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## DIVINE COLLUSION: THE ART OF CARSON McCULLERS

An artist or artist-figure appears in almost every single work of Carson McCullers. In *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* there are the musical pretensions of Mick Kelly and the Beethoven-like silences of John Singer.<sup>1</sup> Many of the gothic flourishes of *Reflections in a Golden Eye* are provided by the delicate, often effeminate drawings and dances of the dwarfish eunuch, Anacleto.<sup>2</sup> *The Member of the Wedding* regularly displays the surrealistic talents of six-year-old John Henry<sup>3</sup> and the stage-struck fantasies of Frankie Adams. The healing and distilling arts of Amelia Evans coupled with the circus-like antics of the midget hunchback, Lymon, impart to *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe* the slanted atmosphere of honky-tonk, backwoods sorcery.<sup>4</sup> A crucial character and possible spokesman for the author in *The Square Root of Wonderful* is the architect, John Tucker, who frequently speaks of the importance of bringing form and design to experience. In *Clock Without Hands*, an exotic black harlequin with blue eyes, Sherman Pew, enrages the local racists by performing on a white baby grand. Then, too, there are a number of short stories that explicitly and sometimes totally centre on artists or artist-figures: "Wunderkind", "The Sojourner", "The Jockey", and "Madame Zilensky and the King of Finland". Finally, the artistic process dominates McCullers' few expository pieces. Her elaborate working outline for her first novel reveals how early McCullers stressed the orchestration of her novels.<sup>5</sup> Her "Preface" to *The Square Root of Wonderful* dwells on the artist as a selfless chameleon. Above all, her extended essay, "The Flowering Dream: Notes on Writing", presents her most detailed explanation of the stages of creation.<sup>6</sup>

The traditional difficulty of squaring an artist's theory with his actual

work is compounded by the fact that McCullers in her expository pieces and the artist-figures in her fictional works yearn for a purifying asceticism and final religious resolution which is either unshared by the other characters or grounded in hidden assumptions. In other words, what is minimally clear even at this point is that McCullers' artistic theory is so entangled in her religious quest that the exploration of her aesthetics may be of a piece with that of her metaphysics.

## I

According to McCullers, the source of all creativity resides in the unconscious; in "The Flowering Dream" she maintains that the seed of an idea "always comes from the subconscious and cannot be controlled" (162). The latter emphasis is crucial and is intended as a warning. Although McCullers often speaks of the need for tight reins, such insistence at the initial stage of creation is disastrous and distortive. In other words, there are two kinds of discipline and they are properly sequential. The first is the discipline of surrender which is receptive, self-effacing, almost feminine. The second is the discipline of control which is exacting, aggressive, almost masculine. Without the first, the second invites a cerebral or egotistical art which is dextrous in its parade of causality or brilliantly glittering in its plumage. In contrast, McCullers, with transparent pride, quotes the remark of a close friend: "I admire you, Carson, because of your ignorance." (162).

Ignorance is dependence. It is patience poised for discovery and serves to temper the kind of easy or eager acts of knowledge that may ultimately obscure more than they illuminate. The two serious temptations at the initial stage of creation are to compel a vague seminal idea to yield precise clarities or rapidly to root the strange in the familiar. To succumb to either or both temptations is to hurry an embryonic, haunting idea to be born prematurely into the world and to impose a finished shape before it is fully formed. Instead, McCullers images the artist as a screen on which is projected a series of emerging and expanding stills whose flickering breaks dislocate the continuity of causality; or because the artist sees and is seen, he is the eye of a golden bird as well as the observer of the reflections of that golden eye. Such a state is tyrannically relationless and unwilled, for nothing is translated or translatable into anything except itself. Things tenaciously remain things, feelings, feelings; and nothing is symbolic of anything, yet. If

any conversions do occur they do so only under the melding power of the unconscious to animate things with feelings and to concretize feelings with things. The initial creative process then to McCullers is the special art of dreaming while awake.

Significantly, that semi-awake state is for McCullers predominantly musical and visual, not verbal, and seems to flourish at the dawn of time or pre-consciousness. Although for McCullers and for some of her more complex characters, that is but the first stage of a developing progression, for many it is their initial and only one. Not accidentally, her preference for children and adolescents as well as for child-like adults like Spiros and Leonora is of a piece with her preoccupation with states of mind that are closer to the unconscious than the conscious, more involuntary than willed, more pristine than sophisticated. The result is a host of characters who are curiously incomplete, only half-formed, half-human. Perhaps the most dramatic example of an arrested child is Ellgee Williams whom McCullers describes as having the "strange, rapt face of a Gauguin primitive" (534):

The mind is like a richly woven tapestry in which the colors are distilled from the experiences of the senses, and the design drawn from the convolutions of the intellect. The mind of Private Williams was imbued with various colors of strange tones, but it was without delineation, void of form (567).

