

thoughts the idea of Osceola McCarthy and this simple theme of compound interest.

DEDICATION OF ETERNITY HALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RIGGS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Hawaii [Mr. ABERCROMBIE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of some coincidence that today is Humanities on the Hill Day, and we had an opportunity, many of us, to meet with the representatives of the Endowment for the Humanities in our local jurisdictions from all over the country.

In that context, I had the privilege of addressing the group who came here this morning for a few minutes, and had a chance to comment to them about a recent event in Hawaii at Schofield Barracks where I had the opportunity to deliver remarks at the dedication of Eternity Hall, Eternity Hall in Quadrangle D at Schofield Barracks. That occasion was on April 2, 1997.

Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, marks the 20th anniversary of the death of James Jones, the author of "From Here to Eternity." I would like to take this opportunity, then, today to deliver yet again the comments that were made on that occasion, to indicate to my colleagues that tomorrow the film "From Here to Eternity" will be shown at Schofield Barracks, because the young soldiers that are there have taken a renewed interest in their history, have taken a renewed interest in Schofield Barracks and in World War II and, by extension, the author who made it possible for us to understand more about ourselves as a result of the great art that is "From Here to Eternity."

Mr. Speaker, "From Here to Eternity," like all great works of art, transcends its form. In this instance, the novel. Like all great works of art, it transforms those who experience it, its readers. It transposes its content, the characters and their actions, into a larger vision of life itself, a dimension of depth beyond the story itself.

Schofield Barracks is the stage upon which the story unfolds. But it is not events of which we learn. Rather, we learn the meaning of integrity, honesty, honor, and above all, what it takes to be human. This is what it meant to me. "From Here to Eternity" shaped the basic values I hold to this day.

So it was with a sense of outrage that I read a sneering, wounding article about James Jones just before leaving for Europe in 1967 on a backpack trek around the world. I had no idea I would literally walk into him in Paris some weeks later.

I knew it was him the moment I saw this short, square block of a man plowing down the avenue. In my mind's eye now I see a cigar clamped in his

clenched jaw, but perhaps it is only because I like to believe it was there. All I really saw were his eyes. How could such gentle eyes be locked into such a rugged mug of a face?

To his friend William Styron, and I quote, "was there ever such a face, with its Beethovenesque brow and lantern jaw and stepped-upon-looking nose. A forbidding face until one realized that it only seemed to glower, since the eyes really projected a skeptical humor that softened the initial impression of rage."

On impulse, I spoke to him. "Don't pay any attention to the critics. You write for us, for me. We're the readers. Pruitt, Warden, Maggio, they're real for us. "From Here to Eternity" means everything for us. What you write is important to us. To hell with the critics. Keep writing for us." Or some such blither.

□ 1915

I felt a total fool. He stared at me, and I bolted away. A few days later I found myself outside his home on the Ile St. Louis behind Notre Dame. The San Francisco Diggers who fed the homeless during those years had published a directory of Americans worldwide who could be counted on to be kind to American travelers in need. I had come upon it in a Left Bank book store, and Jones's name and address were in it.

I rang the bell on impulse out of both a desire to apologize and yet tell him again more clearly how much he meant to us as readers. A suspicious housekeeper somehow agreed to tell him that the man who stopped him on the Right Bank the other day wanted to see him.

Amazingly she returned animated. By all means Mr. Jones would see me. He was anxious to see me. Please come up. Would it be possible to wait a few minutes while he finished his writing for the day. Please don't leave.

I was a bit dazed as I sat on a stool on what appeared to be a tiny bar and library area. Suddenly he burst through a door, barrel-chested, huge smile, moving like a pulling guard on a halfback sweep.

"Am I glad to see you. I told Gloria," his wife Gloria, "I told Gloria all about our meeting. I've been writing on the energy of it for the past two weeks. I never seem to meet readers any more. It's always somebody who wants something from me. How about a drink?"

From that moment, I ceased to be a fan. I became a fierce partisan. I had never met anyone so nakedly honest in his observations and inquiries, so plain-spokenly straight. No rhetorical brilliance, just easy-fit words and thoughts expressed as solid and simple as a beating heart, just like From Here to Eternity.

