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A R I O N

A Journal of Humanities and the Classics



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Partisan Review

Winter 1996

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Monad Noir*

WHORE AT THE CAR.
ONE FULL STOP AT THIRTY EIGHT.
ZUKOFSKIFIED
OR MURDERED?

*Persicos odi, puer, apparatus,
displicent nexae philyra coronae;
mitte sectari, rosa quo locorum
sera moretur.
simplici myrto nihil adlabores
sedulus cura: neque te ministrum
dedecet myrtus neque me sub arta
vite bibentem.*

Percy's cous' o.d.'ed. Poor works.
Vice police and next a filly of a coroner,
mildly sexed. Harry Rose, a coy local, run
s a room for renter
s, implies murder. Neil at the lab hurries,
said, "You'll use a current inquest team in his TR, Hmmm?"
Dead. A kid. And murders knot me. Internal constrictions.
A quick drink ends 'em.

Notes *ad hoc* and *ad homicidium*?

Horati Car. 1.38: The *mise en scène* is a good example of Zukofskian Pythagorean upsilonian—or in this case psian—translation choices. After jump-cutting to the hero's arrival at the scene, a Hell's Kitchen-type area where streetwalkers expect that any passing, pausing, and unmarked car contains a john, rather than a dick, we confront "1.38." I have chosen "One full stop at thirty eight," using the old telegraphic code, evocative of the film noir '30s, '40s, and '50s, for the symbol "." Here "full stop" stands for the death being investigated. Another avenue would have been to read the phrase as "One period at 38," i.e., one episode in the

* Dedicated to Douglass Parker with apologies to Colin Dexter, Morse, and Thaw.

detective's life, specifically when he is thirty-eight. Or stretching the original to have 38 stand for 38th *vel sim.*, one could have used the second number as a designation for Thirty-Eighth Street in New York City where near the exit from the Lincoln Tunnel low-class hookers hang out for the car trade from New Jersey.

.1 Read *apparatus* as in English, as a synonym for "works," slang for the paraphernalia used for a drug fix.

.6 TR=toxicity report.

.7 Take *vite* as in French, use the root *bib* for a drink (shortened and thereby quickened), and read *entem* as it sort of sounds (and fittingly ends the constrictions and the poem). The overall effect is of an eastern European poetic *Manchester Guardian* crossword puzzle.

By the end, you should understand that our hero, the narrator, is a 38-year-old homicide detective called in to work the case of a young junkie who died of a drug overdose. Routine and straightforward until Harry Rose . . .

Thomas G. Palaima

ARION

A Journal of Humanities and the Classics

Herbert Golder, *Editor-in-Chief*

Volume IV, Number 1 will include:

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Stephen Scully on orchestra and stage in Euripides' *Suppliant Women*

Charles Segal on Sophocles' gods and the chorus of *Oedipus Tyrannus*

Reviews by . . .

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Marianne McDonald's *Ancient Sun, Modern Light*

Ruth Padel on the Lyric and Barbicon productions of *Ion*

Robert Sonkowsky on the Guthrie production of
"The Clytemnestra Project"

Oliver Taplin on Mnouchkine's *Les Atrides*

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Articles by Anne Carson on Simonides and Greed, Leslie Kurke on Pindar and Prostitutes, Martin Bernal on Orientalizing the Greeks à la Burkert, Mary Lefkowitz on Feminism and the Classics, Simon Goldhill on Oedipus and Suspicion, and more.

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Charles Martindale on the Ruins of Rome in *The Waste Land*

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