THE SANATORIUM,
LE GRAU-DU-ROI

BY DAVID CHERISHIRE

The white beds placed out, neatly, in the sun; the delicate, antiseptic scrape of the surf over the beach, the taut shell. I had come (not as a patient, I thought) with enough health to see me through. But watching, each day, the dazzling, washed figures round a bed like gardeners plotting some vegetable cure for their sick as I walked, not spotlessly, over their sand, I saw why they came here, a place unplagued by uncertainties. This land, held for the sea to be by, and to face the sun, has nowhere else to go, no hill to clamber and squint from and no inland jagged motions but one slow coil of waves in clocks of sand.

Less decorously, nearby, some trippers laze, unhealing, miserable, secure, and oil a leathery arm or two, or gaze blankly at that scintillating shore. None stroll this far. My traveling eye, though, sees that those trust the white amplitude of years to swell recovery into a cure, while these bodies on vacation roll each half hour, stare and squirm to ease their burning thighs, yet coax no bright events out of the sea, ignoring the sick men with sun-filled eyes who quietly, grain by grain, build ecstasy, and in me too, stale pools of sickness, sipped and diagnosed at last, come clean, break free — I stand and watch my quick, dead footprints sift, unhurried as an hourglass, to the sea.

ALL-NIGHT DINER

BY JACK FLAVIN

I'm going to teach my owl to sing in Presbyterian. I think it's fine — it's perfectly all right the way he hoos the country kids to sleep. What really bothers me is how he spends his nights. Am I to go on harboring a criminal, a dunce, a common thief? No, no! I'm not a keeper of assassins. I'll simply teach the bird to sing. The lessons must begin at once.

THE STATUE OF EVE

BY MICHAEL WOLFE

Slim as a rib, out of the public grass, In this dying October garden Where both I and my brother pass, She begs our pardon

Fearing what parents fear when children meet, The Elderly Guilty who sense That disapproval of defeat And of self-defense

Which is the sole response a child may give To his inheritance, The world his parents make and give, Small recompense

Indeed, for that forbidden Spring-time garden Each child is cheated of; An outstretched arm, she begs our pardon We who now move

In private pattern through her timeless chapel And mark our time, until We pluck the dappled death-worn apple That eats the will.