In 1951, the Los Angeles Times said:

James Jones has written a tremendously compelling and compassionate story. The scope covers the full range of the human condition, man's fate and man's hope. It is a tribute to human dignity.

The book was From Here to Eternity. Its author was 30 years old. In March of 1942, he had written to his brother Jeff from his bunk at Schofield Barracks.

Sometimes the air is awfully clear here. You can look off to sea and see the soft, warm, raggedy roof of clouds stretching on and on and on. It almost seems as if you can look right on into eternity.

It is 20 years tomorrow since James Jones died, leaving his work to speak for him and to us.

Biographer George Garret said,

Boy and man, Jones never lost his energetic interest, his continual curiosity, the freshness of his vision. It was these qualities, coupled with the rigor of his integrity, which defined the character of his life's work.

Others, of course, recognize these qualities and wish to speak for and about James Jones on this anniversary of his passing.

Winston Groom, George Hendrick, Norman Mailer, William Styron, whose Forward to To Reach Eternity: The letters of James Jones, I include here in its totality and from which I will read, Mr. Speaker, excerpts, and Willie Morris, friend and biographer of his last days, all are represented in the remarks which follow.

First is a letter to me from Winston Groom:

Dear Congressman ABERCROMBIE: Gloria Jones asked me to write to you regarding the dedication of a building in Schofield Barracks in honor of her late husband, James Jones.

This is a wonderful and fitting tribute to a fine soldier and a great writer who contributed perhaps more than any other to the public understanding of the military during the World War II era.

Long before I wrote Forrest Gump I began a friendship with Jim Jones which was cut far too short by his untimely death. He was always kind and giving to the younger generation of writers and took time to help me with my first novel, Better Times Than These, which was about the Vietnam War. In fact, I dedicated that book to Jim.

I congratulate you and all the others who worked to create this very appropriate memorial to a great American patriot and champion of the common soldier.

Respectfully yours, Winston Groom.

I received a letter from George Hendrick, a professor of English at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Dear Neil: I'm sending along, as promised, the statement for the Schofield Barracks ceremony. I am certainly pleased to know about this important event and to play some small part in it.

The university library has acquired the manuscript of From Here To Eternity and The Pistol, and they will be on exhibit at the next meeting of the James Jones Literary Society in Springfield on November 4 of this year. I hope you can attend.

Professor Hendrick's comments are as follows:

Pvt. James Jones, then a member of the air corps, transferred to the 27th Infantry Regiment at Schofield Barracks in September of 1940. Jones, not yet 19 years old, was already an aspiring novelist, and he was later to have a clear recollection of life in F Company in Quad D, of the lives of officers and enlisted men, and of the landscape around Schofield. In From Here to Eternity

he made this peacetime army uniquely his own.

When Jones was finishing *Eternity* in 1949 he wrote a chapter about the events of December 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor, with emphasis on the strafing of Schofield Barracks that day. He wrote his editor about the chapter.

And I quote:

Here is the piece de resistance, the tour de force, the final accolade and calumny, the climax, peak, and focus.

Here, in a word, is Pearl Harbor . . . I personally believe it will stack up with Stendhal's *Waterloo* or Tolstoy's *Austerlitz*. That is what I was aiming at, and wanted it to do, and I think it does it. I don't think it does, send it back, and I'll rewrite it. Good isn't enough, not for me, any way; good is only middling fair. We must remember people will be reading this book a couple of hundred years after I'm dead . . .

The chapter did not need rewriting. In fact, his intent throughout the novel had been to aim high and capture for all time the complex world of Schofield Barracks as it was in 1940 and 1941.

From *Here To Eternity* is now a classic American novel, and Schofield Barracks is preserved in it as if in amber.

Norman Mailer, along with William Styron and James Jones, the great trio of writers to come out of World War II said, and I quote:

The only one of my contemporaries who I felt had more talent than myself was James Jones, and he has also been the one writer of my time for whom I felt any love. We saw each other only six or eight times over the years, but it always gave me a boost to know that Jim was in town. He carried his charge with him, he had the talent to turn a night of heavy drinking into a great time. I felt then and can still say now that *From Here To Eternity* has been the best American novel since the Second World War, and if it is ridden with faults, and ignorances, and a smudge of the sentimental, it has the force that few novels one could name. What was unique about Jones was that he had come out of nowhere, self-taught, a clunk in his lacks, but the only one of us who had the guts of a broken-glass brawl.