It is crucial at this point to recall that Williams is a voyeur and that the theme of voyeurism appears as persistently in McCullers' work as that of art. Ellgee's voyeurism is comparable to dreaming while awake; he takes in or projects the images of Leonora's naked flaming body on the screen of his mind and patiently waits for those stills to achieve the coherence of design. The unformed mind, indeed, equals unformed art; and the cohesive power of art appears as the cohesive power of love. Indeed, John Tucker in *The Square Root of Wonderful* speaks about his loveless life in the same way McCullers speaks about Ellgee's undefined mind. Tucker tells Mollie that before he met her, "there was no back or front to my life...No back or front or depth. No design or meaning" (14). Before art, there is nothing; without love, life is nothing. The great terror for McCullers is the void; or as Philip puts it: "nothing resembles nothing. But nothing is not a blank. It is configured hell" (121). In short, McCullers' aesthetics and characterization focus on the redemption of the void by form—hence, her enormous emphasis on what precedes not what follows consciousness—on what invites design

not so much on what enriches or extends it. The considerable care and energy that a Henry James expends on sensibility and consciousness are shifted by McCullers to what constitutes the foundations of both. In the process, what is clearly established is not only McCullers' receptivity to the child as the emblem of the unconscious, but also her recognition that the child is permanently alive in the adult as the agent of the unconscious. Her adult freaks and grotesques actually represented mangled shapes born of the disparity between the child and the adult, for in McCullers' world wholeness is defined by all the characters who never achieve it.

## II

To return to the evolution of the seed of an idea: the unconscious image in order to take hold and to flower must unfold in a special form that is both indulgent and real, asleep and awake. For McCullers that congenial form is the dream—the flowering dream. Dream is the beginning of form. On the one hand, it is an invitation to the unconscious to be extravagantly uncompromising, basic, even infantile in content. On the other hand, it must be respectful, even ultimately protective in form. Dream then is art's model, for all is tentative yet tenacious, multiple yet singularly obsessive, mischievous yet seriously final. Although dream may be outrageous, it also must operate within some reassuring limits of safety or deflection; and although it cries out for analysis, artistic dream must seek shape as its initial means of meaning. Whatever logic or coherence exist, their mannered or containing pressure must never be at the expense of raw immediacy or urgency. Above all, the flow of a dream's form and the form of its flow cannot be impeded by any premature probing for origins; it must reach its ultimate ends of terror or beauty or an entanglement of both independent of either Freud or God. In short, keeping the dream alive *as dream* is the supreme strain of the discipline of surrender. But for such surrender to work the passivity must be positive. The dreamer must manifest the kind of absorptive patience that Biff Brandon displays in his unhurried survey of the spectacle of life; and for the eccentric or fragmented aspects of dream to emerge with their suggestive integrity intact, what is also needed is Biff's tolerant fascination for freaks. For the artist, McCullers insists, must have the character of a chameleon: "In addition to being lonely, a writer is also

amorphous. A writer soon discovers he has no single identity but lives the lives of all the people he creates (viii)."

If the dream is the congenial greenhouse for the seed of an idea, then the projective power of the imagination constitutes its lifegiving atmosphere. McCullers denies her own identity so that her characters can acquire theirs. Such selfless transfusion also forestalls the premature and narrowing intrusion of the ego which seeks only variations of the self and the analytical intellect which murders to dissect—that is, takes life away for the sake of meaning. Above all, the collaborative act of the imagination is quantitatively suited to the dream which is multifold. Just as dream multiplies the singularity of McCullers' life into many lives, so the accomplished musician, Madame Zilensky, who though a pathological liar, fabricates like a true artist: "Through the lies, she lived vicariously. The lies doubled the little of her existence that was left over from work and augmented the little rag end of her personal life" (99). To McCullers, the artist essentially fulfills his artistic role at this point not as a creator but as an amplifier.

Just as earlier it was important to pause and relate the artistic stress on the mind as a screen to the theme of voyeurism in McCullers' work, so here there are a number of important yields with respect to dreams that must be examined before going to a final consideration of the contributions of mind, intellect and God to the creative process.

