friends. I should long ago have decided to sit down on a throne and surround myself with glory, but I find myself instead still in the trenches and with a battle still to be fought. I'm one of the oldest artists around, and yet the young artists think of me as the youngest. That's something else that people find disturbing. They still think of me as an artist who's "under observation." And I'm considered a ver embarassing peronality to have around. If the critics were to recognize my work, they'd be forced to deny their own past and to declare themselves failures. And that's why they prefer to remain silent and to keep me in isolation.

What will be written on Cavellini's tombstone?

"He was the inventor of 'Self-historification'." (And also of the Living-room exhibition. He was a guerrilla fighter against the art system through innumerable mailing operations. And so on and so forth.) It seems that my way of making art and the positions that I've taken have greatly helped many young people to see the art world in a new and different way. In California, they greeted me like a Prophet and treated me as a source of inspiration and ideas. For some time now, the daily mail that I receive from all parts of the world always contains works of art that people have made in homage to my own works of art as well as to me as a person. I have them all framed since they're to go into the Cavellini Museum and will sooner or later constitute a block of material that will have to be studied as something of considerable historical importance. The art world experts are waiting to see if this will be something truly important, and that's because my situation is anomalous and disconcerting. In terms of the date of my birth, I'm one of the oldest artists now working; but when the critics formulate their lists of the one hundred most important Italian artists, my name is never included. And whenever a show of Italian art is to be organized for exhibition abroad, I'm left out of that too. How long is this to go on? But the most paradoxical fact of all is that people continue to discuss the "Cavellini case." One young American artist and critic who has lived in Europe for two years has written that I'm the only really interesting phenomenon of the moment. I find all of this both stimulating and amusing. By now, I've understood that only the passage of time will put me in the proper perspective. Time has always been the wisest and most authoritative judge, and till now, time has always revealed itself to be my most faithful friend.

Why do Italians all talk at the same time?

That's one of our customs; it's an ancestral fault and it appears to be incurable. It's a matter of proved experience that ten people together in a discussion will always reveal ten different ways of thinking. And all of us think that we are always right. All of us are presumptuous and nothing makes us happier than to write and talk circles around ourselves. And all of it is laced with envy, gossip, and slander. I think that this will be remembered as the most chaotic period in all of Italian history. We're not ready to face the challenge of a new form of civilization. We've grown too rapidly, and now the structures that should support this growth reveal themselves to be insufficient. We promulgate laws designed to prove that we live in a civilized country, and then we don't have the knowledge or the ability to put them into practice. This is an historical moment of great confusion, an era of transformation, and there are no easy solutions, no easy ways out. Not even earthquakes and scandals are enough to change the way we Italians think and live. Look at the art world, for example, and that's something of which I have been a protagonist, something of which I've been able to follow all of the vicissitudes. During the boom, everybody wanted to buy paintings; it was the fashionable thing to do and people tried to speculate in it. Self-styled experts popped up like mushrooms, there was more demand than the market could satisfy, and the nouveaux riches ended up by buying an enormous quantity of fakes. And authentic works of art were sold for extremely high prices that it would be very difficult today to realize. And it wasn't possible to redimension this incredible situation until the boom was over and done with. It seems that Italians are incurably presumptuous, ignorant, and, above all, provincial. The people with positions of power and responsibility do all they can to defend and to hold on to them and they do their best to confuse people's ideas precisely in the moment when the confusion is already at its height. Now they've even come up with the idea of auctioning paintings over the television. And it's logically enough a question of absurd paintings at ridiculous prices. This is the greatest possible level of decadence. Sinking lower than this will be absolutely impossible.

Railroaded Images

We're watching television,  
Looking at the teevy doncha know,  
and we uh

well for some reason  
we decide on going for a walk  
along the railroad track.

A train passes by,        a long train.

There's no danger.  
This is the starting point  
of our art.

On one car out of a hundred  
or so,  
there's a painting.

Mona Lisa.  
Virgin of the rocks.  
Hobo Jim in the Boondocks.  
None of these is an ad:  
They speak like friends.  
We're standing there.  
We listen to railroaded images.  
After a while the train stops.

A fellow in the most colorful costume  
asks if anyone would like a hamburger,  
or perhaps some brown rice  
and champagne.

There's been enough of the real,  
one replies, all bubbly-minded.  
Later, back home,  
all the walls in the house  
are television.  
Most of the images  
are railroaded.

-Dave Uz

INTERNATIONAL  
MEXICAN ART  
MAGAZINE

FINALLY: POETRY ISSUE

The Shell

Shall I compare? No, probably not,  
and as for, Shall we go then? We are  
going, going, but never will be gone.  
More like Anastasia than etherized!  
The past is dramatic enough  
so we can wind it round paintings  
of legendary subjects,  
into a different sort of future.  
This what that we do  
is what we do do.

No ifs or buts required;  
the joke changes line by line.  
Like the new curl music takes  
as who sings it varies,  
but what is sung is very much more  
different;  
like the invention of a Spanish  
whose fundamentals aren't so sexist;  
Like a section of a graphics class  
meeting on a different continent;  
like the time of day varying  
minute by minute instead of hourly  
with the eccentric half  
from Newfoundland  
as a Canadian joke you always knew  
or just learned now;  
like, like, like life itself,  
the beat goes on but all the same  
keeps changing...

Oh! I forgot. No! It's a joke.  
It don't matter. Yes it do! If...  
these lines...were longer...  
wouldn't need no dialect!  
we don't need to die!  
There's just no reason  
for that old mistaken myth  
in poetry we shall be writing now.