

SAN JOSE STATE COLLEGE 1938

# EL PORTAL

PHELAN LITERARY AWARDS



Rowland

# EL PORTAL

1891

El Portal is a small town in the heart of the mountains of the State of New Mexico, and is one of the most beautiful and healthful places in the country. It is situated at an altitude of about 7,000 feet above sea level, and is surrounded by some of the most beautiful scenery in the State. The town is well supplied with all the necessities of life, and is a most desirable place for a summer residence.

The town is situated on the Santa Fe and Albuquerque Railroad, and is one of the most convenient places for a summer residence. It is well supplied with all the necessities of life, and is a most desirable place for a summer residence. The town is situated on the Santa Fe and Albuquerque Railroad, and is one of the most convenient places for a summer residence. It is well supplied with all the necessities of life, and is a most desirable place for a summer residence.



# EL PORTAL

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Volume VII

June, 1938

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EL PORTAL, a literary annual edited  
by the English department of the  
San Jose State College, San Jose,  
California, from the best material  
submitted in the Phelan contest.



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1861      SENATOR JAMES D. PHELAN      1930

Senator James D. Phelan bequeathed to the San Jose State College the sum of \$10,000, the annual income of which was to be awarded to students for excellence in poetry and for the Montalvo Contest as sponsored by him. The cash prizes made possible by the generosity of Senator Phelan have stimulated a keen interest in creative writing throughout the college. The speaker of the day at the Phelan literary program was Dr. Margery Bailey, Associate Professor of English at Stanford University. In this edition are found the contributions meriting awards and honorable mention. This issue of *El Portal*, containing the seventh annual literary awards, is dedicated to the memory of the sponsor of the contest,  
Senator James D. Phelan.



## *Fair Tomorrow*

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

Tomorrow will be fair again, and you and I  
together  
Shall laughing run the sunny hills and drink of  
April weather,  
And we shall rest in silky grass and share a bit  
of dreaming  
Where all the world seems made of sky—of blue-  
ness and of gleaming—  
Where all the world seems made of peace, with  
naught of doubt or sorrow.  
Oh, you and I shall own the lovely world again  
tomorrow!

## *Crumbled Treasure*

BY JEAN HOLLOWAY

Beyond the gray horizon  
Of my thought  
A blue sea lulls the stretch  
Of shifting sands and throws  
Shards of rare treasure  
In the crumbling bits  
Of other ages  
Garnered from a thousand foreign lands  
Beyond the dull horizon  
Of my gaze  
I see proud galleons  
Never reaching Rome  
And bronzes and gold figurines  
From dim shores  
Clutched by the greedy fingers  
Of the foam.  
And rosaries and chalices once wrought  
With tender skill  
In ancient shops of Tyre  
Mingle with harpoons, Damascene blades,  
Doubloons, now mere crumbling sands  
Of dead desire.

And ever on the sands,  
The changing sea,  
Hurls its crushed booty,  
Bits of by-gone eras,  
But debris.

## *Stay But a Little Longer*

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

Stay but a little longer from my sight  
And, oh my dear, my heart must surely learn  
To lie ungrieving on the hill at night  
Where the low stars like thy white kisses burn,  
And where the little stream that knew our tryst  
Sings to itself sweet, shy songs like a child.  
Surely my eyes, that now are dimmed with mist  
Must learn to smile, serenely reconciled  
To glimpses of some sunny dimpled face  
Heart-high to thee, my ears to words our own  
Shared with the one who has usurped my place.  
Surely this desolation I have known  
Must pass in time, that I may bear thee near.  
Stay but a little longer, oh my dear.

## *Chinese Scene*

BY CHARLES LEONG

The patient crescent of an  
Icied moon  
Gazes night after night—  
On the eternal pursuit of a leaping lion  
By an arrow poised for flight,  
The chase will end for hunter and moon,  
Even arrow and lion;  
When soon,  
Reluctant stone absconds to dust.

## *You Will Return*

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

You will return, they tell me, just as tawny and  
as slender  
As once in long-remembered sunny hours.  
You will return, as sudden and surprisingly as  
tender,  
And, smiling, we shall learn again of mutual sur-  
render  
And lose the weary years among the flowers.

## Two Twos Though Four

By PHILIP SHERIDAN

"And just as the captive, who in sleep enjoys an imaginary liberty, when he begins to suspect that his liberty is but a dream, fears to awaken and conspires with those agreeable illusions that the deception may be prolonged . . ." — Rene Descartes, *Logical Rules and Moral Maxims*.

HERE comes the meat-wagon. It whines like a tomcat—a low-slung white cat with ears back. "Jeez; whatahell he mean—walkna' mid-laroad! Jeez! Poor guy!" Put him under the rubber blanket; slide him in the meat-wagon. He's dreaming. People are craning their necks like chickens looking out of a crate. Stop everything. "Come on! Come on! Keep moving!" Put green grass from the road's edge in the blood-pools. Flies make people sick.

Meat-wagon is going back to the hospital. It's no different, kid—Jeez, you're awake—but whatahell, whatahell—things are just a little flittery. People are talking somewhere close—can't make out what they're saying. Jeez, you're awright, kid—you're awright.

"No chance." The doctor's talking.

"No chance." It's the white walls now.

"Poor busted bastard," said the smooth whir of the electric clock.

"Identification?" asked the interne. "Relatives?"

"Bum!" It's another voice. "Bum! Knife—pack o' weeds—keys. Letter from St. Paul. Addressed to Roel Bills—general delivery. Just a bum—use 'm out at the school for a cadaver if he's not bunged up too bad."

"Feet are sure tired," said the night-nurse. Watch the charts of lights on the wall. Sure, you know where you are—but things just don't stay tied down so you can get settled.

The principal's office had a worn carpet. Fourteen years old—he was hanging his head and biting his lip. Keep the expression out of your face—don't give him anything to work on.

"Low marks, Roel. Poor attention. No effort. No—ah—cooperation. What's the matter?"

"I don't know."

"Don't know—don't know! Snap out of it! You're looking out of the window—what do you see?"

"Flies in the sun, sir."

"Can't hold a job with this—day-dreaming."

"Guess not, sir."

"Listen, boy, you're trying to live in two worlds. You can't get away with it! First thing you know something's going to bump you and you'll never know what hit you!"

Flies in the sunshine. Half a dozen. They weren't doing anything—just being flies and flying. When two met they'd swoop into each other, then up. Then they'd separate. Principal was talking. Character—citizenship—responsibility—noblesse oblige. He'd heard them all.

He was third wealthiest man in the United States. Second and first places carry too much notoriety. Never did care much for notoriety. Third place is just right—lots of money but none of this notoriety.

It's fun to soak up sun out by the swimming pool. It's fun to play polo, dance with movie actresses at Palm Springs, wear a white tie every night. It's fun to see your name in the society section every Sunday. Jeez, kid, remember how you used to read the society section every Sunday and wonder—but whatahell, whatahell!

Diamond ring, limousine, "Fortune" on the front table—fur coat for the old lady. Got to be good to the old lady, kid—she's worked her heart out. The kid brother is getting a swell education. Gee, kid, you're doing everything you want. You're making an impression, kid—country house, greenhouses, terraces, white peacock on the lawn, rugs that take hold of your feet. You have a big radio that booms like a cow mooring. You're taking a trip to Capri in the spring. Gee, whernahell's Capri—look it up in the morning.



Take it easy, kid—you're awright! You're awright! Monday morning is hard to take anyway. Now you're eating oatmeal with blue milk—sugar is all crusted over. You'll feel awright when you get your coffee. But you gotta go easy on lunch money this week—buy yourself a new hat. Jeez, another week. Pick up the paper, read the funnies. Gotta go, Mom, so long.

\* \* \*

Boss is looking at you. He has a funny set expression like a piece of cold pie. "Want to see you a minute after work, Mr. Bills. Have to lay you off. Your mind isn't on your work. Sorry." Walk through the office—the girls are all staring and looking the other way if you look their way. Jeez, something's wrong. "Third Wealthiest Man in the United States Laid Off." Jeez, funnier'n hell. But whatahell! Whatahell!

\* \* \*

Cars are passing you up. The faces are looking you over—you in your trench coat and cap. They're looking at you like you were a bunch of celery they were buying. Like you were an object—not a person like them. Like you were something in a cage. Jeez, they aren't part of your world, kid. They don't know how cold, and how hungry and how—lonesome you are. They don't know how much you want a ride out here in the rain.

"They're they and you—well, you're just you." Funny, you remember reading that—outa some kid's book. Yeah. You read a lot when you were little. But you're not little anymore, kid. Maybe a shave would help you get a ride—

"Hey, buddy! Gettahell outa dat rest-room. 'For Patrons Only'—can't you read? Don't want no bums hanging around anyway!"