William Styron faxed to me his introduction to the volume of Jim Jones's letters. He asked that certain passages, those which he thought were most effective for illuminating James Jones, be read at the ceremony. He invited me to feel free to use any part of the essay, not just the circled passages, and I think that I have the essence of it here from William Styron:

From *Here To Eternity* was published at a time when I was in the process of completing my own first novel. I remember reading *Eternity* when I was living and writing in a country house in Rockland County, not far from New York City, and as has so often been the case with books that have made a large impression on me, I can recall the actual reading, the mood, the excitement, the surroundings. I remember the couch I lay on while reading, the room, the wallpaper, white curtains stirring and flowing in an indolent breeze, and cars that passed on the road outside. I think that perhaps I read portions of the book in other parts of the house, but it is that couch what I chiefly recollect, and myself sprawled on it, holding the hefty volume aloft in front of my eyes as I remained more or less transfixed through most of the waking hours of several days enthralled, to the story's power, its immediate narrative authority, its vigorously peopled barracks and barrooms its gutsy humor and its immense harrowing sadness.

The book was about the unknown world of the peace time army. Even if I had not suffered some of the outrages of military life, I am sure I would have recognized the book's stunning authenticity, its burly artistry, its sheer richness as life. A sense of permanence attached itself to the pages. This remarkable quality did not arise from Jones's language, for it was quickly apparent that the author was not a stylist, certainly not the stylist of refinement and nuance that former students of creative writing classes had been led to emulate.

The genial rhythms and carefully wrought sentences that English majors had been encouraged to admire were not on display in *Eternity*, nor was the writing even vaguely experimental; it was so conventional as to be premodern. This was doubtless a blessing, for here was a writer whose urgent, blunt language with its off-key tonalities and hulking emphasis on adverbs wholly matched his subject matter. Jones's wretched outcasts and the narrative voice he had summoned to tell their tale had achieved a near-perfect synthesis. What also made the book a triumph were the characters Jones had fashioned—Prewitt, Warden, Maggio, the officers and their wives, the Honolulu whores, the brig rats, and all the rest. There were none of the wan, tentative effigies that had begun to populate the pages of postwar fiction during its brief span, but human beings of real size and arresting presence, believable and hard to forget. The language may have been coarse-grained but it had Dreiserian force, and the people were as alive as those of Dostoevski.

It has been said that writers are fiercely jealous of one another. Kurt Vonnegut has observed that most writers display towards one another the edgy mistrust of bears. This may be true, but I do recall that in those years directly following World War II, there seemed to be a moratorium on envy, and most of the young writers who were heirs to the Lost Generation developed, for a time at least, a camaraderie, or a reasonable compatibility, as if there were glory enough to go all around for all the novelists about to try to fit themselves into the niches alongside those of the earlier masters.

When I finished reading *From Here To Eternity*, I felt no jealousy at all, only a desire to meet this man just four years older than myself, who had inflicted on me such emotional turmoil in the act of telling me authentic truths about an underside of American life I barely knew existed. I wanted to talk to the writer who had dealt so eloquently with those lumpen warriors and who had created scenes that tore at the guts. Jim was serious about fiction in a way that now seems a little old-fashioned and ingenuous, with the novel for him in magisterial reign. He saw it as sacred mission, as icon, as Grail. Like so many American writers of distinction, Jim had not been grant-

ed the benison of a formal education, but like these dropouts he had done a vast amount of impassioned and eclectic reading; thus while there were gaps in his literary background that college boys like me had filled, he had absorbed an impressive amount of writing for a man whose schoolhouse had been at home or in a barracks. He had been, and still was, a hungry reader, and it was fascinating in those dawn sessions with him to hear this fellow built like a welterweight boxer, speak in his gravelly drill sergeant's voice about a few of his more recherche loves. Virginia Woolf was one, I recall; Edith Wharton another. I did not agree with Jim much of the time, but I usually found that his tastes and judgments were, on their own terms, gracefully discriminating and astute.