The first and most obvious yield is the reminder that no other contemporary author uses dreams as regularly and directly in fiction as McCullers. There are the hosts of dreams and day-dreams that orbit her many adolescents, the terrifying dream that Captain Penderton has and that illuminates the title of the novel, the opening paragraph of "The Sojourner" that is bathed in the "yearless region of dreams" (105). *The Member of the Wedding* opens with a comparison of summer to a "green sick dream" (599); and throughout the novel Frankie fantasizes heroic adventures while gazing at herself and others through distorted mirrors. The one in the kitchen is "watery" (600); peeking through John Henry's glasses, the room looked "loose and crooked" (612). Finally, toward the end of the novel Frankie and her new friend Mary Littlejohn (substitute for the now dead little John?) read Tennyson together. Could one of their favorite poems be "The Lady of Shallot" who gazes at Camelot indirectly through a blue mirror? In any case, what McCullers' pervasive use of dreams in both her artistic theory and

her actual works makes clear is the extent to which her entire vision is rendered obliquely, through a glass darkly or more appropriately bathed in the reflected golden light of a bird's eye. Moreover, McCullers' dreams tend to make use of brilliant colors and forms; movement tends to be orchestrated or choreographed. In other words, for McCullers, dreams tend to be closer to music and the plastic arts than to literature. It is therefore not accidental in this connection that none of her artists or artist-figures is a writer. They are predominantly musicians, a few are painters and sculptors, and one is a dancer. It is the musical and visual that dominate not only her dreams but also McCullers' mode and characterization. Indeed, to the extent that the imagination and mind of both the musician and the plastic artist are closer to the unconscious and more reluctant to employ analysis or conceptualization, then one can better understand why McCullers, aside from her substantial early training in music, has placed such enormous emphasis on dreams in her work and has created an artistic theory which forces literature to be subservient to the other arts. In any case, for McCullers, dream is the natural ally of art. It is ancient and permanent and yet new and transient; it is situationally personal and yet mythic. It also adjusts the mystery of existence and the mystery of art in that while the meaning may be obscure or even finally unknown, the effect is gripping and ultimately possessing. Above all, in its final flowered form dream offers the promise of a closed circle; or as Frankie Adams puts it, "the telling of the wedding had an end and a beginning, a shape like a song" (671). How it acquires that final shape, especially one of song, requires a consideration of the contribution of the intellect and of God to the creative process.

### III

Although the "writer by nature of his profession is a dreamer", McCullers insists, however, that he is finally a "conscious dreamer". But the act of conscious comprehension even at this point does not proceed from without but from within; here is the curious and puzzling way McCullers puts it: "The intellect is submerged beneath the unconscious..." (53). It is at this point that the literary critic is perhaps hard-pressed, for to him the intellect no matter how responsive it may be to the unconscious or to the art of the unconscious never surrenders its independent ability to perceive pattern and design. But to McCullers

the intellect is denied any such autonomy; and lest it impose a meaning from without that contracts too narrowly and predictably the terrifying or rhapsodic image of the unconscious, it is demoted and compelled to work its way up and through the unconscious and to expand organically as it does. Moreover, thought is not even given its own head or allowed to exist apart from feeling: "the thinking mind is best controlled by the imagination" (53). Although McCullers takes great pains to secure the priority of the imagination for the artist, as in her works she strives for love for the dreamer, the intellect under wraps does make a crucial contribution at the closing arc of the creative process.

The intellect introduces tension and sets in motion an interplay between hard thought and soft imagination to produce the ideal of lyrical realism. In other words, the dream must meet the pressure of surviving in this world; and the intellect serves as the mid-wife assisting the dream in its rites of passage into reality. Significantly, McCullers, now stressing the discipline of control rather than that of surrender, discusses the interaction of mind and imagination, realism and dream, in terms of prose and poetry:

Some of the best novels and prose are as exact as a telephone number, but few prose writers can achieve this because of the refinement of prose and poetry that is necessary. I don't like the word prose; it's too prosaic. Good poetry should be fused with the light of prose; prose should be like poetry, poetry should make sense like prose (53).