You shoulda had more education. Sure. Culture, Shakespeare, Longfellow, psychology, and all those classical guys. Fellow needs an education—then he's not a mug anymore. Fellow needs a shave, fellow needs a job, fellow needs to get in on the inside of the game. Fellow needs a ride in this goddam rain. But whatahell—

Hey, cut it out, kid; kid, you're awright. But you're talking to yourself too much—you ought to talk to people more.

But how you gonna talk to people when they just go by you in their nice warm cars looking

at you through the glass like you were a goldfish in a bowl. Sure they're not looking at you—they're looking at a goddam dirty bum that's just cluttering up the landscape. Sure they're making funny faces and laughing. You're just a joke, kid—you hadn't ought to live. But if you—oh Jesus, taste of blood in my mouth—Jeez, God let it stop raining and make some one give me a ride in their nice warm car.

\* \* \*

"Life! Life!" said the red hollyhocks, standing like pope's guards along the pickets.

"Life!" said the scissor-snip voice of the ruby-throat, "Life!"

"Sleep! Sleep!" said the wind in the branches of the apricot tree. Now and then the piled green foliage shook itself a little like a sleepy hound.

The children, Roel's children, were calling each other on the sands. The waves made little hissing sounds as the mother sea drew them back. Roel could see the lawn, then the hollyhocks, then the picket fence, then the driveway, then the low stone wall, the brown stone showing through the clinging nasturtiums.

Beyond the goldenrod hung over the cliff and immediately below it was coarse brown sand, then sombre sand, then sparkling sand, and finally firm wet sand with the children wading in the white-swirled wavelets. The incoming tide filled the children's spade holes and crumbled the sand castles.

They all ran out into the sunset—the gentle, trusting baby-waves creeping at the children's feet, the cold severe breakers, alive yet impersonal. They assaulted the beach in disciplined rolling advance. They were cast down and fled, their pride broken.

Kelp gleamed in the slow swell beyond the breakers—the slow rise and fall of the curved breast of the strong mother. "Come to me, home to me, children dispirited." Beyond was blue, blue—and then one just didn't see anymore.

Roel was going to sleep. He was going to sleep in his garden, his own garden, on his lawn and under his apricot tree beyond the hollyhocks. It wasn't raining here, and people weren't going by in warm cars looking at him like he was a head of celery. He must have dreamed that somewhere—and he was going to sleep now. In sleep one dreamed—one dreamed—and he must stay awake.



"Stay awake, Roel," said the distant calls of the children.

"Sleep!" said the little breeze, "you're tired."

"Stay with me!" said the autumn afternoon, fragrant and warm, now running forever out of him.

This was his—this was real, and if he went to sleep he might lose it. Sure it was his—jeez, don't let 'em fool ya, kid—they're trying to take it away from you. They can't take a fragrant autumn sunshine away from the Third Richest Man in the United States.

Fight with them; fight, kid! But who are they, anyway? Don't go to sleep; you haven't seen all the day, yet. You want to watch the strong mother enfold the sun and tuck him to rest somewhere out on the blue fringe of the sky. Then the hills would be lighted up a little while, and the frogs and crickets would sing. Fight with them, kid; you're not sleeping yet.

There's a car turning in the driveway. It's feeling its way up now between the low wall and the lawn. And a girl's getting out. Who's she? Jeez, kid, she looks like—but she changes so fast. Now she's that nigger wench you had down at Tia Juana. Now she's the little Susie Rabbit girl that used to go with you in high school. Now she's the fresh waitress with the swell shape that used to work in the restaurant where you ate your lunch. Now she's some movie

actress, now she's the pretty school-teacher you had in the third grade; remember, kid? Now she's just a pretty face out of a cigaret ad. But she hasn't got any face, really. She's like every woman you've ever seen.

But—waitaminit, kid, she's picking you up. You're just a baby again. She's carrying you to the car. You can't do anything about it either. Don't go to sleep, kid! Don't sleep! You want to stay here under the apricot tree and just watch the sun set. Please let me see the sun set, Girl.

Jeez, kid, it's the meat-wagon. Sure she's putting you into the meat-wagon; there's a taste of blood in your mouth. Go back! Let me out. I want to stay in my garden! I want to stay awake! I don't want to sleep!

Jeez, you're sick, kid, and you feel a big jagged pain somewhere! And it's something else now and there's a shaded light in the corner and the smell of rubber and chloroform and—jeez, but you're tired, kid! Go to sleep! Sleep! Sleep! Peace! And still you're away off somewhere watching yourself and the room's getting brighter and brighter and—whatahell! Whatahell!

\* \* \*

"Use him?" asked the interne.

"No," said the interne, "he's not worth the trouble of embalming. Make out a burial certificate. He'd have made a bum cadaver. He's damn near cut in two."

## Plays

The editors of *El Portal* regret that the length of the plays winning first and third prizes prevented their being published in this magazine.

|                                       |              |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Dark Tide, First Prize.....           | Ona Hardy    |
| Girl from Tikva, Second Prize.....    | Mary Belick  |
| You're An Itinerant, Third Prize..... | June Falcone |

## Transition

By GERTRUDE DENNY

YOU have been away from home for almost all of three years. Each returning is a little more disquieting than the last. The first Christmas you were in an automobile accident Christmas night, and the shock of that night is still vivid. Before the dance you had been radiant and self-confident. The accident had taken place on the way back from a supper party. You weren't hurt badly—your lucky streak. Nerves you did have; and at three in the morning, the pain at the top of your spine becoming intolerable, you crept from the bed and tiptoed down the stairs into the huge front room. Perhaps if you had a cup of hot milk, you would stop this absurd shaking and sleep. There in the room, to your great wonder, are your mother and father. They have built a fire and are sitting in front of it, silent, troubled. They look up, still silent, and your father's glance is neither soft nor sympathetic. Your mother calls you "dear" and asks you to sit down. You sit down and tell her about the hot milk. She leaves immediately for the kitchen. You pass a shaking hand over the hurt of your neck. At least down here you don't feel the lunge of the car—see the ditch coming every time you close your eyes. But you continue to tremble, rocking your chair with convulsive shudders at recurrent, clocklike intervals.

Your father's voice comes to your ear. Steadily it goes on and on until you could scream in exasperation and annoyance. You admit later that he has been badly frightened and is merely relieving his mind. But to give you the benefit of his anger and fright seems, at such a time, the result of a cruel, methodical parentry, relentless and unmerciful. You don't hear all of the words, but his voice drives you very nearly mad. You clench your fists until your fingernails break the skin of your palms. You dare not speak, for the first words would be, "I hate you—". You close your eyes, the voice pounding in your ear drums, and see clearly why and how you could commit cold-blooded murder.

Your mother returns with the hot milk. Your hands shake so that the milk slops over the cup and runs down your robe, drips into your slippers. You gulp the hot liquid, and it burns its way

down your throat into your stomach where it warms and comforts you. The voice subsides. Your mother's eyes meet your remorsefully. In the back of your mind you are sorry for her—but only faintly sorry because it is impossible to feel much besides the throb of the jangled nerve in your spine.

On the way up the stairs you wish, with sudden fury, that you could tell your father that the date that had led to the accident had been wise—that you had helped him by accepting it—that there had been no drinking at the party—that there had been no ice on the spot where they had crashed when they went over it the first time—that you hadn't screamed or been hysterical. You hadn't been frightened. He probably wouldn't care about the last. He had been frightened, and if you had been hurt, it was not his fault.

In bed again your brain whirls with visions of the last skid—of the icy road on which it had been so difficult to stand after you had been pulled from the car. Over and over your father's voice beats severe words into a ringing ear drum, the hardness of his tone never to be forgotten. Vainly you fight the hysteria which you had kept controlled until now. The clock strikes a slow four—your parents have not yet come upstairs—you will have to go to a dull wedding tomorrow at high noon—sharp pains shoot up the back of your neck—there are no cigarettes upstairs—Christmas—Christmas ball—supper party with coffee instead of cocktails—fireplace—ice—hot milk—no cigarettes—poor judgment—wedding—wedding—Father's eyes—Mother's face—wedding—high time that cousin got married anyway.

You laugh before you weep.

\* \* \* \*

Memories of the next summer are faint shadows. The sky was a tortured blue—heat waves climbed in spots by each fence when you, in dirty blue linen, descended from a dirty bus and kissed your mother. Almost immediately began the tiresome work of cooking and doing dishes and setting tables to dirty more dishes. All summer there were eighteen or twenty people living and eating at your house. The one o'clock stage marked the climax of each day. On this



stage came the mail from your friends. Letters brought delightful moments of pleasure. A letterless stage meant another day of waiting. The stack of them mounted higher and higher, but the monotony of the days grew more intense.

