

of run good if I could of broke in," he added, passing to other news of northern Washoe County. "The only trouble was I got stuck in the gate. I was beat out in the primary."

"Wouldn't the Indians vote for you?" I asked.

"This was a Republican primary," Harry said. "All the Indians is registered Democrats. I got beat by one vote—twenty-one to twenty. If Joan could of voted for me, I'd of tied." Joan is his wife.

"Why couldn't she vote for you?" I asked.

"Turned out she's a registered Democrat, too," Harry said. "If I'd got nominated, I could of won, because all those Indians would of voted for me instead of the Democrat in the elections. As it was, the Democrat won easy. The pay would of helped buy penicillin for those yearlings I got. Come New Year's, they'll be some of the runniest two-year-olds in America."

"Quarter horses?" I asked. In 1949, Harry, who used to be a world's champion rodeo rider, had owned mostly dude horses, but had aspired to better things.

"These is thoroughbreds," Harry said. "I got a stud—Andy K.—and I'm using him on my mares."

I shuddered. Andy K., I remembered from seeing him race at Saratoga, was an extremely fast horse with an incurable habit of running out on the turns.

"Do they run—" I began, but delicacy prevented me from completing my question.

"I don't know," Harry shouted, understanding. "I ain't got them up that fast yet."

I cannot deny that curiosity about Harry's two-year-olds increased my desire to revisit Pyramid Lake. So did an effectively simplified version of the situation that I had built up in my mind during the intervening months, which went like this: Here were these funny Indians, the first I had ever known and, unlike my preconceptions, neither solemn nor tragic nor mysterious but dressed in J. C. Penney cowboy clothes and talking, like everybody else in that part of Nevada, about the two annual staple crops of the region—Herefords and divorcées. I had heard all sorts of yarns about what the narrators called Indian shiftlessness. For example, there was one that hinged on the disappearance of the great cutthroat trout from the receding lake. When the level of the lake dropped, the cutthroat had found it impossible to ascend the Truckee River, the lake's lone feeder, in the

ON TRANSLATING "EUGENE ONEGIN"

(AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE "ONEGIN"
STANZA—METRE AND RHYME PATTERN)

What is translation? On a platter
A poet's pale and glaring head,
A parrot's screech, a monkey's chatter,
And profanation of the dead.
The parasites you were so hard on
Are pardoned if I have your pardon,
O Pushkin, for my stratagem.
I travelled down your secret stem,
And reached the root, and fed upon it;
Then, in a language newly learned,
I grew another stalk and turned
Your stanza, patterned on a sonnet,
Into my honest roadside prose—
All thorn, but cousin to your rose.

Reflected words can only shiver
Like elongated lights that twist
In the black mirror of a river
Between the city and the mist.
Elusive Pushkin! Persevering,
I still pick up Tatiana's earring,
Still travel with your sullen rake;
I find another man's mistake;
I analyze alliterations
That grace your feasts and haunt the great
Fourth stanza of your Canto Eight.
This is my task: a poet's patience
And scholastic passion blent—
The shadow of your monument.

—VLADIMIR NABOKOV

spawning season. The reasons for the drop were two—a cycle of dry years, beginning in 1917, and the diversion of water from the river for a power plant and irrigation ditches along its course. After the trout had disappeared, the State Fish and Game Commission offered to restock the lake with a species that would not have to go upstream to spawn, on condition that when the new trout caught on, other residents of the state would be allowed to fish for them, provided they bought a tribal license. The Indians, according to the story, turned the Commission down cold. They wanted the lake for themselves. I had also heard that they would not permit prospectors on the reservation—although, for all anybody knew, it might be shot full of valuable ores—because they just

didn't want to be disturbed. This lack of a soaring, General Motors type of ambition appeared to be a hereditary characteristic. "The old Paiutes never had anything but a pot to cook in, and even that was only a watertight basket," an Indian Bureau man had told me. "They'd cook in it by filling it with water and heating the water with hot stones. They'd take the pot and wander after food—berries, or small game, or grasshoppers, or pine nuts—always using the lake as the center of their orbit and counting on the fish for their main supply. They were unpretentious Indians."

THE unpretentious Indians, however, were standing off the internationally omnipotent old calliope of a Senator. I had never met McCarran, but I had heard a miscellaneous lot about him, and in the months that followed my talk with Harry I pursued a lazy kind of research on the subject of the Senator. I looked in the Congressional Directory and saw that he was born in 1876—in Reno, it said, although I had been given to understand he was born on a ranch a few miles out, which he still owned. He had four daughters, two

