

The Road / Richard Jackson

Giving himself entirely to the road
he walks to the wreck of the buick,
remembers the car he found once
with the two moving inside it,
the whole car rocking as if something
invisible drove it through the field
and now he climbs in, clutches this
wheel giving himself entirely to
this dream where he drives across a field
past mice who have tunneled
their secret holes in abandoned mattresses,
the insects sticking to his windshield,
though now he does not know where he is
nor the girl on the seat beside him
as they stop in a field like this where they
do not speak as they climb
into the back seat, where she gives
herself entirely to him
giving himself entirely to the road.

The Map / Larry Levis

Applying to Heavy Equipment School
I marched farther into the Great Plains
And refused to come out.
I threw up a few scaffolds of disinterest.
Around me in the fields, the hogs grunted
And lay on their sides.

You came with a little water and went away.
The glass is still on the table,
And the paper,
And the burned scaffolds.

You were bent over the sink, washing your stockings.
I came up behind you like the night sky behind the town.
You stood frowning at your knuckles
And did not speak.

At night I lie still, like Bolivia.
My furnaces turn blue.
My forests go dark.
You are a low range of hills, a Paraguay.
Now the clouds cover us both.
It is raining and the movie houses are open.

FICTION / GERALD JAY GOLDBERG

The Secrets of Malaterre

From all indications, Madame Blaise would be difficult. She was in her late seventies now, a suspicious age when generosity is little more than a dry sponge. If she proved to be anything like my grandmother had been, it would be hard for a stranger to get the time of day out of her, let alone the letters and diary. Pearlmutter had barely been able to squeeze out two short notes, when everyone knew she had boxes of unpublished material, invaluable documents, God knows what in her possession. And that was almost ten years ago! No, it was definitely not going to be easy.

As soon as I arrived in Paris, I carefully drafted an appeal to her, bowing and scraping in my most courtly French. "I thank you infinitely for your cooperation, chère Madame Blaise," the letter concluded, "and beg that you will accept my respectful and devoted sentiments." Somewhat effusive, I admit, but this was no occasion to stint. Holding my breath, I sent it off. It could be a week, even two, before I had a reply. The thought that she might never answer was a black cabinet I refused to open.

Not to waste time while waiting, I climbed the steep cobblestone hill to the Jacques Doucet—the *bibliothèque littéraire* across the street from the Pantheon—where I spent the next few days examining the correspondence with Gide. Pearlmutter's magnifying glass had been everywhere. The admirable thoroughness of the man, I'm ashamed to say, depressed me profoundly. But while studying the 1912 letter in which my Malaterre told Gide of his esteem for him, of his own restless boyhood, of his quest for a "noble and pure" mentor, I was suddenly struck by the fact that here was Assistant Professor Stanley Blum of the University of Delaware (Bronx bred and coarsened) holding Malaterre's original, just as he wrote it, right between his reverent fingertips. The thrill almost made the expense of coming to Europe seem worthwhile. As for the contents, unfortunately, everything was in Pearlmutter. But Pearlmutter's biography of the poet had been flagrantly