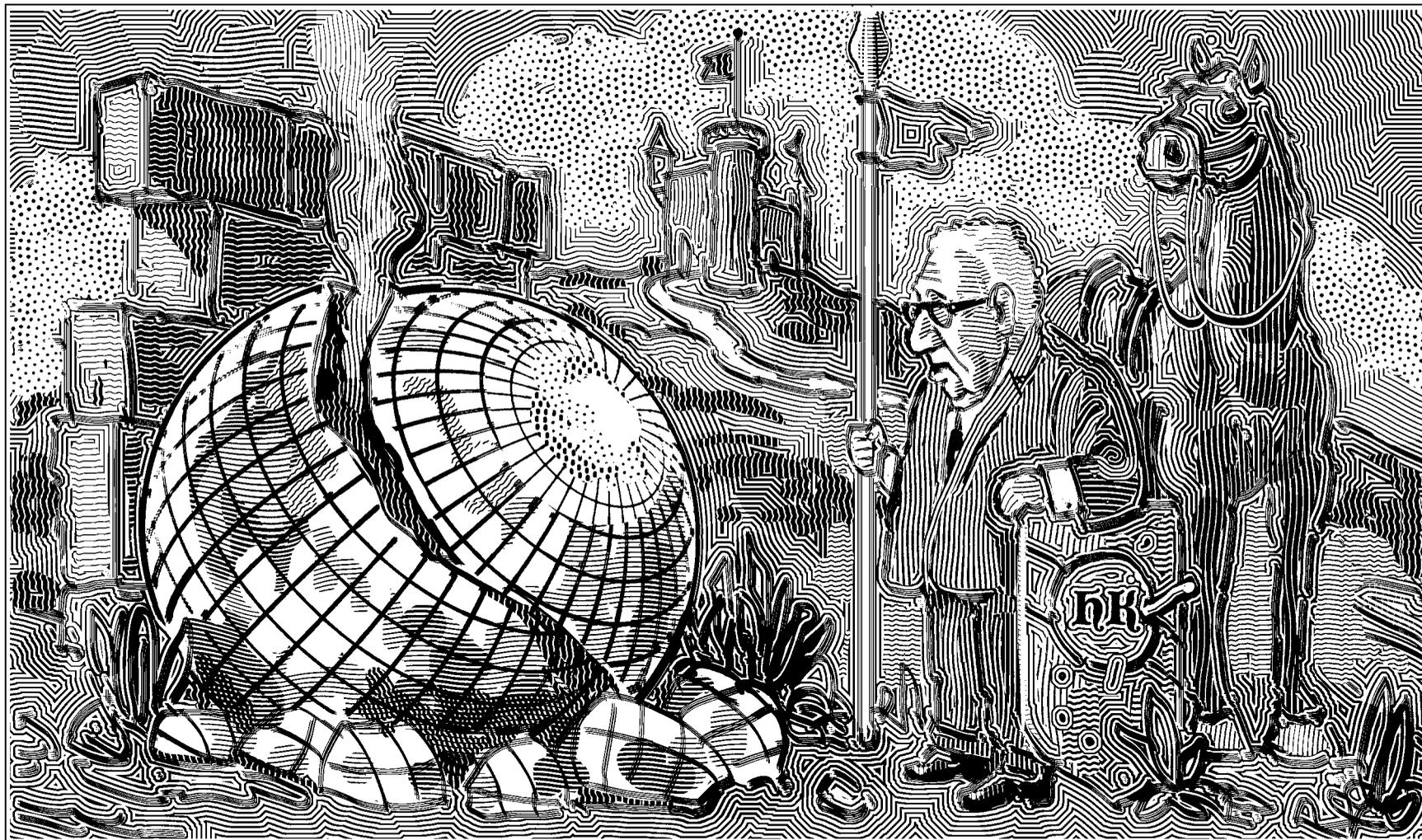


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Frost's Mite

THE CONTEMPLATIVE FROST OBSERVED
A mite upon a sheet of white,
And watched it scurry to and fro
To circumvent his finger's probe.
"A mind," said he. "It has a mind,
The smidgen mite is of our kind."
With a capacity like ours
For safety, first of needed powers,
A link across life's spectrum broad,
From humble mite to human lord.
Of things that move, none can survive
No painted frog, no bee in hive,
No fluked leviathan, no bird,
No roaring beast nor cattled herd,
Without some means of sensing threats,
Averting harm, defeat, and death.

That's what life's for, the sage will say,
Self-preservation, come what may.
But is that true, or are there not
Some purposes the sage forgot?
We live not for ourselves alone;
The fate of others we bemoan
And often risk our limb or life
For others, braving every strife.
On friendship do we dote for joy,
A union strong, a fair alloy.
And then there's offspring—all do wish
To more than feast at their own dish.
They reach beyond what they can see;
They long for immortality.

