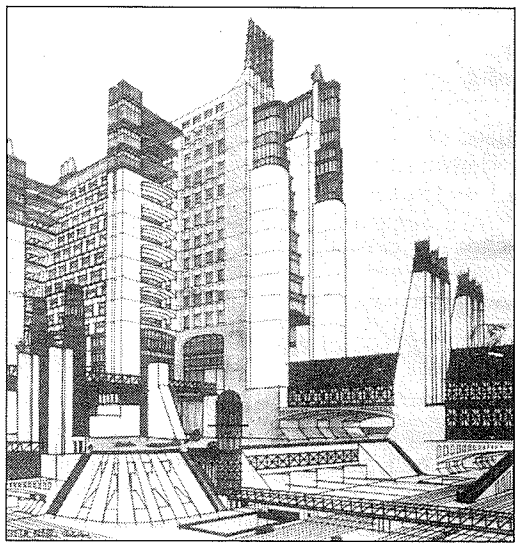
chitects and urban planners. And now, middle-class gentrifiers see many of the old tenements as diamonds in the rough.

Why is it, Glazer asks, that the old houses, built by speculators, "with ostensibly no attention to personal taste and desire, thrown up to cover the most land and make the most money, using the materials and technology of the 1870s, [have been] considered superior by many of those living in them to the new flats designed by the best planning authorities using good architects?" Because most people, especially those raising families, share a "taste for the low-rise, the small-scale, the unit that gives some privacy, some control, some access to the ground, a small piece of land wholly under one's control."

These are tastes that architects and urban planners do not find very interesting to explore or to satisfy, Glazer observes. In hindsight, urban planners might have admitted that leveling neighborhoods and uprooting long-standing communities was an extreme step. Instead, they have attacked working-class people and their defenders as boorish, backward-looking philistines. Glazer finds it ironic that modernist architecture, conceived to provide housing for the working-class, should now require an elitist defense.



The best-laid plans: Antonio Sant'Elia's 1914 citta nuova *apartment building complex, which featured external elevators and a tramway.*

McPoetry

"The Contemporary Workshop Aesthetic" by David Dooley, in *The Hudson Review* (Summer 1990), 684 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021.

The poet Donald Hall recently lamented that instead of nurturing young artists, this country's flourishing university poetry workshops are turning out scribblers of lukewarm "McPoems." Dooley, who is also a poet, believes he knows why.

The "workshop lyric," as Dooley dubs most of the poetry written by university-trained poets in the last 30 years, is the diminished legacy of "confessional" poets such as Sylvia Plath, "quasi-surreal" poets such as W. S. Merwin, and "regional-pastoral" poets such as Wendell Berry. While these artists grappled with words, ideas, and emotions, Dooley writes, workshop poets merely mimic their forms.

Workshop poets are paralyzed by what Dooley calls "three terrors: terror of emotion, terror of thought, terror of language." The adept composition of their predecessors is replaced by heightened, awkward diction, as in Stephen Dunn's highly acclaimed "The Routine Things Around the House," in which he writes: "Mother, dead woman/who I think permits me/to love women easily . . . ."

Workshop poets mostly write free verse, Dooley notes, because rhyming poetry requires more effort than they are willing to muster. Laziness also accounts for the flaccid images common in their work, most notably the ubiquitous "adjective noun of noun" phrase (such as "sweet revisions of memory" or "dim lands of peace") decried by Ezra Pound years ago. Emotion, indeed any genuine expression, is replaced by blandness. In the hands of a workshop poet, Dooley continues, once-effective traditional poetic techniques, such as the "line/break," made popular by William

Carlos Williams, become pretentious and stultifying. He points to the opening lines of a poem by Phillip Booth: "On the far side/of the storm/window." The break is used as a trick to interrupt the flow of the poem and call attention to the cleverness of its author.

Are there any antidotes to the workshop syndrome? Dooley knows that little can be done about the larger cultural trends and smaller academic imperatives that foster mediocrity. But he does have a few hints for budding McPoets. Avoid obvious cliches, such as the "adjective noun of noun" formula. Read lots of poetry, especially verse written by dead poets, whose work was never dulled by a workshop. And *feel* something.

Bloodsuckers

"The Real Vampire" by Paul Barber, in *Natural History* (Oct. 1990), American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., New York, N.Y. 10024.

To most people, the "typical" vampire would be a tuxedoed gentleman with overdeveloped canines and a predilection for nighttime activities. But this is the vampire of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), based on a Walachian prince named Vlad Tepes. In the actual folklore of Walachia (part of present-day Romania) the *vampir* had more humble origins.

The Slavic revenant (literally, one who returns from the dead) was usually a peasant. "Victims" of vampires described their attackers as bloated figures with ruddy skin, having long fingernails and stubbly beards. In the 1730s, an outbreak of vampire attacks in the Serbian village of Medvegia prompted a group of Austrian physicians to investigate. In the harsh light of modern forensics, writes Barber, a research associate at UCLA's Fowler Museum of Cultural History, the evidence for vampires included in such accounts as their *Visum et Repertum* (Seen and Discovered) seems to vanish.

Much of the hysteria in Medvegia during the 1730s was fueled by memories of Arnold Paole, a suspected vampire. When they had exhumed Paole's body years earlier, the villagers told the Austrians, they had found that his corpse was "undecayed, and that fresh blood had flowed from his eyes, nose, mouth, and ears." They also saw that "the old nails on his hands and feet, along with the skin, had fallen off, and that new ones had grown." Convinced that Paole was a vampire, they had driven a stake through his heart, "whereby he gave an audible groan and bled copiously."

Scholars once simply dismissed such accounts, but Barber says they contain some telling details. The condition of Paole's corpse, which suggested to the villagers some kind of continuing life, actually exhibits classic signs of decomposition. Nails fall off after death; the "new nails" probably were the glossy "nail beds" underneath. Burial slows the rate of flesh decomposition, and even copious bleeding from corpses is natural. What of Paole's groan? Merely the compression of chest air through the larynx, forced out by the driving stake. The bloating mentioned in many accounts was due to an accumulation of gases, not to gorging on blood.

But how to explain the victims' certainty that they had been attacked by a vampire? In the case that brought the Austrians to Medvegia, a woman named Stanacka had awakened from her sleep "with a terrible cry... and complained that she had been throttled by [a man] who had died nine weeks earlier." After suffering from chest pains for three days, Stanacka died. Barber believes that the attack was nothing more than a nightmare. The peasants' willingness to believe Stanacka was natural, since the record suggests that an epidemic, beyond their ability to comprehend or cure, was sweeping the area. It probably was the epidemic that claimed her life, too, but to the peasants, Stanacka's death was proof enough that she had been the victim of a vampire. No doubt it gave them some solace to personify the agent of their troubles. At least a vampire can be dispatched with a stake through the heart.