

A It became apparent quite early in ^{Fairfield's} his life, before he went to college, that ^{he} Fairfield was destined for a ^{Career} life in the arts, either as a writer or as a painter; in both of ^{these} which pursuits ^{he} had manifested considerable ^{select} aptitude. My interests were wholly in the realm of the sciences; as a consequence we had little in common outside the usual family and social intercourse. This was the situation ^{for many years} even when we were together in the summer on our island in Maine. Not until I gave up science to become a photographer did our interests begin to converge and finally become intimately interwoven. Edward appreciated Fairfield's talents sooner than I but he ceased going to the island quite soon after I became a photographer and from then on saw less of Fairfield than I did.

Fairfield started painting on the Island. His subjects were the landscapes of the Maine coast, scenes of the boats and houses, interiors of the Big House in which we as children lived for a half century of summers and loved, and the people who shared the island with us, his family, children and friends. Fairfield greatly admired Marin who painted in Stonington, a fisherman's town ten miles from Great Spruce Head. He first saw Marin's paintings at Stieglitz's gallery and was much influenced by his abstract style reflected in his own more realistic paintings of the Maine scene.

Even when confronted with adverse criticism, the popularity of subjective, intellectual trends, or the influence of his painter friends whose work he admired my brother never abandoned ^{his} realistic representation of the outer world throughout his painting career.

Fairfield introduced me to Stieglitz at a time when I was beginning to question my dedication to the pursuit of knowledge ^{sciences} through ~~the~~ and was tentatively seeking fulfillment of purpose in photography. It was ^a ~~A~~ fateful meeting and eventually led to my

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My brother Fairfield was a lifelong artist at heart beginning with his high school years. Father, in spite of his own artistic inclinations, never completely understood Fairfield's aspirations or his first immature attempts to express them. Mother, however, was more sympathetic, allbeit not ^{painting} ~~xxx~~ informed about the prevailing vogue in ~~the art world~~ ^{the art world}. After graduating from Harvard ^{Fairfield} ~~he~~ attended The Arts Student's League in New York where he studied unde ^a Bordman Robinson. Mother paid for his first trip abroad ^{during} ~~on~~ which he toured Italy for several months, visiting all the ~~famous~~ museums and palaces ^{in order} to gain first hand ^{knowledge} ~~acquaintance~~ ^{of} with the famous works of the renaissance Italian painters.

After marriage he settled at first in New York City, where he was living when he introduced me to Alfred Stieglitz, but after several years he moved permanently to South Hampton on Long Island, and it was there and in Maine that he developed his inimitable style of representat^{ional} ~~ive~~ painting.

~~for which he had been well known in the art world~~ His circle of friends included writers and poets of distinction and many abstract expressionist painters, among whom was ^{De Kooning} ~~the de Kooning~~, a recent unknown immigrant from Holland, ^{who was} greatly admired by Fairfield. The painters that especially

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influenced Fairfield and whom more than any others he sought to emulate were Bonnard and Vuillard. Fairfield's dedication to realist painting was criticized by Clement ^{Greenberg} who said of his work "You can't paint like that and ^{expect to be known} ~~ever be recognized~~ to which Fairfield replied that that was precisely the way he would continue to paint. Fairfield was also a critic of recognized perspicacity and wrote reviews for Art News. He once said he ^{was a} ~~considered himself a~~ better critic than a painter. In 1960 He wrote an article ^{that} ~~on Art for The Nation~~ in which he discussed the relationship of ~~photography~~ ^{which included} ~~xxx~~ ~~is~~ painting to photography as an art medium with a critical review of my color photographs.

My interest were wholly in the realm of the sciences

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Not until I gave up science to become a photographer did Fairfield's and my interest begin to converge and finally become intimately interwoven.

Fairfield started painting on Great Spruce Head Island, where his subjects were the landscapes of the Maine coast. My interest ^{at that time} were wholly in the realm of the sciences; as a consequence we had little in common ^{besides} outside the usual family and social intercourse. This was the situation for many years, even when we were together in summer on the island. Not until I gave up science ~~to~~ for photography did our interest ^s begin to converge and finally become intimately interwoven and mutually more empathetic. I was ^{very} affected by his paintings of the sea and sky and the spruce trees growing right down to the water's edge, which captured the very essence of relationships in the natural world. When I sent Fairfield a copy of ~~my~~ Summer Island he wrote me: "Thank you for the Island book, which I love: it is your best collection of photographs, I think even better than In Wildness. In this book each photograph is better than the previous one, and there is never a let down." In the Adirondack book some that I very much like are the first wide landscapes with slopes of millions of leaves in the foreground and a mountain in the distance, and the ones of deserted orchards in which sight is carried beyond itself to a kind of total knowledge of the world as a whole.⁽¹⁾

During the last summers of his life, I often visited him in his studio on the back porch of the Big House, which had become his by right of occupancy. He would on these occasions show me what he was working on and the paintings he had completed; ^{he then} would ask for my opinions and reflectively listen to my comments, that as an inexperienced critic, I expressed with hesitation. During one of these conversations he told me that he ^{had been} ~~was~~ influenced by my photography, ^{words of} praise that I cherished. Fairfield was the brother to whom I grew closest in my later years. Shortly before his death he wrote: "I have just read Antarctic Experience which I couldn't interrupt. It is beautiful; accurate, transparent, and without rhetoric; I think it will become a classic. I could almost illustrate it in color from your descriptions."