Sometimes, in the afternoon, it was possible to go swimming in a nearly bottomless dredger hole about five miles away. No one ever went there except at night or on Sunday afternoon. The water was cold and clear, surrounded on three sides by high piles of rock and brush. On the fourth side the ground was flat and hard. On this side was a low diving board. Alone, unhampered by a suit, you could poise on this board before you left it to meet the softness of the water as it came up to meet the softness of your flesh. Across the pond and back to the center with long even strokes was the customary procedure. The water held and rocked your body. Here you were safe from loneliness—safe from confusion—safe from monotony.

Occasionally, after supper, you mounted the thoroughbred Roc and rode down the river into the gold of the sunset. The little horse raced coming back through the late twilight, meeting lightly the green of the pasture. The mountain air was cool and caressing against your face.

Toward late summer your face showed discontent. You were dissatisfied with your reaction. It revealed shortcomings in your nature and character. It was small to begrudge these three months of your life. Each day's length seemed that of three. You swore never to stay home again for more than two weeks. The valley was beauty wasted, color dried for want of feeling. You have finally ceased to live, and exist only to wait.

One night, driving home, you notice the quietness of the moon-drenched valley, the loveliness of the willows along the river, the fragrance of the stacked hay, the blue of the mountains. These mountains of your home frighten you, as they have always, with their silence, their sturdiness. When you were very young you had been afraid that you could never get past them into another world. Something of that fear still persists.

\* \* \* \*

The second Christmas should have been pleasant. There was harmony between parents and daughter. You had proved yourself worthy of their efforts and self denial by being invited into an honor society. Your father realized to a greater extent than ever before that his day as a ruler was passing. Away from home the greater

part of each year, you had grown accustomed to making your own decisions—coming and going as you chose. You, in turn, tried desperately not to quarrel with this man who was your father. Because you were so like him, he feared for you. He must not know that his fears had been well founded. You both should be spared that. He would be spared the pain; you, the result of that pain. Last Christmas you had tasted his anger. True, he had been angry before, but always kind when you were ill or distraught. Now there was nothing left but distrust and suspicion. He would not spare you, no matter what it cost you. And you could never tell him the whole truth.

The lucky streak held. Through the two weeks you remained quiet, poised, stuffing the nervous strain inside you. You tried not to seem preoccupied or worried. Christmas day dawned on a white world. Uncles, cousins, grandparents flooded the house. Dressed in black and garnet, you mixed Tom-and-Jerrys for countless visitors. At that time you were wearing your hair long. It was done up neatly that day to please your father.

The dinner done and the youngest of the children sleeping peacefully on her fat little stomach, the women of the family chattered over the dishes. You moved gently, carefully—leaving any heavy work to some one else. Your father and two of his brothers-in-law smoked near the Christmas tree. He was so obviously pleased with you. Just before the stage came by, you played Christmas carols for them all. Their voices rose thin, full, rich, tired, off-pitch, flute-like.

"It came upon the midnight clear." Your hands trembled on the keys. You would have to sing for them now. They were waiting—expectant. The chords of introduction lingered. Very softly you sang of the Holy Night. If you believed in God, this would satisfy you. The rich simplicity of the music pulled inside—bringing no peace. If there was a God, you'd pray that your voice wouldn't crack on the high note. It didn't, and your breath came easily. The voice, dying away from the full crescendo, was softly resonant. "Christ, the Savior, is born."

It was in the silence that followed the song, that someone handed you the letter. The stage had been late. Quickly you excused yourself, left the quiet room for your own. There, sitting cross-legged in the middle of the bed, you opened the letter. From now until the year you died you would have a Christmas and a birthday letter.

Later they were to mean more than the day itself.

This letter was short—almost terse. You remember, painfully, the night that you had told him, because it was only fair to him to let him know, exactly how you felt. He had been kind, insisted upon a smile—and left you sitting in the dark beside the fire, numb with grief and regret. Hours later a friend found you still staring into the fire, clenching in your fist the good luck charm he had left you. You hadn't cried, but your throat was taut with unshed tears. If you had met him sooner. . . .

A few days later he had written, thanking you for your courage. He would remember you. Now your hands involuntarily went to the blonde curls he would remember. They were gone and you yanked at hair pins until your hair fell to your shoulders—blonde and curly.

\* \* \* \* \*

The next summer, true to your vow, you were home for five days in the spring and ten in September. Even those days went slowly. Home meant nothing any more but fear. You were afraid that something might happen so that you could not leave and afraid that you might quarrel with your father. Fear that you might hurt your mother lay hidden in your eyes. It must have been in June that you realized that if home meant the place where you had been born, you had no home. Under the parental roof you were restless and vaguely tired. You were young enough to believe that it was time wasted in your life. Activities and friends away from home kept you busy and happy.

In September you sang for the church. By September you felt secure and independent. You had earned enough money during the summer to live on for some months. So, in the church, you stood erect and confident, singing unfamiliar words to the lovely, familiar Londonderry Air. The congregation was fond of you and indulgent. Clear and high your voice soared, happier than it had sounded for some time. Back in the church your mother smiled gently, proudly.

Nevertheless, a quarrel of a kind came. It seemed to be impossible to go home without upsetting yourself and your parents—probing the hurt you both felt. You wanted to make the trip back to school with a friend who was driving down. Conceding the point, quietly, you packed for the train. At the station the illiterate ticket salesman was slow and impudent. It was impossible to have your heavy luggage checked. You

and your father grew irritable—the atmosphere strained. Obstinate, you kept thinking that all of this could have been avoided. You couldn't resist a sarcastic remark. Your father's heavy brows knitted in displeasure. Your mother was troubled. In a fit of anger at yourself, you mounted the train without kissing them goodbye. In your berth you shook with sorrow. Two Septembers ago you had caught the same train, in a flurry of goodbyes, thrilled to the bottom of your toes. Your father had been gruff and proud, your mother sweet and anxious. The vision of them, this year, standing by the train, your father hurt and angry; your mother, cold in her light coat, small, gray, aged years in two, pitifully huddled close to the hulk of your father's sternness—all of this troubled your rest.

\* \* \* \* \*

Christmas again. You hadn't seen your brother for a year. It was good to be back. You spent most of the time outside. You rode, drove the small brother's team, burned brush along the river with your father. The valley was seeped in fog, dark, and bitter cold. The skies clouded over and tried hard to snow. Finally the storm came, fitfully nasty. The whole family tried, rather desperately, to be one again. Your father cooked your steak for you himself the way you like it best—blood rare. You consumed actual gallons of milk, ate innumerable eggs and luscious slices of bacon. After supper you played the piano, but the voice was silent. Sometimes your father and older brother played three-handed pinochle with you.

The older brother had been away from home for six months, and his talk was full of his school and of his new friends. Neither you nor he were as much interested in the old circle of friends as you had been. Some of them you couldn't even remember. Your parents knew few of your new friends and little about your life although you had written in detail of every day.

Loudly and gaily everyone laughed, vainly playing upon memories. Discussions of the current political situation were warm. Your father is widely read, well informed, and a logical talker. You didn't agree on the subject of war and isolation. You think firmly that America should learn to keep her nose out of foreign affairs and mind her own business. War is horrible and impossible. Patriotism is ghastly foolishness and consists of bands and stirring speeches and emotionalism. My God, if man could be cool about patriotism and



religion, he would at last be mature. Your father believes that if the fleet withdrew from Asiatic waters, the prestige of the United States would be impaired. Let them lose prestige, you think. Time enough to show their strength when another nation becomes aggressive enough to attack them.

But your father sees in your vigorous denouncement your frightened soul. He is quiet.

Christmas Day was lonely with just the immediate family. Pathetically each tried to express a gaiety he did not feel. It was much like every other day. After the dinner was over and the carols sung, you dressed your mother in her best and sent her and your father away to a party. The dishes done, you dressed for the formal ball, hoping your gown wasn't too indecent. But it didn't really matter—you were so detached.

At the dance you saw many unfamiliar faces. Very few of your high school friends were left. The few that were present were friendly and interested. Dancing with them, you felt a twinge of remorse because you hadn't kept in closer touch with these people you had known since childhood. Their parents had known yours as children, and your grandparents and theirs had crossed the plains or come around the Horn at about the same time to settle the valley. The feeling passed as you realized that they, too, had other interests. You would always be friends no matter how far apart you were or how seldom you met.

The die was cast. You were irrevocably cut away from the old home—at your own bidding. There was no point in returning each vacation expecting everything to be the same as it had been. The only result of such an attitude would be disappointment. You sigh, remembering the first broken illusion. When you were about six, someone told you that there was no Santa Claus. You had cried, alone, for a long time. Now tears were hidden. Somewhere inside there was a supply that had been gathering for two years. There, too, lay the hardening of your emotions, the bitterness you forced down, the sorrow you refused to feel.

The next night you kissed your parents at the station. You knew that you wouldn't be back again for a year or perhaps longer. You couldn't tell them, but they probably realized it.