Basically it had to do with men at war, for Jim had been to war, he had been wounded on Guadalcanal, had seen men die, had been sickened and traumatized by the experience. Hemmingway had been to war too, and had been wounded, but despite the gloss of misery and disenchantment that overlaid his work, Jim maintained he was at heart a war lover, a macho contriver of romantic effects, and to all but the gullible and wishful, the lie showed glaringly through the fabric of his books and in his life.

□ 1930

He therefore had committed the artist's chief sin by betraying the truth. Jim's opinions of Hemmingway, justifiable in its harshness or not, was less significant than what it revealed about his own view of existence, which at its most penetrating, as in *From Here To Eternity* and later in *The Pistol* and *The Thin Red Line*, was always seen through the soldier's eye, in a hallucination where the circumstances of military life cause men to behave mostly like beasts and where human dignity, while welcome and often redemptive, is not the general rule.

Jones was among the best anatomists of warfare in our time, and in his bleak, extremely professional vision he continued to insist that war was a congenital and chronic illness from which we would never be fully delivered. War rarely ennobled men and usually degraded them. Cowardice and heroism were both celluloid figments, generally interchangeable, and such grandeur as could be salvaged from the mess lay at best in pathos, in the haplessness of men's mental and physical suffering.

Living or dying in war had nothing to do with valor, it had to do with luck. Jim had endured very nearly the worst. He had seen death face to face. At least partially as a result of this, he was quite secure in his masculinity and better able than anyone else I have known to detect muscle-bound pretense and empty bravado. It is fortunate that he did not live to witness Rambo or our

high-level infatuation with military violence. It would have brought out the assassin in him.

The next major work of war was *The Thin Red Line*, a novel of major dimensions whose rigorous integrity and disciplined art allowed Jim once again to exploit the military world he knew so well. Telling the story of GIs in combat in the Pacific, it is squarely in the gritty, no-holds-barred tradition of American realism, a genre that even in 1962, when the book was published, would have seemed oafishly out of date had it not been for Jim's mastery of the narrative and his grasp of sun-baked milieu of bloody island warfare, which exerted such a compelling hold on the reader that he seemed to breathe new life into the form.

Romain Gary had commented about the book: "It is essentially a love poem about the human predicament and like all great books it leaves one with a feeling of wonder and hope." The rhapsodic note is really not all that overblown.

Upon rereading, *The Thin Red Line* stands up remarkably well, one of the best novels written about American fighting men in combat. *The Thin Red Line* is a brilliant example of what happens when a novelist summons strength from the deepest wellsprings of his inspiration. In this book, along with *From Here to Eternity* and *Whistle*, a work of many powerful scenes that suffered from the fact that he was dying as he tried unsuccessfully to finish it, Jim obeyed his better instincts by attending to that forlorn figure whom in all the world he had cared for most and understood better than any other writer alive, the common foot soldier, the grungy enlisted man.

His friend at the end, Willie Morris, wrote these words:

Dear Congressman ABERCROMBIE, I hope this is what you had in mind. My friend Jim Jones was sent to Schofield Barracks at the age of 18 in 1939 as a private in the old Hawaii Division, which later became the 25th Tropical Lightning Infantry Division. He was a member of Company F. It would be the division of the memorable characters in Jones's classic novel *From Here to Eternity*: Prewitt and Maggio and Warden and Chief Choate and Stark and Captain Dynamite Holmes and the others, and it would go through Guadalcanal and New Georgia and the liberation of the Philippines all the way to the occupation of mainland Japan, although Jim's own fighting days would end when he was wounded at Guadalcanal.

Schofield Barracks resonates with the memory of James Jones and the imperishable characters and events he placed here in his fiction, the sounds of the drills, the echoes of Private Robert E. Lee Prewitt's Taps across the quadrangle, the Japanese planes swooping over the barracks of the fateful morning of December 7, 1941.

On the morning of December 7, after the attack started, Jim went to the guard orderly desk outside the colonel's office of the old 27th Regiment quadrangle to carry messages for distraught officers, wearing an issue pistol he was later able to make off with as his fictional Private Mast did in *The Pistol*.