After his death^e his wife, Ann, wrote me: "He really loved talking with
 you; so often he said at the Island, "I think I'll go and see if Eliot is home"
 The text of the book on Antarctica was such a joy to him I'm sure he told
 you. He kept saying, "It's beautiful, Beautifully written. It's a classic."

B [The French painters ^{that} ~~whom~~ Fairfield especially admired and whom, more than
 any other^s, he sought to emulate, were Bonnard and Vuillard.

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George) the Socialist label as an alien product burdened with notions of revolution and violence; and the Marxists in turn regarded the Bellamy groups as unscientific, sentimental idealists. The injustices and cruelties perpetrated by the Stalin regime and its unconcealed contempt for those Socialist groups who were critical widened this breach. If the Khrushchev regime should now begin moving toward political democracy as well as higher living standards, if it could earn the confidence of the many Socialist and semi-Socialist factions in every country, the world might move ahead much faster toward something resembling Bellamy's new Boston.

ART

Fairfield Porter

HOLDERIN's poem, *Nature and Art*, characterizes the Golden Age as a time when the ruler of heaven and earth "uttered no command, and still not / One of the mortals by name had named him." (Vernon Watkins' translation.) In the Saturnian age the world appeared new: things had no names, there was no past or future, all concepts were unconscious, and all order. The radiance of such an age has been expressed by poets; but has it ever been expressed in painting or sculpture? Perhaps in fifth-century Greek sculpture, and perhaps sometimes by Monet, and often by Sisley. But these Impressionist painters expressed it in a generalized way, and only by color. The color of nature is disappearing from painting, even though non-objective painting represents a turn away from conceptualism and toward direct experience. Non-objective painting is more graphic and emotional than open to sensation; and realist painting is less interested in nature than in ideas, as: what is natural, or what should painting be about? An expression of the immediacy of experience—for what else is the namelessness of everything—is proper to poetry and natural to photography. I know no photographs that express this so well as the color prints of my brother, Eliot Porter who, like Audubon, is known for his record of the birds of America.

He has made a series of color photographs illustrating Thoreau on the seasons, which were shown last month at the Baltimore Museum, and are now on exhibition at the Eastman museum in Rochester. They are not like other color photographs. There are no eccentric

angles familiar to the movies, snapshots or advertising, and the color is like a revelation. The color of photographs usually looks added: it floats in a film above the surface; it is a dressing-up. And it is usually rather inattentive. It is inattentive in the way that printers in this country are inattentive to the accurate shade, and the way color reproductions are almost invariably insensitive. It seems that the fact of color itself is considered enough: one knows the sky is blue, and the grass green, and you can let it go at that. But Porter's colors, with all the clear transparency of dyes, have substance as well. They are not on top.

His range of colors contributes to their namelessness. For photography has limitations comparable to those of paint — there are primary and secondary colors. Memory contracts and symbolizes; and one thinks of his winter photographs as pale yellow and white; spring as blue-green; summer as red and green; autumn as orange and yellow; however if you look again, you discover that you cannot generalize, you cannot conceptualize, the colors do not correspond to words you know, they are themselves, a language that is not spoken. The color indications are all primary, as a poet might use words as though they were new, without precedent or possible future, but tied to the event. The color is tied to the shape and the context; no habitual meaning is suggested. In the corner of this grayish wall of trees, that blue, is it sky? No, it is ferns. It is as much of a discovery as the broken color of Impressionism. The shadows of leaves are yellow or black, the light on them white or blue. The weed stems in the snow are yellow, better set in and stronger in their contrast than Wyeth's black virtuosity. But you cannot describe one language with another. Drawing and painting have a language, but literature and photography are language. This is what Maholy-Nagy must have meant by his suggestion that the illiterate man of the future would be he who could not use a camera. These photographs make wonder the natural condition of the human mind. Have you ever seen before the redness of grass, the blueness of leaves, the orange cliffs of autumn, the two circles of sunflower blossoms, or a kerosene lamp against the sun in a window? Or that where a tree has fallen, it seems to have fallen with intention? There is no subject and background, every corner is equally alive. *es pty.*
Photography is nature, and so critics

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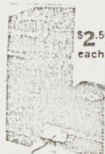


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The NATION

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have thought that it was not art. But if these photographs did not show you what they did, you would never have been able to discover it. The golden age of the child's omnipotence is succeeded by the Jovian world of adults and of art. Adults classify, generalize and ignore. But the ability to distinguish comes first. Can we as adults be sure that we see more deeply, through art, than the photographer who pretends to do nothing but pay the closest possible attention to everything? He distinguishes endlessly and he dares not ignore. What does love come from if not just this scrupulous respect and close attention? The trouble with art is that, in choosing, the artist ignores. The trouble with the realistic artist is that he is indirect, and between himself and his experience he puts concepts: a steady equality of detail, conceptualistic anatomy, or the meter of the old masters. The non-objective artist is closer to the photographer in his reliance on direct experience. But, because he is not interested in objective nature he tends to lose his contact with concrete variety. The trouble with this is that it leads to a loss of a feeling for pluralism, as though all experience were becoming one experience, the experience of everything.

