

BIO/TECHNOLOGY

EDITOR

Douglas K. McCormick

MANAGING EDITOR

Susan Hassler (New York)

RESEARCH EDITOR

Harvey Bialy (New York)

ARTICLES EDITOR

John Hodgson (London)

NEWS EDITOR

B.J. Spalding
(New York)

SENIOR EDITOR

Stephen M. Edgington
(New York)

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Joseph Alper (St. Paul, MN)
Bernard Dixon (London)
Jeffrey L. Fox (Washington, D.C.)
Russ Hoyle (New York)

ART DIRECTOR

Lou Pippo

ASST. ART DIRECTOR

Edna D. Thomas

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Claire M. Corcoran

PROJECT EDITOR

Mark Goodstein

PUBLISHER

Andy Sutherland

VICE PRESIDENT - SALES

Marion Delaney

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGERS

Stephanie J. Nolan
Angela Kays (Europe)
Marianne S. Ettisch (Classified)
Julie Skeet (Classified, Europe)

VICE PRESIDENT MARKETING AND PRODUCTION

James Skowrenski

MARKETING MANAGER

Bruce Shriver, Jr.

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Estelle B. Selzer

ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER

Renée M. Roberts

NEW YORK

65 Bleecker St., New York, NY 10012
Tel: (212) 477-9600 Fax: (212) 505-1364
Editorial Fax: (212) 254-9493 MCI ID #: 329-8956

LONDON

4 Little Essex St., London WC2R 3LF
Tel: (071) 872-0103 Fax (071) 240-2408

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

George Poste	SmithKline Beecham
Ken-ichi Arai	DNAX Research Institute
Teruhiko Beppu	University of Tokyo
Ronald E. Cape	Darwin Molecular Technologies
Jean-Pierre Changeux	Institut Pasteur
Mary-Dell Chilton	CIBA-Geigy
Nam-Hai Chua	Rockefeller University
Rita R. Colwell	Maryland Biotechnology Institute
Arnold Demain	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
J. Lawrence Fox	Amoco Technology
David Goeddel	Genentech
Leroy Hood	University of Washington, Seattle
Morio Ikehara	Protein Engineering Research Institute
Ernest Jaworski	Monsanto Company
Irving Johnson	Consultant
David Mount	University of Arizona
Victor Nussenzweig	New York University Medical Center
George Rose	Washington University
Carl-Gustaf Rosen	Abitec AB
Kendall Smith	Dartmouth Medical School
Yukio Sugino	Takeda Chemicals
Marc Van Montagu	Plant Genetic Systems
Indra K. Vasil	University of Florida
Wataru Yamaya	Seikagaku Kogyo
Douglas Youvan	Massachusetts Institute of Technology

THE FIRST WORD

Blues

John Hersey died in March. Some of us, if we are lucky, will find a teacher who transforms the way we look at the world, and the way we see ourselves in it. John was one.

When I was ten and troubled—long before I met him—I first came across one of Hersey's books. It wasn't one of the famous ones—the Pulitzer-Prize-winning *A Bell for Adano* or *The Wall* or *The War Lover*. It was, rather, a now-obscure, angry bit of science fiction called *The Child Buyer*. It's about a lonely little boy, also about ten, too smart and too fat, beset by a world (or, in this case, a Senate investigative committee) that wants to turn him, literally, into a cog in the military-industrial complex. I devoured it almost at a single sitting, quivering with resentment.

It wasn't until a retirement party thrown for John by his former writing-seminar students that I finally got up the courage to tell him how the book had touched me. "How old were you?" he asked. I told him. He frowned. "Oh my," he said, "that's too young." He shook his head, as though he'd been caught telling dirty stories to a kindergarten. I never really found the right words to tell him he was wrong.

In between, I won a place in John's much-coveted fiction seminar. Writing, they say, can be learned but not taught. Somehow Hersey helped a generation of scribbling wannabe's how to teach themselves to write. By that time, I'd been supporting myself by writing and reporting for five years. John taught me how much I still had to learn. Our textbook back then was his own *The Craft of the Writer*—an anthology of other writers' work tied together with Hersey's commentaries on technique. This was heady stuff, as different from New Criticism or Deconstructionism as carpentry is from topology. To the lit crit crowd, literature was an academic discipline. To us, it was a craft. All it required was talent, tools, and determination. Did I say *all*? Writing is a three-legged stool. Leave one leg off, and all that's left is a pair of crutches.

I've never known a writer who resembled his writing more than John did. When I knew him best, he was tall, lean, intense, and very formal. He had been born in China, to missionary parents. He spoke Chinese before he spoke English, and I always fancied that it was his early upbringing in a formal and foreign society that gave him his courtliness. But the coolness was just a part of the mix. Everything of his that I read, almost every conversation I ever had with him, touched somewhere on the importance of anger—rage at human folly—as the touchstone of moral writing.

John started out as a war correspondent, but he considered fiction the higher calling. After *The Child Buyer*, though, I'm afraid I never appreciated his fiction as much as books like *Hiroshima* (his epoch-making 1946 description of the first atomic bombing) and *Blues* (a masterly 1987 updating of Izaak Walton's *Compleat Angler*, part bluefishing primer, part cookbook, and all meditation on man's place in the natural world, and a rumination on the state of the planet his generation is leaving to my children's generation). The journalist's passion for research and accuracy vied with the fantasist's need to create lies out of whole cloth. As I gravitated to journalism in later years, I myself found that artistic invention, no matter how soaring, often seems pale and paltry indeed beside the rich contradictions of *The Real Thing*.

I blush at this disloyalty. John would have expected it, though: One of the things he taught us is that writers grow by turning on their mentors. He himself had been private secretary to Sinclair Lewis. And it fell to John to tell the old master that drink and declining years had robbed his pen of its power.

He taught us craft and courage and passion. He taught us to balance the cold objectivity of research with the anger that drives the writing that produces change. Most of all, he taught us that it is not only possible to make a living stringing words together, it is possible to make that life a life of constant adventure.

Thanks, John. And God be with you.

—DOUGLAS K. MCCORMICK