

MIRAGE

No. 5

Summer, 1962

VOLUME ONE

"The Amateur Magazine of Fantasy"

JACK L. CHALKER, editor

NUMBER FIVE

I do not know if it ever existed--
That lost world floating dimly on Time's stream--
And yet I see it often, violet-misted,
And shimmering at the back of some vague dream.
There were strange towers and curious lapping rivers,
Labyrinths of wonder, and low vaults of light,
And bough-crossed skies of flame, like that which quivers
Wistfully, just before a winter's night.

Great moors led off to sedgy shores unpeopled,
Where vast birds wheeled, while on a windswept hill
There was a village, ancient and white-steeped,
With evening chimes for which I listen still.
I do not know what land it is--or dare
Ask when or why I was, or will be, there.

.....H.P. Lovecraft*

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MARY-VI

THOMAS B. HAUGHEY (pronounced 'Hoy') is a fellow WSFA member, a student at the University of Maryland, a fanzine editor (MIRTH AND IRONY, which "Mirage" readers should like, and which will shortly feature material -- fiction -- by yours truly), and the only person I know who would've gladly slept on the bar at the Phillycon. Almost cherub-like in person, his excellent poems show a hidden pessimism. Still, they are filled with power; I predict that, as a poet, he'll go far.

THIS USUFRUCT MORTUARY

(This Usufruct Mortuary, etc)

A blighted black eagle's feather
Tossed by the wind,
Proclaims with forboding
Of those who have sinned.

Nothing left but eagle feathers
Rotting in the dust,
Nothing more than black blotches,
A monument to lust.

The mighty are falling
In a dull flake-stone manner,
Dull, gastly blotches --
A shroud, not a banner

Relieved silence fills the air;
Then Nature shows a golden ray,
Yet mourns and sighs through leafy flutes
Sick at the thought of the bird of prey,
And the prayer he might have lived....

Flaming eye still raging,
Eagle soars on unaware
That the fire is slowly fading
From its blankly wrathful stare.

Wings beat out furiously,
Then contemptuously ride the crest.
In sunlight splattered talons flash
Red from a rabbit's breast.

To countless heights of gore and glory
The red-eyed spectre flies
Grating all of peaceful nature
With its harsh, triumphant cries.

One by one the feathers fall;
Little by little the eyes grow cold.
Yet more and more the claws strike out;
More and more the cries ring bold.

One by one the feathers fall,
It's nature's whole affair.
One by one black feathers fall,
Owner blissful, unaware.

And then at last a chill seeps through
The angry, staring eyes.
The blankness lifts and self is known
At the instant of demise.

Bereft of pride, bare of plume;
A used-up missile falls to doom.

Remembered sneers at his domain
Now conjured forth but soaring pain:
A terror cruel of cruelness vain,
The knowledge of a sensuous brain --
Then nothing.