Best not to come back until you were settled and independent of them. When you did return, it would be with a desire to please—a desire to forget yourself for them. Until you could do that

it was best not to come. You were separated, no longer father and daughter. Strangers to each other, you would be acquainted again in a few years. Until then you can only try each other's patience and understanding. It has been your fault, dependent upon their fault. But the fact is indisputable. The great love between you is dead or sleeping, deadened by its own intensity and violence. Each returning has made the time of transition lengthen. You face the new year with shoulders relaxed, quietness in your heart, reflection in your voice, and the happy loneliness of decision and relief implicit in your step.

## *The Spanish Shawl*

By JEAN HOLLOWAY

The shawl is scarlet  
And fragrant with the muted scent  
Of old things.  
My grandmother wore it defiantly  
About her withered shoulders  
In those other days:  
When she sat, small and erect,  
Before the fire.

And now it is mine . . . Grandmother's shawl  
With the wicked red roses  
Splashed across its seductive, rustling surface.  
I used to think it odd that one so old  
Would garb herself in this gay, flaunting bit,  
But now . . .  
Now I found there is mystery in its folds,  
A subtle grace in the way it settles about one.  
A Spanish dancing girl might well have worn it  
About ivory shoulders,  
Or a gypsy twirling madly  
In enchanted firelight.  
Some lovely princess perhaps twined it over an  
arm,  
Or a slim Oriental veiled her sleek hair coquet-  
tishly,  
Knowing someone watched in the shadows.

Even as I fold prosaic tissue,  
I sense an iridescent glamour  
Transcending the commonplace . . .  
Glamour which gave quiet, prim little grand-  
mother  
The flaming soul of a Spanish dancer  
When she smoothed its silken folds  
About her shoulders.

## Girl From Tikva

BY MARY BELICK

### CHARACTERS

**ANICA.** A peasant girl visiting her rich aunt in the city. She decides to make her vacation a paying proposition by making a good marriage.

**MILOSH.** A raw country youth; rustic suitor of Anica, who follows her to the big city.

**PETAR,**

**JOVAN,**

**FRANAC,**

**STEFAN.** Suitors to Anica; ambitious university students who are destitute, and determined to marry wealth.

**AUNT,**

**UNCLE,**

**SERVING MAID.**

Action takes place in present day Belgrade

### SCENE

An old-fashioned parlor, comfortable, but decidedly lacking in taste. An effort has been made to impress visitors with the possessions of the family, for photographs are liberally distributed throughout the room, embroidered handwork and doilies have been placed on the large, round, mahogany table, and on the two little tables. Large vases filled with gaudy paper flowers have been placed upon the two small tables, while the large one has been decorated with a bowl of artificial fruit and a pair of candlesticks with limp candles in them. Two fat pillows have been placed on the sofa, while one has been set on the floor. Four chairs around the table, a sofa, an old clock, and three odd-sized rugs complete the furnishings. The rugs are old, and the color combinations are inharmonious. Yellow, red and blue are the predominating colors in the room.

Anica is in the room. She has placed her embroidery on the sofa, and is walking up and down, looking at the photographs.

Someone knocks on the door. Anica sticks her head out of the window, jerks it back in again, and starts to titter. As the serving maid goes to the door, Anica runs out of the room. The maid shows Milosh into the room, and gives him

a chair. He sits down, places his greasy paper bag and big umbrella on the floor and crosses his legs. This fellow needs a haircut badly. His coat is faded and too large for him; his trouser legs are very tight at the bottom, and his big feet are very conspicuous in the heavy working shoes he wears.

Anica's aunt comes into the room. Milosh gets up. He is pigeon-toed, and places the front of one shoe atop the other while he squashes his cap in his hands.

The aunt holds out her hand to him.

**AUNT.** Milosh, I'm so glad to see you.

(He pumps her hand up and down.)

**AUNT.** Sit down, Milosh. Did you come all the way from Tikva to see my niece?

(Milosh nods and looks at his feet.)

**AUNT.** Oh, I'm sorry, but Anica isn't home today.

(Milosh looks at her uncomprehendingly.)

**AUNT.** I said Anica isn't home right now.

(Milosh scratches his head all over, until his hair is completely matted, places his cap atop his head, his umbrella on his arm, and trudges out.)

(Anica peeks through the doorway, sees he has gone, and joins her aunt in the parlor. She looks out through the window and giggles. Her aunt watches her disapprovingly.)

**AUNT.** Milosh is a good, honest, hardworking fellow, Anica.

**ANICA.** I despise him—he's so stupid.

**AUNT.** He has one of the best farms in your village.

**ANICA.** Heavens, Auntie! How could you expect me to prefer a fool like him to all my wealthy, educated suitors? If I marry Milosh I'll have to spend my whole life in Tikva. I hate the country. I want to marry a rich man and live in this wonderful city.



AUNT. Still, Anica, I think Milosh would make a better match for you than all those city fops who are courting you. You know Milosh's family. You know his father and grandfather and great-grandfather. What do you know about the families of these dandies from the university?

(Pause)

Did you ever tell them that you're from the country?

ANICA. No.

AUNT. Perhaps that would make a big difference with them. These fellows may imagine you to be a wealthy girl with a large dowry.

ANICA. But they have money of their own.

AUNT. Not all the students are rich—they may be just as poor as you are yourself.

ANICA. Not by beaux. Not Petar and Stefan and—

AUNT. (interrupting) Why not?

ANICA. They're always so well dressed, and they bring the nicest presents.

AUNT. Any beggar can rent a suit of clothes, and bon bons can be bought on credit. No, Anica, you need some better proof than that.

ANICA. If we could only find out where they lived, I could convince you of their fortunes. Petar told me they were renting a luxurious apartment in a handsome old building near the lake.

AUNT. Humph, the four bachelors are probably living together in a garret.

ANICA. I won't believe they're trifling with me. They aren't after any money.

AUNT. How can you be sure of that?

ANICA. When they propose, I'll tell them about my small dowry. I'm sure my lack of wealth won't matter to at least one of my suitors.

AUNT. The trouble is,—they always come in fours. How will you find the worthwhile one of four men?

ANICA. Yes, I have to weed out three of them. They all seem to be equally attentive. If only I could talk to them alone.

AUNT. Four wooers every evening! Your uncle is beginning to complain. He won't stand for it. He says their bickering is driving him crazy. Anica, you've got to make a choice soon.

ANICA. Please tell me what to do, Auntie. You've had plenty of beaux yourself. What made you choose Uncle?

AUNT. Persistence won. The others got tired of waiting.

(Thinks for a moment)

Yes, you can put your beaux to a test. You must try their patience until just the most persistent suitor remains.

ANICA. Yes—

AUNT. And then you must reveal that you have no dowry.

ANICA. All right. But how can I weed out the less persistent ones?

AUNT. Before your suitors arrive, I want you to go across the street to Sophia's house. You can take your sewing and watch everything from the window.

ANICA. Yes—

AUNT. I shall tell each of your suitors that you will be home soon, but you are not to come back here until you see three suitors leave this house.

ANICA. (looking at clock) Eight o'clock. They'll be here soon, Auntie.

AUNT. Yes, hurry, Anica, and don't let them catch sight of you.

(Anica takes her sewing and leaves the room. The aunt walks about the room, straightening the photographs and patting the fat pillows. Her husband enters the room. He is wearing slippers and an old robe, and he holds a small bottle of wine and a newspaper in his hand. He settles himself comfortably on the sofa, and prepares for a long rest.)

AUNT. Heavens! You can't do that.

UNCLE. Why not?

AUNT. Anica's friends will be here in a few minutes.

UNCLE. No they won't; I just saw her go out.



AUNT. That makes no difference—they're coming anyway.

*(She moves to the window and looks out.)*

Here comes Franac. Quick! Get into the kitchen.

*(The uncle swings his feet to the floor, gnashes his teeth and crushes the paper up. His wife sticks the bottle into his hand, and pushes him out of the room.)*

AUNT. Don't act up so. It will only last a few days more.

*(The servingmaid shows Franac into the room. He holds a box in his hand.)*

FRANAC. Hello. Tell Anica I'm here.

AUNT. Anica will be home in a few minutes. *(She holds out her hands to take the box, but Franac shakes one of them, holds onto his gift, and sits down.)*

*The aunt walks out of the room. Franac remains seated for a few minutes; then he begins fidgeting. He gets up, walks around the room, and looks at the photographs. The knocker is heard again. Franac jumps back to the sofa, and places his gift on his knee. The servingmaid shows Stefan into the room. He, too, holds a present, but it is a little larger than Franac's. The aunt comes into the room.)*

AUNT. Hello.

STEFAN. Hello.

AUNT. Did you come to see Anica? She'll be here in a few minutes.

*(She holds out her hand for the box, but Stefan does not relinquish it. He seats himself on the opposite side of the room from Franac. The aunt leaves the room.)*

FRANAC. *(hissingly)* Thought you'd keep me away, you fool. I saw you hiding my shoes.

STEFAN. What of it? Next time I'll burn them.

