

# The Longer

by Andrew Kenneally

The longer this goes on the worse it gets. What I mean is, if it isn't immediately obvious, that the greater the mass of words that stretches out ahead of the aspiring reader the more inclined is this reader's attentiveness to wander; your eyes — for any reader can only inescapably be you, whichever you you happen to be . . . your eyes, I was saying — the repetition necessary, of your eyes I mean, for it's a bit much to have such a gap in the thread of words, an interpolation, and then go picking back up the original thread as if there were no gap, expecting the reader to jump around like some circus animal, and what's more, elegantly, picking up on loose and semi-abandoned threads as if this were the most natural thing in the world, the writer having awarded himself the strangest liberties with the written word, for of course he couldn't get away with those kind of stuttering liberties with the spoken word. Confusion and irritation is all the kind of stuff his slovenly sentences would produce. The reader though, rather than the listener, tends to be a far more tolerant creature; he accepts the unnatural, maybe even expects it, considers it maybe aesthetic, this language torn loose.

But with all this clarifying I've lost all the seamliness of my thread . . . so as I was saying the greater the mass lying ahead of the reader the more inclined that reader's eyes to skim over the words falsely; falsely that is in that the words are seen but not absorbed, forgotten as soon as passed over; the act of reading a visual progression rather than a soulful or intellectual one, the words not sinking in. And why not sinking in? Inattentiveness. Well yes, but why inattentive? Perhaps a myriad of reasons, but perhaps the main one: that with the volume lying ahead one could afford a lapse or two, there is no urgency to one's attention, there is plenty of time to re-enter the fray as an active pursuer of the truth contained within - if there is any truth contained within, more than likely there isn't - and presumably at a time of greater consequence, for naturally if one's

attention is wandering loosely, then one might, rather than look at one's elusive self think this is proof of the lack of urgency of the matter at hand; that it has failed to grasp, to tether oneself to the matter, proof of its inadequacy.

So anyway the longer this goes on the worse it gets - and I couldn't say I'm under the impression it began well - so rather than it getting any worse - and you may think that difficult to achieve - I'll stop here.