McCullers is perhaps initially apportioning prose to the intellect and poetry to the imagination. The poetic impulse like the dream is endowed with the plastic power of bathing prose with the glow of that which is timeless and suggestive. The contribution of prose and intellect is to be exacting—to demand of poetry and the dream that it make sense and that it be as precise "as a telephone number". The final result is a "conscious dream" sturdy and durable enough to live in the real world but appearing to come from a realm which is simultaneously exotic and familiar. The reader is thus not required to take the dream on faith or to accept the author's promptings that it is substantial and valid. Its very survival in this world, in art, and its impact on the reader not only confirm its substance, but also open the way for the wandering reader to join McCullers the wandering dreamer. In other words, just as in the creative process the seed of an idea needed the

collaboration of the dreamer for it to flower, so McCullers extends that process of partnership now to the reader. The creator is completed by his creation, for it is at this point that her aesthetics is inseparable from her metaphysics.

Throughout her entire essay, McCullers again and again speaks of the work of a writer as a "grace of labor" and of the combining of reality and dream as a "divine collusion". In fact, her final sentence sums up her aesthetic metaphysics: "For myself, the further I go into my own work and the more I read of those I love, the more aware I am of the dream and the logic of God, which indeed is the Divine collusion" (164). The archetypal dream is God's dream. It is the initial and eternal act of creation in which are intermeshed imagination and logic, the flower and the telephone number. As the supreme artist, God is available to McCullers through the aesthetic experience, for He acts in collusion with all artists who mirror His ideal of combining the dream and reality, poetry and prose. God acts to support the making of art for the artist. The artist in turn is both receptive and projective, a receiver and an amplifier. Then the roles shift. The artist becomes God-like and the original relationship between God and the artist is transferred to the artist and the reader. The reader is encouraged by the nature of the art to be both receptive and projective. What God initially supports and the artist makes, the reader finally completes.

#### IV

McCullers' aesthetics has provided not only an unexpected understanding of her metaphysical assumptions, but also perhaps a number of illuminations about her work as a whole that perhaps were not clear at the outset. The first of these involves the relationship between the dream and the child.

We already have noted McCullers' understanding that the child is not only closer to the unconscious but also carries that burden permanently in the adult as well. But now that can be pushed further. The gap between the child and the adult reenacts the gap between the unconscious and conscious, between poetry and prose, and above all between what Mick Kelly refuses, because of her dreams, to settle for and what Biff Brandon and many others already have settled for. That by the end of the novel the ideal of Mick has degenerated to the dreadful reality of Woolworth's is meant to underscore not only a tragic waste and cheat, but also an archetypal experience of incompleteness. In



other words, in McCullers' world all the larger patterns of later life are already available in miniature form in childhood or adolescence. Existence can thus be defined as a series of repetitive arcs, each one duplicating the drama of a dream reaching for its flowering form but withering on the vine. How deep-seated this notion of imperilled wholeness is in McCullers appears in an experience she recalls from her own childhood and with which she significantly begins her essay on "The Flowering Dream":

When I was a child of about four, I was walking with my nurse past a convent. For once, the convent doors were open. And I saw the children eating ice-cream cones, playing on iron swings, and I watched, fascinated. I wanted to go in, but my nurse said no, I was not Catholic. The next day, the gate was shut. But, year by year, I thought of what was going on, of this wonderful party, where I was shut out. I wanted to climb the wall, but I was too little. I beat on the wall once, and I knew all the time that there was a marvelous party going on, but I couldn't get in (162).

McCullers' recollection reads like a dream of Kafka and images a tantalizing castle or heaven which can only be perceived but never partaken of. In her novels the ideal of a Catholic heaven is parcelled out to Carnegie Hall reserved for Jewish musicians, to the warm ghettos of the wise blacks, to a honeymoon set amidst never-glimpsed snow, to the citadel of John Singer's silence. All that is yearned for—peace, belonging, companionship, achievement, sex, art—exists only within the removed walls of a convent or temporarily within the circle of well-lit cafe. But characteristically all the heroes, big or small, old or young, are like children and are given just one glimpse or chance and then the door slams shut forever; vainly Berenice pursues her dead love Ludie. However the wall is impossible to scale, the doors are permanently sealed, and paradise becomes the compulsive and haunting stuff that dreams, weddings, music and art are made of.