FRANAC. Afraid I'll win Anica, aren't you?

STEFAN. Huh! you haven't got a chance with her.

*(Knocker sounds. Petar and Jovan are shown into the room. They both carry presents, but Petar's is the largest of all. The aunt greets them from the doorway; Jovan*

*calls a loud "Hello," and gets himself a chair, but Petar walks up to the aunt and bows.)*

PETAR. How charming you look, Mrs. Cressa. *(He bows again, while the other suitors gape at him.)*

Will you take this to your lovely niece, and tell her I am eager to see her?

AUNT. Anica will be here in a few minutes. *(She reaches for the box. Petar holds it for a second, reluctant to give it up; then he relinquishes it.)*  
*(The aunt closes the door, and the boys have the room to themselves.)*

FRANAC. I'm thirsty. I never saw such stinginess in a wealthy family.

STEFAN. Thirsty already? You just emptied a bottle before you came here.

FRANAC. It was just a small bottle.

JOVAN. Hey, Franac, where did you get it? At Lucan's—when he wasn't looking?

FRANAC. *(stands up and doubles his fists.)* *(Angrily)* I bought it like an honest man.

JOVAN. Did you pay for it like an honest man?

PETAR. Leave the fellow alone, Jovan. *(Turns to Franac.)*

Wasn't that bottle a present to Bianca's old man?

FRANAC. Yes, but I took it back when he kicked me out of the house.

JOVAN. I hear she has a handsome suitor now.

FRANAC. To hell with her! The old fellow's going to be stingy with her dowry. I need a rich wife.

STEFAN. Don't we all!

PETAR. You're certainly a fool for letting Bianca get away, Franac. She was married last week, and they say the old man gave her half his estate as dowry.

FRANAC. What! The old, sly devil put one over on me. I thought he wouldn't give her a para.

PETAR. Ho! That's an old trick used by girls with money. When they say they won't get

a para, they're trying to find which you love best,—the girl or the gold.

FRANAC. Curses! (Mutters under his breath.)

PETAR. Well, that will be a lesson to you. I'll never make that mistake.

FRANAC. (Sadly) My big opportunity—gone like that. (Snaps his fingers) I shall go drown my—

STEFAN. (Interrupting) What!

(All three run toward Stefan to stop him from leaving the house.)

PETAR. She isn't worth it, Franac! I won't let you do it.

FRANAC. Hold on there! It's just my sorrows I'm going to drown in another bottle of wine.

(The three of them grab Stefan and push him out of the door.)

They sit down again, and Petar takes a slip of paper out of his pocket.)

PETAR. Hey, Jovan!

JOVAN. What do you want with me? I haven't got a para.

PETAR. All right. I'll shut my mouth. I was just trying to help you anyway.

JOVAN. I'm sorry. What is it?

PETAR. I've got the address of a new one. She's richer than any we've trailed so far. Want her?

STEFAN. I do!

JOVAN. Give it here!

STEFAN. That's not fair—you owe me an address. I'm the one who told you about the widow.

PETAR. It's your turn next time, Stefan.

JOVAN. I'll never forget this, Petar. I'll return the favor some day.

PETAR. Don't waste any more time. Why don't you call on her now? I'll write you a note to give her.

JOVAN. Do you think she'll like me?

PETAR. She'll go crazy over you.

JOVAN. I'll call on her right now. (Leaves the room.)

(Franac is walking up and down the room, glowering at Petar.)

PETAR. Don't be so jealous. This beauty is sixty-five years old and walks with two sticks. I'm just playing a trick on Jovan. I have to get rid of him so I can propose to Anica tonight.

STEFAN. What—!

PETAR. And I want you to leave early tonight. I have to talk to her alone.

STEFAN. The devil! I was going to propose to her myself.

PETAR. Oh ho! I should have played a trick on you, too. Well, may the best man win,—as long as I'm the best man.

(The suitors sit quietly in their chairs for a few minutes. Soon they grow impatient and fidget. Stefan gets up, looks at the clock, and then sits down again.)

The curtains are drawn to show passing of time. When they are opened again, the boys are sprawled on their chairs, half-asleep. Stefan yawns, gets up and leaves the house with his box of candy under his arm. Anica's aunt opens the door and peeks through. She nods to her niece standing beside her, and Anica walks into the room.)

ANICA. (sweetly) Hello, Petar; I'm so sorry I kept you waiting.

PETAR. (fawningly) I would wait forever for you.

ANICA. How charmingly you say that.

PETAR. This is the first time we've been alone.

ANICA. Yes.

(There is a pause. Anica looks at the floor, and then at Petar. He is obviously ready to say something, but is undecided how to begin.)

PETAR. Anica.

ANICA. Yes, Petar.

PETAR. (Has taken her hand, and holds it to his heart.) I cannot live without you.

AUNT. (Speaks to Petar from the doorway.) Would you like a glass of wine and some cookies? Anica made them herself.



*(Petar drops the girl's hand and turns to the aunt.)*

PETAR. Huh? Oh not now—later. *(Waits until the aunt has left, then takes Anica's hand again.)*

Anica.

ANICA. Yes?

PETAR. You must consent to marry me.

ANICA. *(hesitates)* I would gladly marry you Petar, only—

PETAR. *(angrily)* You've promised somebody else!

ANICA. No! No! I was going to say I have no dowry to give you.

*(Petar breathes sigh of relief.)*

*(Anica continues)*—A poor girl like me doesn't deserve such a fine husband as you.

PETAR. Anica, I am deeply hurt. How could you think I wanted your money? No! Never! It's only you I want—money is nothing to me. *(Pleadingly)* You'll marry me, won't you?

ANICA. Yes, if money doesn't matter to you.

PETAR. *(kisses her)* We'll announce our engagement tomorrow!

ANICA. Oh Auntie! Uncle!  
*(The aunt and uncle enter.)*

PETAR. Congratulate me. I've just won your niece!

*(The aunt kisses Anica, while the uncle shakes hands with Petar.)*

UNCLE. When will you tell your mother, Anica?

ANICA. Petar, let's go visit here tomorrow.

PETAR. Fine. Where does she live?

ANICA. About fifty miles from here—in Tikva.

PETAR. *(horrified)* In Tikva?

ANICA. Yes. What is the matter?

PETAR. Is your mother old Mrs. Cressa?

ANICA. Do you know her?

PETAR. Know her! She worked in the fishmarket with my mother! *(Angrily)* Then you're just peasant from Tikva! You're not a rich heiress at all! You've tricked me!

ANICA. *(wailing)* I never did! You said it didn't matter!

PETAR. *(yelling)* You made me believe it was true!

*(Uncle sneaks out)*

ANICA. *(hysterically)* I did not! You lied to me—posing as a wealthy dandy. *(Starts to cry)* Get away from here! Go! I never want to see you again!

*(Petar stamps out angrily)*

*(The aunt tries to put her arm around the sobbing girl, but she shakes her head and moves away. The aunt leaves the room, looking sadly at her niece.)*

*Anica stands alone in the center of the room. She sighs, dries her tears, and walks slowly out of the parlor.*

*A few seconds' pause, and the knocker is heard. The servingmaid opens the door, and Milosh walks into the room with his umbrella over his arm, and the greasy paper bag in his arm. He sits down, crosses his legs, and waits.)*

## CURTAIN

## Concealment

BY JEAN HOLLOWAY

No poet wrote a song for her—  
No lover played a tune,  
And soberly she went her way  
From June to each dull June.

She made her gowns of Quaker gray—  
Her life a drab retreat,  
And no one guessed her sober shoes  
Covered dancing feet!—

That every night her heart would dance  
With beauty like a flame,  
And in the quiet darkness  
A lover breathe her name.

She had a lovely, cherished dream  
That no one ever knew;  
So no one came at any time  
To make the dream come true.



## Confiteor

BY GILBERT HOFLING

Yes, once, my love, when the spring was new,  
Home bound, for that night I had been with you,  
As I strode alone down the lamp-lit street  
Shallow pools of dead rain splashing up round  
my feet  
And my heart laden heavy with love's blind care,  
From the shadows dreamlike she stood facing me  
there,  
Yellow lamps through the mist gave a glow to her  
hair  
Soft, and so yielding those folds, and so fair.  
Pale as the mist that hung thick in the air.  
Though she spoke not with words still her grey  
eyes said,  
"Love is love where you find it, come share my  
bed."  
Heated heart throbbing wildly at once thought  
of thee,  
Your cool lips on my lips. Then she spoke, "Come  
with me."  
I recalled in the night as she stood there beside me  
The love, fresh and gentle, that you had denied  
me.  
I recalled your chaste pleading, our love vows—  
and yet—  
Her warm throat was like yours where it tenderly  
met  
The innocent waves of her amber-light hair,  
Flaxen and lovely beyond all compare,  
As pale as the moon in the mist-laden air.  
Young like you, scarcely less, and I went, O my  
love,  
To her room, up the stairs where the carpet was  
worn.  
And the moments like music sweet spent, O  
my love,  
And her laugh low and listless like yours, I'd  
have sworn,  
That the words we two spoke were as pure as  
a prayer.  
Oh, you lurked in her tresses sweet, you lured  
me there,  
Leaving your soul in the wisps of her hair,  
Pale as your cheek is now. Thus my affair.