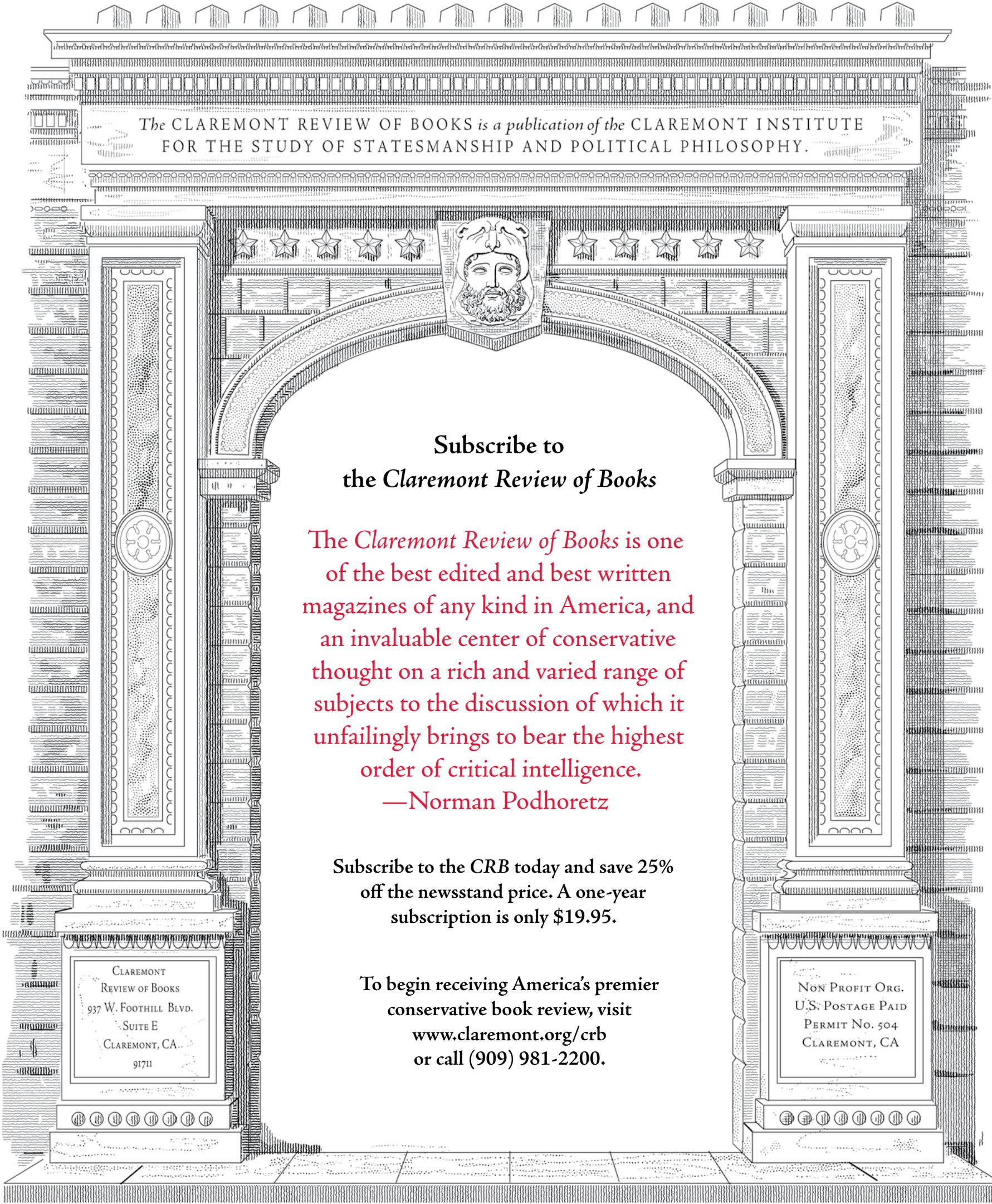
Is that the purpose of it all?
Is that what preservation's for?
Peculiar that our life should be
A prelude to our not-to-be,
A preparation for our heirs
Who in turn prepare for theirs.
But life itself is more than that,

More than a care for one's own fat,
More than, in truth, a passing on
Of one's own flesh beyond the morn.
Life fills out every kind of being
Enjoys the clucking and the laying.
The snore after the feverish chase,
The peacock's glorious displays,
Each kind its own peculiar glee
In doing what comes naturally.

OCOME, YE POETS, PAINTERS, COME,
The other sides of things to plumb,
Come with your colors and your rhymes,
Composers come, with tones and times.
To fill the air with music fair,
Delights that move both eye and ear.
And stir the mind to contemplate
The world where beauty dwells in state.
Come sit in awe of heavens above
And sing of all the things we love.

Life has true ends, no doubt of that,
And far beyond our own fiat.
Beauty's no by-product mere,
But for itself is held right dear.
And virtue loves nobility
Not simply for utility
And thought not just a means to prey,
The body's slave in every way,
Not just an instrument for being
But source of truth and deeper seeing.
Here is the place of mind, in all,
A chance? A means? No, highest call!

Are these things known? Then Frost was right
To celebrate the mindful mite,
And in its scurrying to find
An ancestor to human kind.



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