The touchstone of both McCullers' artistic theory and work is thus rooted in the child's exclusion from paradise because he is not one of the elect—a Catholic in the original experience, a Jewish musician as an adolescent, a normal heterosexual as an adult. Moreover, because that experience is not limited to childhood but reverberates throughout life, childhood establishes the tyranny, if not of original sin, then of original exclusion. The permanent drama then for McCullers is that of incompleteness or as John claims in "The Sojourner": "There's nothing that makes you so aware of the improvisation of human existence as a

song unfinished" (112). Indeed, unfinished melodies abound in McCullers' work as musical accompaniment to all the unfinished characters. In *The Member of the Wedding*, Big Mama speaks about the somewhat deranged Honey Brown:

He was a boy God had not finished. The Creator had withdrawn His hand from him too soon. God had not finished him, and so he had to go around doing one thing and then another to finish himself up...The Creator...had withdrawn His hand too soon, so that he was left eternally unsatisfied (750-1).

What Faust celebrated, McCullers laments. Honey Brown symbolizes man's incompleteness or as Camus put it in *The Rebel*, for exiles "all reality is incomplete".

McCullers' preoccupation with children, freaks, adolescents (normal freaks) and artists is all of a piece. They all act out in different forms the initial and permanent trauma of their dreams being in excess of existence. As a result, they never really change; they only exchange partners. The original dreaming child never really dies; he remains alive in the adolescent and in the adult in the form of a legacy of incompleteness. Partial or distorted adults like Spiros, Leonora, Honey Brown and Ellgee Williams are basically children in adult bodies or as McCullers calls them "stunted giants". The old assortment of midgets and dwarfs represent the most flagrant versions of arrested growth, for aside from their grotesquerie they underscore that the movement of existence is not progressive but recurrent. In short, the persistence of dreams and of childhood are really one and the same.

## V

There is one final yield that emerges out of and summarizes McCullers' aesthetic metaphysics. Not accidentally it, too, has its roots in the child. One of the most striking and recurrent patterns in all of McCullers' work is her preoccupation for odd pairs—for the small and the tall, the dwarfs and the giants, the talkative and the reticent. Judge Clane in *Clock Without Hands* notes: " 'Ah, the patterns of life, both the big and the small' " (18). But as noted in McCullers the big is to be found in the small. Thus, the tiny golden eye of the peacock fans out to finally include the grotesque. Similarly, being excluded from a party is the embryonic version; being locked out of Carnegie Hall, Hollywood, a wedding, and normal heterosexuality are the larger distortions. In the short story, "A Domestic Dilemma", the normally worrisome is worked

up by the father to the gothic. He warns his son that if he swallows his loose tooth it will take root in his stomach and become an enormous tree in which every leaf is a sharp tooth. A less pathological and more aesthetic version of the tiny swelling into the grotesque appears in *The Square Root of Wonderful*. John Tucker the architect and spokesman for McCullers, has a theory which he calls the "square root of sin" and which he explains to the young Paris:

John: "The sin of hurting people's feelings. Of humiliating a person. That is the square root of sin. It is the same as murder."

Paris: "The same as murder?"

John: "The square root is there. You just have to figure it to be a higher power. War is the square root of humiliation raised to the millionth power."

Paris: "To the millionth power?"

John: "When you humiliate a person it is kind of murder. You are murdering his pride" (83).

Only McCullers' concept of the square root can explain Mr. Brook's otherwise hysterical self-accusation that to expose Madame Zilensky's lies would make him a "murderer" (101).

McCullers' preoccupation with the pattern of the big and the small and with the Swiftian square root that makes them not opposites but magnified extensions of each other also leaves its mark on her notion of time and music. In *The Member of the Wedding*, Frankie sighs to Berenice: " 'The world is certainly a small place.' " She quickly amends that to " 'The world is certainly a sudden place.' " Berenice who represents balance puts it together: " 'Sometimes sudden and sometimes slow' " (603). Like the spatial focus on the small and the big and the aesthetic emphasis on the flowering dream and the telephone number, McCullers regularly employs a dualistic style which is alternately or contrapuntally leisurely and rapid, soft and hard, lyrical and mean. Clearly, her rhapsodic style in her artistic theory is allied to poetry; her realistic style to prose. Moreover, the rhapsodic style by its incantation has a natural affinity for dreams and achieves its ultimate refinement when poetry is rarified into music or silence. In contrast, the realistic style embodies the unyielding antithesis of the intellect and mercilessly becomes the agent of violence which abounds in her work as recurrently as yearning adolescent dreams. To be sure, that violence is adjusted in obedience to the analogous planes of the square root. The violence may be essentially verbal and escalate from the hurting

meanness of Mick Kelly to the raging ferocity of Jake Blount. More often, however, it is actual, and in contrast to the rhapsodic, deflective style, its appearance, as Frankie notes, is sudden. Indeed, every single violent scene in McCullers' work—and there are many—is rendered with such immediacy and power that it is impossible to separate the impact of death from the impact of her language. Destruction is so super-efficient, so precise like a telephone number, that its aim is infallible. Although Captain Penderton fires two shots, there is only one hole in Ellgee Williams' chest.