## Sanctuary

BY MARY BERTIE HARRIS

Ivy leaves are red on our cloister walls,  
Red as the blood of the sons of Spain  
Spilt in the war.

From our cells we hear the rumble of cannon  
Growling afar their song of hate—  
Voice of the war.

Earth-shaking files of men march by,  
Shaking the saints in their niches—  
Far from the war.

Shattered and broken they stumble back,  
Back to the cloister—a haven of peace,  
Peace from the war.

Rebel or Loyalist—in His eyes the same—  
Shattered and broken we take them in,  
In from the war.

## In the Arbor

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

Serenely the growing blue twilight is sifting  
Through air faintly sweet with a fragile perfume  
That all the long sun-tinted day has been drifting  
From clusters of silky wisteria bloom.

A moment ago, hidden deep in the grasses,  
I found a dead thing, once a blue-feathered bird.  
See, here in my hand! Yes, I know beauty passes  
As love does, and life; that to grieve is absurd.

The hot lust of summer will shrivel the flowers,  
Their fragrance be spent, and the passionate word  
Will cloy long before we have ended these hours;  
All things are destroyed, but to grieve is absurd.

For exquisite springs will be coming forever,  
With blossoms as scented and blue birds as bright.  
The world will be lifeless or loverless never;  
Things die, but the heart need not break at the  
sight.

## Trail Ends

By WILL RYAN

PERRY knew he was going to die. He knew it when he felt the root bracing snap, saw the starboard wing fold back and cut into the fuselage. The spars had the strength their designer had claimed, and they held like steel, the force of the four hundred mile-an-hour pull-out crushing the wing into the tiny cockpit.

The shock and pain of twisted metal cutting into his feet and legs caused him to beat on the outer sides of the fuselage with gloved hands. Then suddenly he stopped beating. The lower part of him was numb now. That there was no pain was all that really mattered. He realized without a second thought that he was trapped. There was no use unfastening his safety-belt; he could not get out to use his chute.

He felt the low-wing pursuit shudder, knew that it was reaching its stalling point. Soon it would fall off, go screaming down on the checkerboard that was Long Island. He pushed his goggles up, looked over the side. The icy wind cut his face and when he twisted the pain came back.

The instruments stared at him and he wanted to fight and do things with his hands. But instead he sat there, feeling wet all over, and there was a great pounding in his ears. Now there was no sensation of pain in any part of his body, and he wondered if it had ceased to function. Only his mind seemed to keep pace with the air speed.

His altimeter pointed to ten. Two miles to fall—then oblivion. So this is it, he thought. Fifteen years of flying and this is it. Ten thousand hours in the air and this is the end. He had imagined it many times. He knew that every test pilot must get used to the idea. Testing high speed, metal brain-storms is dangerous work. Yet, he wasn't doing any of the things he had heard, or read, or thought about. He was just sitting here. There was no screaming or praying. He wasn't clawing at his throat and cursing. In fact, he couldn't feel his throat, or even his tongue. There was no feeling in his body any more, not even when he twisted. His mind seemed to be the only part of him that was alive and working.

He put his hand to his face, found that his lips were covering his teeth. Even the flesh and muscles of his face were dead and relaxed. Swiftly a thought came to the front of his mind. Maybe he had crashed minutes ago and what he was experiencing now was the aftermath of death. There was no feeling in any part of his body. He wasn't screaming; he wasn't fighting; he must be dead.

He sensed he was tight against the belt and shook his head. Quickly he knew the pursuit had passed the stalling point, was spinning. The realization seared itself on his brain like hot iron. Falling! This is the beginning of the end. Every part of his mind centered on it. Falling! For the first time he wanted to scream. To scream as loud as the motor and the wind. He started to bring his strength together to open his mouth. Then he thought, "I'm acting like a small boy. I'm not being hurt. Why should I scream? I'm acting like a small boy. . . ."

He saw the house, and once again he was coming up the lane. Through the dusk and snow he saw the stain of the two-story frame, the green of the shutters. The windows stood out against the silhouette, bright and beckoning. It was Christmas Eve, and he was bringing in the tree.

The air was smothered with white flakes, and the world was silent. The only sounds that came to his ears were the klop and snort of the horse, the scrape of the sled runners. It was silent and cold, and the snow was wet and stuck to his cap and coat.

He came up to the great barn, and as he unhitched old Roy, he could hear the other animals moving about inside. He passed beneath the tall oaks, white and gaunt, and broke the ice in the trough. The horse drank with long gulps and he could hear the water going down. He wondered if old Roy knew it was Christmas Eve.

He was inside the barn, and the smell of the animals was strong and the smell of the hay sweet. He went up into the loft and kicked hay down for Roy. The hay was warm, and there was the smell of summer in it. He heard mice running and the boards in the loft creaked as he came down the ladder. The birds and bats



up under the great roof made strange noises, and he wondered if it was warm up there.

Old Roy crunched his food, and he patted the velvety nose and stood very still. In the darkness the barn was mysterious and vast. Suddenly he felt sorry for the animals, and he turned and said, "Merry Christmas, to all of you."

He brought the tree to the house, and his father and Uncle Dave helped him put it up. Soon the tree was standing in the long room with the oak beams across the ceiling and the rock fireplace. It looked small standing in the corner, but he knew that it was twice his size. Then Uncle Dave said, "Perry, boy, I've got a real present for you. The latest thing from Chicago." And they all laughed when he begged to know what it was.

After dinner they trimmed the tree with crisp popcorn and bright red and green paper balls. Then his mother played the organ, and they sang carols until it was time for him to go to bed.

The covers were warm about him and through the frozen window he could see the shadows of the flakes floating down. For what seemed hours he tried to guess what Uncle Dave's present might be. He felt very tired and he thought, I'll rest awhile, then I'll guess some more.

When he opened his eyes again it was morning; the sun was shining. He went down the stairs three at a time. His mother and father and Uncle Dave were standing by the tree.

"Merry Christmas!" he called. And there were toys and candy and fruit. Then his uncle said, "Here's the present from Chicago." He opened it with shaking hands, and it was a bundle of sticks and red paper.

"It's a box-kite," Uncle Dave said. "The latest thing out. We'll fly it after breakfast."

He gulped his food and then watched the construction of the kite. Then they went out into the white world, and the wind was cold against his face, and he was glad. His uncle put the kite on the snow, then ran away from it. It left the sparkling crust, soaring skyward like a bird. His uncle laughed and said, "Here, you take the string. Give it a pull now and then, and she'll climb."

Soon it was a speck in the blue sky, and suddenly he loved this kite more than anything he had ever had before. The feel of the string gave him a strange pleasure, and he imagined that he too, like the kite, was climbing into the blue above.

"Someday I'm going to fly just like this kite," he said. "I'm going to leave the ground and soar away and look down on everything. I'll be free and light, and I'll be just as high."

His uncle laughed . . . . .

The siren-like voice of the motor cut into Perry's brain, and instinctively he closed the switch. The great Wasp belched black smoke, then was quiet. He felt the speed slacken, but the spin held. He fought with the stick. No control, lifeless. He looked through the windshield, down past the cowl, and what he saw made him sick and dizzy. The sky and earth were chasing each other. Everything was going in circles. Everything was going to end in ten seconds, perhaps five.

Perry slumped on his seat-pack. He didn't feel like screaming now. He wanted it to end in a hurry. Something warm and wet came down his face. It blurred his eyes so that he couldn't see the air speed and altimeter and the fire extinguisher and the white-lettered instructions at the top of the panel.

"I'm crying," he thought. "Now I'm crying. Hell! I haven't cried since the day they shot down Grace—since the day they shot down Grace . . . . ."

The field was thick, black mud, the five snub-nosed Spads sitting on the line. The rain had stopped falling for the first time in four days, the clouds broken and the ceiling flyable.

He was downing the last of his coffee, finishing a cigarette when Tom Grace came down stairs and into the mess room. He had never seen Grace the way he looked that day. There was something in his eyes and the way his lips twitched that brought silence into the room.

Franny and Martin put down their bottle and Pete brought his cigarette up, but it never reached his mouth. Grace stood there by the door, holding a piece of paper. Suddenly he crumpled it and let it fall.

