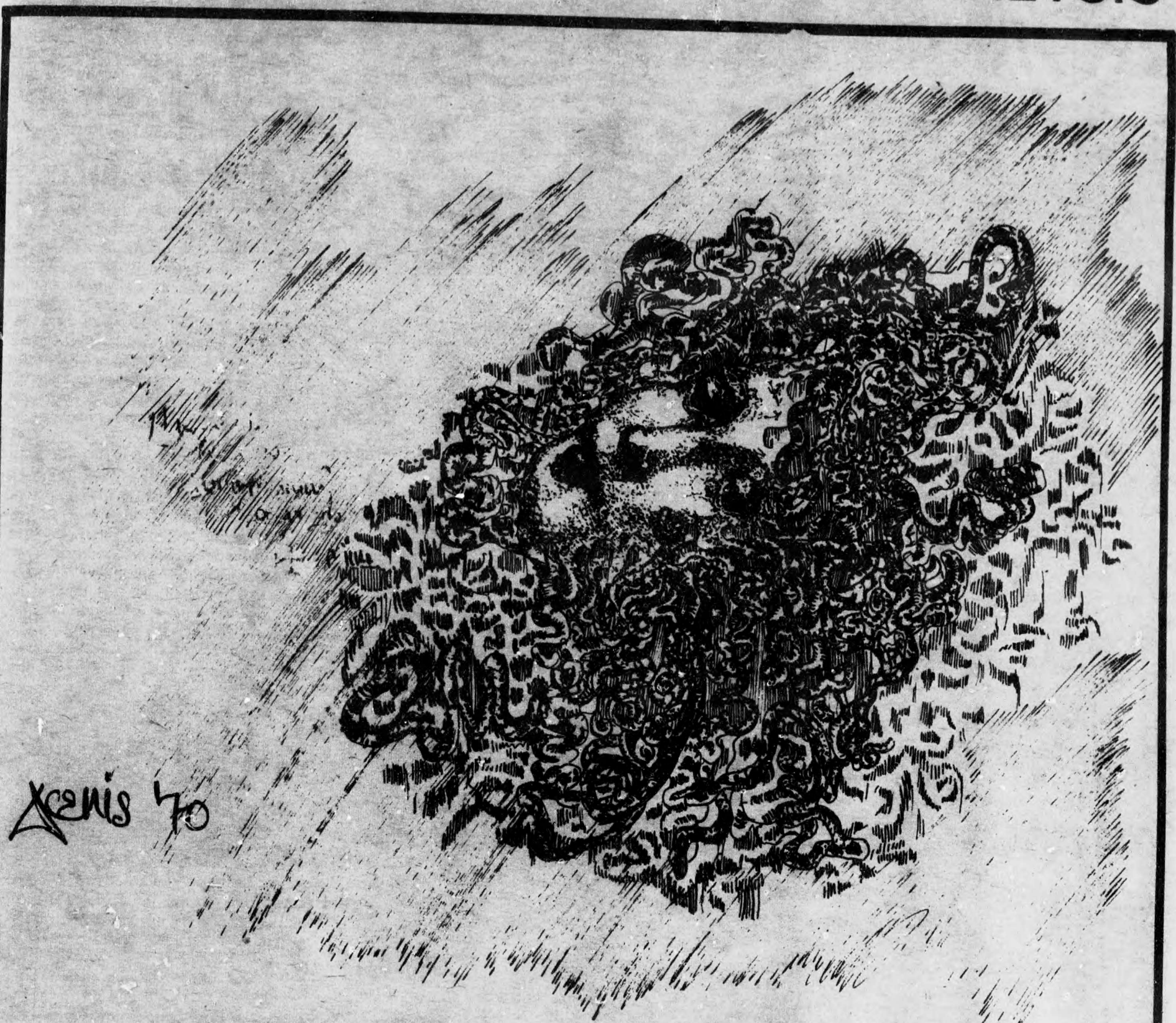


REFLECTIONS : IMAGES IN ANALYSIS



QUILLET EX QUIBUSDAM VETERIBUS CODICI-
BUS CONTRA POSTULATA: DECORUM INJURIAS
DIS CURAE. QUILLET QUI LONGUM NOTO SCRIP-
TORI PORRIGET AEVUM.

Musa, mihi causa
memora, quo humine I aeso?

Virgil

Once upon a time, and a very good time of base declension, it was too, for aught I know, there dwelt in Ireland a race of poets that unwound rhyme for their gruel. Living best half of the day in ditches, dykes, hedges, hollows and nettlebeds and best half of th'other half afoot, it came to pass that at certain fortunate milestones in the year a bard would chance upon a castle and enter it to begger a stew by the timely composition of right witty lays. It was a thing of custom among the Earls and Lords of Ireland to act benignly toward these fellows that was nothing to those that knew the power of the bard in the useful craft of laying poetic curses on those that did not feed them. Thus men often without learning and of slow wit respected a rhyme more than they did their dinner.

Upon this time there was a subtle little bard called Donnacadh and going down the glens he came upon the ancestral house of the O'Hanlons who were both potatoe and butter to all that lived and died in the noble and esteemed vales of Orior. And the weather was not good in this year, making the dyke rare of primrose and scent and smells of the earth that seduced a man to lay down awhile among the long grasses. Donnacadh was wetted and made across the wine-coloured moat-water with the firm intent of filling his belly that stood empty. It was just past dawn and the dew was raw and cold and dull, made bleaker

by the rain that fell with the skinning north-west wind on the vale and the castle and the castle and the hounds.

Inspired within the walls by the faint scent of ortolan-with-sprout, the bold Donnacadh, expecting to find Imperial O'Hanlon lulling in the custom on some precious embossed ivory love-bed with a brace or two of courtesans, ungirdled his lyre and, moth-eaten-apart grey alb flung gallantly behind to float stately on the chill air, hastened to the bed-chamber. With a light pluck of resonant strings Donnacadh the Brave rushed into the room and began to intone:

How many more miles to Dublin?
It is midnight and twenty minutes
where your sweet white thighs are.

But Holy O'Hanlon was at prayer.

An hour after, poor Donnacadh the Exiled sat six thousand feet above Orior, in a dead elm, or ash, naked, cold and starved, chewing a crust. His toes that were freezing to the west eight now looked like blue pebbles on a leaf. Far below in the grey waters of the loch he heard the living waters:

Donnacadh! Donnacadh!
Donnacadh! Donnacadh!

So was poor Donnacadh the Leaf, up there with the dun rook and the crow, fearing for his soul. Six long days and nights came and went with the whispering winds and still Donnacadh remained high up in the air like a piper's note caught in a lofty bough. Here, I am not a bird! he said, and clambering down the trunk changed his throat and had the throat of a bard. And this was his song:

O'Hanlon the tattered
I saw in the glen,
Getting ready a dinner
For Orior's thin men.
He was cooking a roast
On two bars of a narrow,
Bedaden, bedaden,
'Twas the leg
Of a sparrow.

Daenis



(continued : P. 8)