MUSIC

Lester Trimble

THERE is always excitement in the air when Stravinsky appears in public. This was certainly true of the recent Town Hall concert at which he conducted four American composer-pianists (Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland, Lukas Foss, Roger Sessions), the American Concert Choir, a group of solo singers and a percussion ensemble, in his masterpiece from the period 1917-1923, *Les Noces*. The standing ovation as he came on stage from the wings was even longer and more fervent than usual. Only a few individuals, no doubt tinged with the same iconoclasm that has been a part of the composer's mental equipment, remained stubbornly rooted in their chairs. I was glad for both demonstrations.

Despite the general atmosphere of brilliance, however, a sense of incipient sadness also hung over the evening. Stravinsky has aged rapidly in the past few years; his sprightly, grasshopper-like way of moving about the podium has changed radically, and one cannot avoid seeing that his seventy-eight years

weigh heavily upon him. This, combined with the fact that there were on the program an *Epitaphium* (1959) for Prince Max Egon zu Fürstenburg; a *Memorial* (1959) for Raoul Dufy (both by Stravinsky); and a *Trio-Satz* (Opus Posthumous-1925), by Webern, darkened one's spirits a little. The program notes for the Bach Cantata, *Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir* (conducted by Stravinsky's protégé, Robert Craft), lent their bit to a perhaps accidental image by reminding us that the work "might possibly be a funeral cantata, since no particular Sunday is indicated." I don't know who planned the program, but it's a good thing a jolly piece like *Les Noces* was there at the end.

INDEED, had it not been there, the concert would have been a failure. *Epitaphium* is only seven bars long; too short to make any impression beyond the one that it was a Dadaesque idea to write it at all. The piece is scored for flute, clarinet and harp, and the only memories I retain of it are certain lovely bass-register harp sonorities, a feeling that it was about equal in time-space to a three-inch newspaper obituary, and the thought that "chic" can get very close to "chi-chi," even with Stravinsky.

Memorial, for string quartet, is a bit longer, lasting perhaps two and a half minutes. It consists of a double-canon. For some reason which I have not been able to trace, its spiritual ambience reminded me of the late Beethoven Quartets, which is to say also that it was very beautiful. It was not "concentrated," as are the ultra-brief works by Webern. Its brevity, like that of *Epitaphium*, seemed an externally, willfully imposed factor, and thus disturbing. A short double-canon is fine, but unless it gives a sense of aesthetic fulfillment, it is not an *oeuvre*, but an es-

say in contrapuntal technique. These two minuscule pieces are, to my mind, nothing more than elegant autographs from the hand of a master. Their elegance and accuracy are admirable, but when the canon reminded me of Beethoven, it also reminded me that the earlier composer was humbler and more generous when he dealt with a noble idea.

Les Noces is prime Stravinsky, and threw everything else into shadow. To have Messrs. Barber, Copland, Foss and Sessions at the four pianos was an entertaining idea, and they played very well indeed. But as a whole, the performance was not particularly spirited. Stravinsky seemed tired. The soloists—Mildred Allen, Elaine Bonazzi, Regina Sarfaty, Loren Driscoll and Robert Oliver—were, with the exception of Mr. Driscoll, possessed of splendid voices. They were not, however, entirely at home with the music. Nor was the chorus. Possibly there was not enough rehearsal, but whatever the reason, there were moments where the music's Slavic extravaganza seemed almost an embarrassment to Anglo-Saxon personalities. As for the text, sung in English, it might as well have been in Urdu, for not more than five words were understandable. And yet, as always, *Les Noces* was a wonder to the ears. I wish it would be done in New York with the ballet which is one of its integral parts. This would be expensive, no doubt; but what an extravaganza!

There is not much to say about the rest of the program. Mr. Craft conducted competently enough, but neither the Bach Cantata nor the Monteverdi *Ballo delle Ingrate* is a particularly fascinating work. The latter is entirely too long and full of recitatives for present-day audiences. Before it was over more than a few heads were nodding—mine among them.

Out in the Cold

The sun shines in the ice of my country
As my smile glitters in the mirror of my devotion.
I live on the edge of the land. Flat is the scene there.
There are a few scrub bushes. The frozen sea
Lies locked for a thousand miles to the north, to the Pole.

Meager my mouth, and my knuckles sharp and white.
They will hurt when I hit. I fish for a fish
So thin and sharp in the tooth as to suit my malice.
It stares like any fish, but it knows a lot,
Knows what I know. Astonishment it has not.

I have a hut to which I go at night.
Sometimes there is no night and the midnight sun
And I sit up all night and fish for that fish.
We huddle over the ice, the two of us.

DAVID FERRY

The NATION

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