"All right," he said, "you can laugh now. Laugh all you want; it doesn't matter any more. You can razz me about Yale and my rich old man. You can even call me yellow—oh I know what you've been saying and thinking. I know what everybody said that day: Tom Grace is yellow; he's a rich, no-account play-boy who spent five years in college. He saw his commander burn rather than enter the fight himself. Sure, I turned tail that day and ran. I didn't have more than ten rounds left; I couldn't have saved him. But no—you wouldn't believe me—you said I



shot up my rounds on the way back; you said I should have pulled the other planes away. Then you started to burn me about being careful. I was careful, but I wasn't afraid, like you thought. I was careful because I had someone waiting at home for me. Someone I thought of everytime I was in that damned cockpit; someone I loved in a way that none of you could understand—"

Grace stopped and his eyes flooded, and he choked with emotion. "It doesn't matter now," he said. "You can laugh and think what you like. She's—she's dead now—dead."

He turned on his heel and left the room. You could hear him walking up the stairs, hear the door to his room slam. Nobody moved until Franny said, "Must be the girl he has the picture of under his bed. I ran across it the other day, and he got mad."

Pete stood up and pulled his helmet on. "We take off in twenty minutes," he said. "Marty, give me that bottle. I'm going to take Grace a drink. Better get your ships ready."

He slouched in the cockpit of the Spad and thought, "I'm Perry Tillet. I've misjudged a man—terribly. I've seen that man's heart torn out today. Forgive me, God."

The green cat, hanging above the air speed, swung from the motor's vibration. He thought again, "Give me good luck today, cat. Let me help Grace in some way. Let me show him that I respect him. Be a good cat."

Pete and Grace came out, and the signal was given for the take-off. The ground was soft, and he kept the tail low until he bounced out of the mud. Then he brought the stick back and felt his heart race, just as it always raced when he was first free of the ground.

He saw they were flying in a loose formation, that Pete was leading them up. They leveled off at eight thousand, and there was nothing visible below except the rolling plain of clouds. On his left he saw Grace, leaning forward over the stick, eyes straight ahead. He thought, "I'll help him in some way."

Then a shadow swept over his top wing and he saw the fabric on his lower wing fill with holes. He rolled away and came back in a vertical. For the first time he saw what had caused the roar. He saw the black crosses, counted seven Fokkers. Enemy planes from a higher altitude! The formation was shattered now and without hesitation he opened the throttle and dove into the merry-go-round.

Things happened so fast after the dive that

it was hard to remember much detail. A German crossed in front of him; he kicked open his guns, the Fokker burst into flames. He made a hammer-head turn to keep from hitting the falling ship, and when he swung around for another attack, he saw only four enemy planes.

He looked to see what had happened to the other Huns. The green cat flew into bits and the glass over the altimeter and fuel gauge fell into his lap. He swung to one side, the bullets cutting into his wing. Twisting in the cockpit, he looked back. There were two Fokkers pointing flaming guns at him. Quickly he decided that his only chance was a power dive. He kept the nose down until the wings fluttered and the ground was uncomfortably near. Then he pulled out and went into a vertical spin.

When he fell from the stalling point, the Germans held him in a cross-fire, the little Spad shaking from the impact of the bullets. He thought, "This is it. I'm going to die." And with his usual cool, detached manner, he looked back to see the death that was after him.

Instead he saw Grace streaking in for a broadside at his two attackers. The kid held down until the last second, then pulled over them. The ship fell away and went into a slow spin. He guessed the pilot had been hit.

The Fokker on the right kept his guns open and he saw the slugs tear past the fin and start to come up the camel's back. He thought, "Perry, those bullets will reach the cockpit in a minute and cut you to pieces. But don't squirm; you've lived long enough."

He saw Grace closing in for another broadside, and he was pointing the nose of his ship right for the center of the Fokker. But the German didn't give ground, and the little holes kept coming. Suddenly they stopped, and when he banked around, there were Grace and the Hun spinning earthward in flames.

Flying back over the lines with Martin and Pete, he sat very straight in the cockpit. He felt all sick inside, just as if he had been hit. But he knew he was sick at the thought of flames and Tom Grace.

"I wanted to help him," he said through his teeth. "I tried to find him and show him how I felt. I would have died for him, just as he died for me."

He kept saying this, and the rain began to beat down on the windshield and make funny patterns. It felt cold against his face and he thought of cold and heat and flames and Grace.

And other water came down his face, and it was warm and blurred his eyes. Tom Grace was dead, and he was crying.

The spin slackened. Perry saw the world below him break up into smaller components. Colors became more pronounced, and gray and white residential districts, criss-crossed with black asphalt and tiny squares of green, and fitted together like an intricate jig-saw puzzle, loomed up before him.

Great chunks of brown and green seemed to reach for him. Then houses and grass and woods and fields exploded from the colors. He saw the smoke and haze above the city and the sunlight on the windows. Everything seemed quiet and waiting.

A green bulge, like a blister on the face of the earth, centered itself in his line of vision. That would be the hill in back of the airport. Sunlight flashed up, and he knew that the reflections were from the windows in the house on the hill. For the first time he thought of Paula, and he wondered if she was standing at one of the windows. Or was she on her way to Boston? . . . . .

She came across the room, and he thought he had never seen her look more beautiful. Her negligee hung loose and showed one white shoulder and just a hint of the valley between her breasts. Her straw-colored hair, rumbled by her pillows, gave her that same exciting look that had captured him that night on the observation roof.

He watched her long legs move toward him, and when she stopped in front of him, he let his eyes climb past the soft curve of her hips and the fullness of her breasts and the red and pink of her face and finally stop at her brown eyes. Her brown eyes— He looked into the eyes again, and fear washed over him like a great wave.

He said at last, "Good morning, Paula. Shall I ring for Ellen to bring your toast?"

She didn't answer with her usual quickness, and he felt sure his assumption was correct. He had felt this thing building up for a great many days. Now he was going to have to face it.

"It's not such a good morning, Perry," she said, and her voice was like the ice around his grapefruit.

He decided to feel her out: "If it's about last night, I'm sorry, honey. I had to work late at the hangar on the P-35, and I decided at the last minute to sleep in the office. Say, it sure is a swell day for the test, isn't it?"

She said, "If you test that damned plane today, I won't be here when you come home. Do you understand? I won't be here."

He tried to laugh, but his face felt numb and he just stared.

She went on, "It's gone just this far, Perry. You've neglected me long enough. All you think about is airplanes. Flying! Flying! That's all you think about. Well, there are other men who appreciate me, and one of them is waiting right now for my call."

He stood up and pushed back his chair. "You're not being fair, Paula. You know damn well I appreciate you. You know how much I love you. I have to talk flying and test planes to buy you the things you want. How do you think I bought this house on the hill? Where do you think I get the money I give you for your clothes? It all comes from flying; it's my business."

"You've said all those things before," she pointed out. "When we were first married, you said you would quit your test pilot job and work for some airline. Do you remember that?"

He saw how desperate and earnest she was, and suddenly the realization of how much he loved those lips and breasts and hips made a direct hit, and the fear gripped his heart and made his lips twitch.

"All right," he said, "today will be my last test job—"

"If you test that plane this afternoon, I'll be in Boston tonight," she cut in. "I've heard you make too many promises, Perry. Now I don't believe you. You have to make your choice now; the airplanes or your wife."

"You know I'll take you any day," he said, and he went over to her, but she pushed him away.

"What about the test this afternoon?" she asked.

"Paula, you'll have to be fair about that. I can't get out of it. There will be government officials from Washington, dozens of Army men. I have to put on that show; I can't back out. If I did, I'd never be able to get a job anywhere."

"Is that your final decision, Perry?"

He knew that it was coming, and like a clever boxer, he tried to dodge: "Paula, do you remember the night I proposed to you? We were dancing at the Rainbow Room, and you wanted to go up to the observation roof. Do you remember the snow? Well, I do. I remember how it got in your hair and made it look like a Christmas tree. And New York looked like a fairyland. The red in the tower of the Empire State



and far below the lights of Times Square and Central Park. And everywhere great flakes of snow and muffled noise. Remember the sounds from the river? Paula, you can't forget that night and all the other nights we've had together and go away with another man just because I'm going to fly an airplane this afternoon. It isn't human."

"If you fly this afternoon, Perry, it's the end of the trail for us."

She left the room, and he sat there and tried to clear his mind. Finally he decided to go to her bedroom. He was half way up the stairs

when he changed his mind. He was right. Why argue with her? Boston and the other man was all a bluff as far as he could see. He'd bring her a box of candy when he came home tonight. He put on his overcoat and left for the airport . . . .

Perry knew the time had come and he cried out, "God, I know now why my stomach is tied in a knot and why I can't breathe. I know now that it's not fear—the fear of dying. It's just that I can't die without knowing what my wife did, God. Is she at the window or did she really mean it? I've got—"

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## "I'll Larn Ya!"