In mid-afternoon of that day his company, along with hundreds of others, pulled out of

Schofield for their defensive beach positions. As they passed Pearl Harbor, they could see the rising columns of smoke for miles around. Jones wrote:

"I shall never forget the sight as we passed over the lip of the central plateau and began the long drop down to Pearl City. Down toward the towering smoke columns as far as the eye could see, the long line of Army trucks would serpentine up and down the draws of red dirt through the green of cane and pineapple. Machine guns were mounted on the cab roofs of every truck possible. I remember thinking with the sense of the profoundest awe that none of our lives would ever be the same, that a social, even a cultural watershed had been crossed which we could never go back over, and I wondered how many of us would survive to see the end results. I wondered if I would. I had just turned 20 the month before."

It is fitting that Eternity Hall be dedicated to James Jones. He was one of the greatest writers of World War II. Many consider him the foremost one. His spirits will dwell forever on these grounds.

On my last night in Paris heading for Africa and beyond, I left Jim and Gloria vowing someday somehow would I see *From Here to Eternity* and Jim honored at Schofield Barracks.

James Jones had said to his brother in 1942,

I would like to leave books behind me to let people know what I have lived. I'd like to think that people would read them avidly, as I have read so many, and would feel the sadness and frustration and joy and love I tried to put in them, that people would think about that guy James Jones and wish they had known the guy that could write like that.

They know you at Schofield Barracks, Jim, today, in Eternity Hall. The ghosts of all those who came before to this quadrangle and the shades of all those who will come, know you and they know you love them.

As he neared death, he struggled to finish *Whistle*, to complete what he had begun with *Eternity*. The final scene of the novel became the ultimate expression of his passion. Facing the end, he wrote of "taking into himself all the pain and anguish and sorrow and misery that is the lot of all soldiers, taking it into himself and into the universe as well."

The universe for James Jones in *From Here to Eternity* began and ended at Schofield Barracks. The measure of this universe and the final judgment of and about James Jones is to be found in the simple declaration of his dedication:

To the United States Army. I have eaten your bread and salt. I have drunk your water and wine. The deaths ye died I have watched beside, and the lives ye led were mine. From Rudyard Kipling.

"I write," Jim said, "to reach eternity." You made it, Jim. Today in Eternity Hall, in Quadrangle D, in Schofield Barracks, you made it. Welcome home, Jim.

THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, the session has now truly begun. We are now contemplating the parameters of the budget. There has been a budget agreement reached between the President and the Members of the House and the Senate, and now we can go forward in a session that has sort of been marking time up to now.

Nothing is more important than the discussion of the budget. Our Nation's values are all locked up into the way it proceeds with its budget. What we really care about we can discover by watching the figures in the budget and understanding that what is really important to this Nation will be reflected in how we score our budget.

The parameters are there. Discussion will go forward. Maybe we will restore the Democratic deliberation process back to the Congress. We were beginning to lose it because discussions were taking place out of sight, off center. Most of the Members were being excluded. There is a budget committee, which we assume would be the primary focus of deliberations on the budget, but that did not happen.

I am told by my colleagues that serve on the Budget Committee that very little discussion has taken place on the Budget Committee about the budget. It was off limits for most of the Members. We have experienced a lot of that this year. It seems that after 1994 and the 104th Congress, when we had the Contract with America, everything was laid out as to where the majority Republicans wanted to take us.

It was refreshing to see clearly what the goals and objectives were. The American people behaved accordingly. Knowing fully well what the party and power wanted to do, they reacted, they responded. There had to be a lot of adjustments and corrections before the election, and things proceeded as they proceeded.

But at least there was a dynamic interaction, a public discussion. We knew that there was a proposal to eradicate the Department of Education, and the republic reacted to that. We knew that there was a proposal to cut Head Start drastically, to cut title 1 programs. We knew those things. The reactions of the public helped to guide what was happening, including guiding the party and powers, to the point where they reversed themselves and changed their minds on some of those critical areas.

This time it is a stealth process, it is a stealth operation, it is an underground operation, it is a guerilla operation. Very little is discussed and laid out on the table. We find out about it later. Not only in the discussions of the budget do you have a situation where you have a closed circle, a commanding control group somewhere, at the White House probably most of the time, deciding what the parameters of the budget would be, but the whole process is repeated throughout the entire Congress.

In both parties it seems that there is a great love affair with oligarchists