



Pest Fiction

Stanley Elkin writes: "You ask for biographical information. That's a little difficult. To know me is to know me. Well. Family consists of my wife Joan, my son Philip, and my novel *Boswell*, which I wrote last year in Rome and London. I have a Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Illinois, earned from an unpublished—perhaps unpublishable—doctoral dissertation on William Faulkner. I am an assistant professor of English at Washington University in St. Louis. However next year I have a year's leave of absence and will be a visiting lecturer at Smith College in Northampton, Mass. In 1961 I received a Longview Foundation Award for two short stories; two other sto-

ries, one from *Perspective* and the other from *Esquire*, have been reprinted in Martha Foley's Best American Short Stories, 1962-63 short-story annuals. I'm thirty-three but if *Boswell* doesn't come out soon, I'll never make thirty-four." "The Transient" is an entirely self-contained section of *Boswell*—the novel itself deals with a man destined to be a friend to all the great men of his time. Other sections are to be published by *Esquire* and *The Paris Review*; the novel will be published by Random House this spring. Judging by prepublication enthusiasm *Boswell* promises to be one of those startlingly original first novels—like *Catch 22*—that engross both literary critic and ordinary reader alike.