Big and small—violent and paradisaical—these are the converging modes and styles that create the poles of tension that strain and sustain the artistic theory and work of McCullers. The supreme issue is whether a harmony born of divine collusion will bring art or love; or whether discord will dominate and the divine presence will be cut off from a world now severed from redemptive visitation. No one situation more fully reflects the alternatives of promise and failure than the archetypal one of the party. Significantly, when Frankie Adams shows some signs of being less “greedy and big” and becoming more loving, Berenice promises her a schizophrenic party. One is to be an elegant bridge party with dainty olive sandwiches set properly in the living room. The other is to be rowdy and boisterous with hot dogs as the fare and set outside in the backyard. “One party dainty and the other rough. With prizes for the highest bridge score and the funniest costume” (773). Like the party which started out sweet and ended up violent in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*; and like the seminal party from which McCullers was excluded as a child, Frankie's party symbolizes in McCullers the permanence of dualism and imperfection in existence no matter how strongly art fights for the possibilities of heaven on earth.

Growing up does not resolve the intense dualities of childhood. Rather, it only magnifies the extent to which the dream may be shattered. It is in fact significant that every major and minor work which contains an artist-figure also is sustained by an ideal which glows like a heavenly possibility. In *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* silence and music embody the notion of perfect communication. Captain Penderton's ideal is “To square the circle”. Frankie's is to be a member of the wedding. Amelia's is to move within the warm, magic circle of a well-lit cafe. John Tucker's is to find design through love. In *Clock Without Hands*, it is the dream of homosexual love as a symbol of race

relations. But if the above ideals represent the promises of childhood and the dreams of heavenly beginnings, McCullers regularly concludes with terrible endings, arrested children, grotesque adults, and freakish odd couples. Mick Kelly settles for Woolworth's, John Singer commits suicide, Captain Penderton shoots his lover, Frankie Adams is shut out from the honeymoon, the well-lit cafe is darkened, the illustration for the square root of wonderful becomes the square root of sin, and Sherman Pew and his offense-giving white baby grand are consumed in flames.

The only ideal not shattered is that of art. The mature artists in her work, though few and zany, are the only ones who achieve any kind of wholeness. The price they and their art pay for such an achievement is that their art to be true must record failure. Nevertheless, art is justified in being called divine by McCullers and her aesthetics, her metaphysics because art alone provides the flowering dream by which to measure and to portray the permanent drama of paradisaical exclusion. If art is indeed born of divine collusion, then it alone serves as the square root of heaven on earth.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe* (Boston, 1951), p. 259. All references to the novels and short stories are to this collected edition, except for *The Square Root of Wonderful* (Cambridge, 1958) and *Clock Without Hands* (Cambridge, 1961); and for convenience will be included in the text.
2. With characteristic arrogance, Anacleto maintains: It was common knowledge that he thought the Lord had blundered grossly in the making of everyone except himself and Madame Alison—the sole exception to this were people behind footlights, midgets, great artists, and such-like fabulous folk (529).
3. Aside from John Henry's dream-inspired drawings which transform Berenice's kitchen into a psychedelic freakhouse, John Henry is a sculptor in biscuit dough. There is a fascinating description of that culinary art on p. 607.
4. The song sung at the end of *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe* by the twelve mortal men of the chain gang serves as a coda to McCullers' carefully orchestrated handling of form throughout the novel.
5. Oliver Evans, *The Ballad of Carson McCullers* (New York, 1966), pp. 195-215. Although a great deal has been written on McCullers, there is almost no substantial treatment of her aesthetics by academic critics. Only three authors deal seriously and extensively with the subject: Oliver Evans in his discussion of McCullers' use of music (pp. 20-ff); Tennessee Williams' defense of her art in his "Introduction" to the New Directions reprint of *Reflections of a Golden Eye*; and best of all Marguerite Young's essay, "Metaphysical Fiction" *Kenyon Review* (Winter, 1947) which neatly notes: "She sees life as an impressionist, but she herself is not the impressionist. She is a logician in an illogical realm" (153).
6. *Esquire* 52 (December, 1959), 162-4.