The greatest possibility open to us lies in giving ourselves up. But the mere thought of giving ourselves up is followed by an inward shudder. Fear immediately freezes everything into a stylized, discrete paralysis, like those isolated moments, laid end to end, in which Zeno’s arrow tries to cross the sky. Since Zeno’s arrow exists only inside his paradox, it can never land, and since after thinking about giving ourselves up, we too begin to take on the immateriality of a logical demonstration, it makes more sense to think of white monkeys fading back into the white paper on which they are painted—or of the final note in a piece of music. When its ripples ebb away and there is no hint of reverberation left anywhere, silence fills the room; not the cold silence of a paradox but the warm silence of a white opal chip slipping downward through a viscous fluid inside a black glass jar. The opposite of this silence is music itself. Music is a dream without the isolation of sleep, in which it appears we’re meant to endure life on a dying planet by becoming aware of emotion.

Cinderella

A moon the color of a white bone lying on blue snow slowly floats up a moving stairway to the stars, rescuing the sadly victimized word “escalation” from its bleak political context and suggesting that, given the chance, even such ugly duckling terminology can turn heads. The beautification of terms by context is a Cinderella story that tells us something about language, how it uses its terms in a floating manner. The words waver according to their weightiness. The heaviest expressions wobble like sumo wrestlers on a tightrope thin as a platinum diode, whereas the lightest ones glide so smoothly that their unwavering course across the clear landscape of the summer night leaves no questions to be asked, no mysteries to be discovered. These yelp-like apparitions seem to achieve a perfect aerobic denomination of truth, but it’s an illusion; a glass slipper can’t be danced in. Cinderella skates hopefully over the polished landscape of the ballroom floor, but we see through her as easily as thought the rayon and cellophane of her dress were spun from the tatters of a transparent soul. As the night deepens, she climbs out of that cheap dimestore gown and slips into the posh—where amid the buoys and inner tubes she becomes beautiful, Prince Charming or no Prince Charming, because I have willed it.

Terminal Stimulus

Everything exists under restraint. Nothing is free of this limitation. All existence in the universe is relative to the rest. Everything qualifies everything else. In this respect there are differences only of degree and form between the mineral realms and that of conscious beings. Once upon a time their lack of physical, economic or social power accustomed most humans to accept this; they existed in a benign state of ignorance that was happily abetted by those few who had power and who themselves dwelt in the delusion that they could play the game by a special set of rules. Then came the electronic emission of information, consumerism, and the infinite extension of markets. Greed was aroused to surmount the lower rungs of the ladder. No ultimate foothold was in sight.

Please Hold

Administrative disguises have no other use than to conceal from people the true workings of the social mechanism they are (however reluctantly) a part of. Sensing this, people have no other avenue of response but talking to each other about it—as in, “what to do?” And they console themselves by thinking that something has already been done about what is oppressing them when they talk about it. This conversational phenomenon resembles the psychological device known as wishful thinking. “Wishful talking” might be a good name for it.

Nobody There

One of the bonuses of living along the interdimensional rift zone of a society caught between its future in the age of electronic magic and its past in the spellcasting of the caves is the hang-up phone call, wherein, for a few seconds, one hears the heavy breathing of eternity—followed by an abrupt click, as the other world opens and closes, relunctantly to the here and now, but not without a powerful, lingering sense of disappointment.
WILLIAM GOWPER'S LAST WORDS

does it signify?

abol

SUBS: £20/$30 (40 issues/post) 132 Ditton Fields, Cambridge, U.K.