

STEVEN GRAVES

The Room of Facing Mirrors

Nothing is omitted. Whatever
is evident in our synoptic vantage
collects: The audience is added row
to row, the chairs submit to accumulation,
angling fashionably to their vanishing
point (or are there two?) Crescents of light,
projections of shadow are strung in cords
to missing corners. The wedgewood, patera
ceiling slides efficiently into

an economized blue, as symbol
of day's dim incremental rise in blue.
This is the glass of awakening.

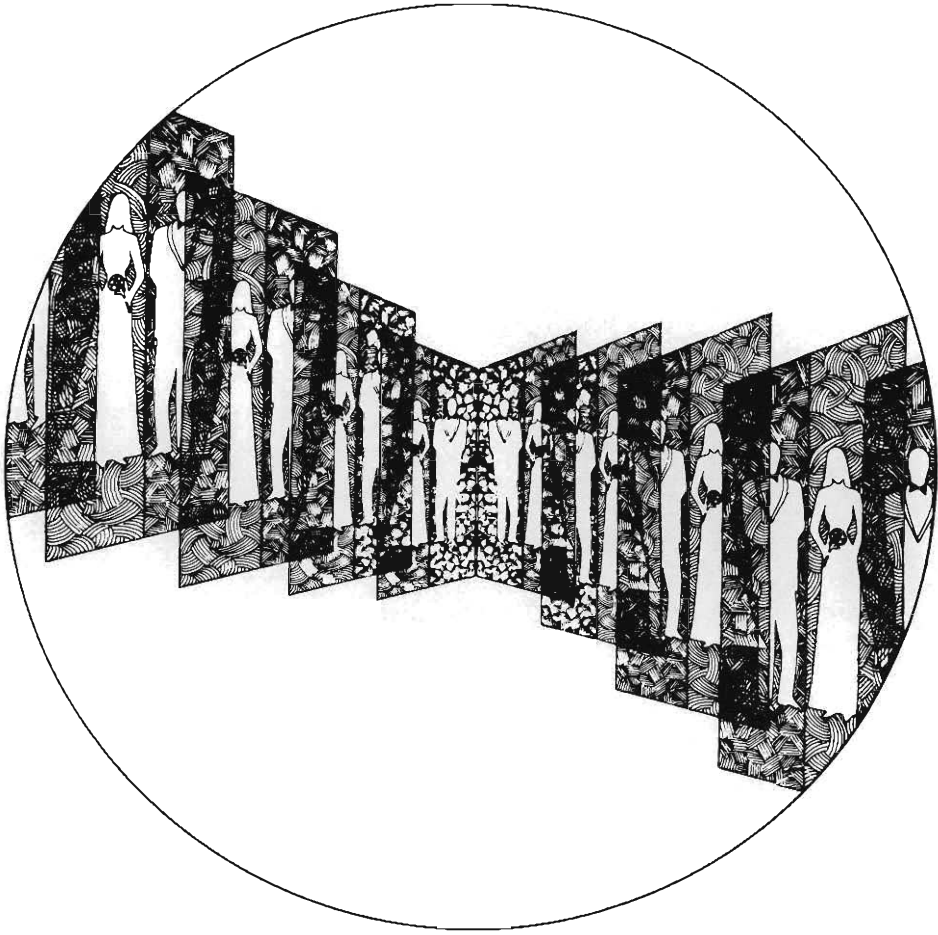
Amid the scattered sounds of morning,
we approximate ourselves, amused
at a yawn, a multiplicity of yawns.

From our half-focused stares, we recognize
ourselves front and rear, these elliptical
embarrassments in seeing one's self

as others do: a patch of hair upright,
some accident in our attire,
the backside of the best self's stage.

We sit before this gallery
of witnesses finding a renewable
kinship with each, even with the distant

and slightly darkened visage—there
in the tapioca colored garment. Others
before us have noticed in the sixth



or seventh reenactment, a slight
independence in detail—perhaps
in the grouping seen off to the right,
the salmon furnishings buoying them up.
Still, to most appearances our thin,
balding coach has drilled our ensemble well.

Peripheral movements, panels
of cloud and woodside have been
deleted. The focus is rather on
the bold redistribution of light
(its passing from the hair to the brow
and eyes) as our host enters
unannounced, a visual echo.
We all rehearse arrivals, that
and unpunctuated time.

There's a marginal complexity
in having two centers, to stretch
both north and south, but the stories
of the earliest works attest
to such a collective rise
and flowering. One does not soon
forget the laminated
history of brine and wonder
at this junction of time and space,
where each concentric posture of the self
or other is its own harmonic, chimes:
a realm of possibilities.

True, there are no unmistakable
household smells, familiar tunes, just
a happy resemblance letting itself go,
indefinite in both directions,
perpetual in its endorsement of here,
where we wish for no lesser place.