BY ELIZABETH BEDFORD

AMONG other rights and duties of one's majority, twenty-one bestows the privilege of saying "I remember when." At twenty-one, one's recollections are regarded as having the soundness of maturity and one may, with Shakespeare, "summon up remembrances of things past," secure in the tradition that age, in its own mysterious fashion, gives both dignity and veracity to the results of these "sessions of sweet silent thought." Having reached this impressive age, one is tempted to look back and trace the steps by which he has been prepared for man's estate, and in so doing he is prone to contrast the present with the past, thereby making use of his newly acquired inheritance.

In my own experience, the most vivid contrast between past and present is in the matter of elementary school education. I think my principal reaction toward the present crop of grammar school hopefuls is a feeling closely akin to pity, because it seems to me that my elementary school training taught so many fundamental facts of living concerning which the children of this decade have no conception. The question is really one of underlying philosophies. In both decades children have acquired tool subjects—reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling, together with some knowledge of history, geography and civics.

The school today has undertaken far more than merely teaching these basic skills, however, and the theories of sense impression, actual experience and realistic curriculum are reflected in projects, excursions, free work periods and scope and sequence programs, all based on the idea that the child's interest must be stimulated before he can learn. Furthermore, most modern pedagogy seems to stress the idea that the teacher must work constantly to instill the proper attitude in her little charges, and that she must strive to have each child develop a well-rounded personality.

The teaching philosophy which guided my early educational experiences was a far more simple one; children went to school to learn. This was the cornerstone of the system; after lessons had been mastered, the teacher might embellish according to her talents, but there were no automatic promotions, and each teacher expected that her predecessor had given thorough drill in the subject matter of the preceding grade. The result was that we learned lessons.

In addition, we learned a number of practical facts of living which were largely acquired, paradoxically enough, because we were let alone. We were not exceptionally brilliant children, and our equipment, although reasonably adequate, was



by no means elaborate. Yet every time I discuss education with my friends who are student teaching, they remark on the progressiveness of my early education. From my accounts these enlightened student teachers assure me that we reached some of the highest goals of the modern curriculum, and they inquire eagerly about the methods and the teaching staff.

As in all school systems, some of the teachers were excellent, and some were poor; I was fortunate enough to have several good ones along with the inevitable mediocrity. As a group they were not distinguished by academic degrees; some of the best had passed county examinations at the conclusion of their own grammar school courses and had acquired pedagogy by practical experience, aided perhaps by an occasional summer session at one of the teachers' colleges. There were a number of younger women teaching, but most of my teachers were rather solid middle-aged women who were committed permanently either to matrimony or to spinsterhood. Their lives were more or less settled, and they had, for the most part, a very genuine interest in teaching. I don't suppose any one of them could have passed a costume and makeup course with honors, although I remember one frail little lavender-scented woman of sixty odd, whose pompadoured white hair and black velvet throat band are engraved in my mind as symbols of neatness. Despite a certain dowdiness in appearance, these good women were experts at maintaining discipline, and while we were not repressed into "pin-drop" silence, there was a business-like air of routine in our learning and reciting which instilled in us a subconscious feeling of the security and orderliness of our small universe.

Methods varied from teacher to teacher, but we were early impressed with the fact, both at school and at home, that education was a serious business. Most of our parents were literate if not literary, and they believed that reading and arithmetic were important for the practical business of living. The schools of the community reflected the tax-payers' attitude, and emphasis was placed on the drill in demonstrable skills rather than upon the somewhat less concrete considerations of personality development. The school was provided and the lessons were explained, and it was our business to learn; we were not consulted on matters of curriculum, and it was apparent that the tedious as well as the interesting lessons must be mastered if we expected to be promoted. Thus we acquired an appreciation of hard work

early in our academic careers, and we did not suffer from the delusion that life was an easy matter. As we progressed in this somewhat rigorous school system we began to realize that intellectual pleasures resulted from our hard work, and as we learned to concentrate, we began the lifelong task of self discipline. I am much in favor of many aspects of progressive education, but no one has yet explained to my satisfaction how a child learns self mastery if the whole curriculum is based solely on the things in which he is interested; it has been my experience that learning is acquired pretty largely through suffering and struggle, and I contend that there is much more intensity, (and consequently more learning value) in forcing oneself to work a tedious arithmetic problem than in following one's inclination to draw on the board or construct a cardboard castle.

In spite of the vigorous routine method of my childhood, our classroom experience was by no means dull. As do all children, we had a vast curiosity concerning the world about us, and because we were forced to sit still, we acquired the habit of thinking, and from time to time we really developed some good ideas. I remember that the school library was a great incentive to learning to read; on rainy days we thumbed through the few tattered volumes and admired the pictures. When we finally mastered a reasonable facility in reading, however, we were saddened by the discovery that all the books were of the saccharine "Sanford and Merton" variety. Then someone suggested bringing our favorite books from home for the teacher to read aloud to the class. Soon we had an impressive stack of books ranging from a complete series of "The Rover Boys" to Browning's "Pied Piper," and as it was evident that the teacher couldn't read all of them aloud, we took one another's books home. This cooperative library, organized and managed by ourselves, gave us a wholesome respect for other people's property, and the "do unto others" concept was further applied to our state texts. At the end of the year the teacher remarked that she had never had a class who took such good care of their school books. No discussions motivated by excursions to city and county offices could have been more effective in making us realize the responsibilities of the citizen in respect to public property.

Outside of the classroom our time was pretty much our own. Morning recess was often supervised by the teacher, but during the noon hour

and afternoon recess we played our games and fought our battles without benefit of guidance. No doubt the teachers needed a brief respite from their twenty or thirty active pupils, and we were quite capable of amusing ourselves. Whenever I pass school playgrounds of this community, abounding with sandboxes and slides and swings, basketball standards and backstops, all carefully supervised by the teachers, I wonder whether children today are really having as much fun as we had in our small rocky schoolyards, which were adorned, if we were fortunate, with a single outdoor faucet, where breathless cowboys and Indians splattered their clothes while gulping a drink. Certainly our own games were far more spontaneous than those directed by a teacher from a State Manual, and furthermore the realism of our unsupervised play gave us concrete illustrations of a number of life's hard but undeniable truths. How vividly I remember my introduction to reality on my first day of school! I was a new second grader, and at noon I was permitted to ply my diffident ways unmolested, but by afternoon recess my young contemporaries found me an unhappy addition to their group, with the result that my hair ribbon was removed from my sleek brown hair and hoisted aloft on the flag pole. Some fundamental instinct of self preservation kept me from reporting this incident to the teacher, but after dinner my father handled the situation by a brief review on the essentials of the manly art of self defense. Next day my leading persecutor was rebuffed by a swift right jab followed by a devastating left hook. I don't know whether he or I was the more surprised at this solid impact, but from that time on I was an accepted member of the group, and was in fact a heroic leader until my overwhelming self-confidence led to an unfortunate challenge which resulted in my complete defeat. No doubt the teacher would have interfered had she been in the yard, but the absence of intervention permitted us to explore the concept of leadership to its ultimate implications. If you couldn't be a leader, you learned the valuable art of being a successful follower, and in our playground relationships we had a flexible society with a leadership group who were constantly subject to challenge.

Time spent in argument and quarrels was precious time lost, and since there were few of us, we usually had a working agreement by which the boys would play house with the girls at noon if the girls would join in more virile team games

at recess. Teams would be chosen on Monday, and sometimes such division would last for several weeks. It was not until many years later that any of us read Herrick's "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may," but we learned early that pleasure was a fleeting thing, to be enjoyed to the full while it lasted. We never had time to complete a project at one play period, and therefore we were never bored; we always had something underway, and recess was eagerly anticipated.

Not long ago one of the college counseling staff, after reading a series of freshman interest questionnaires, remarked in despair that "these kids are completely neutral—they don't seem interested in a thing!" I wonder whether all their interests were destroyed by a program conscientiously devoted to keeping them interested; it is one of the paradoxical truths that there is nothing so boring as unrelieved pleasure, and the more desperately it is sought the more elusive it becomes. Pleasure is not a passive thing; it requires the personal effort and enthusiasm of the people concerned. Nowadays the schools do all the motivating, but in my day the children provided the initiative and vitality for their learning situation, and thus they enjoyed the fruits of their own efforts in interesting lessons and exciting games.

In my grammar school days we worked hard and we played hard. As we reached the higher grades, most of the boys joined Scout troops, and the extraordinary number of Eagle Scouts in that small town was an interesting illustration of our ability to entertain ourselves by creative amusement.

Essentially the difference between the "good old days" of my childhood and the present grammar school education is the difference between realism and pseudo-realism. Our lives had the intensity of constant struggle; lessons, requiring concentration and self-discipline, rewarded us with a true intellectual satisfaction, while the periods of unsupervised play furnished an opportunity for creative imagination uninhibited by adult onlookers, and it left us with indelibly vivid illustrations of leadership, cooperation, and self-protection. Ours was not an education designed to train us for life in an ideal world; on the contrary it was a practical system under which we learned about life from living.

Modern education attempts to obtain a similar result by a learning program under which the child's every thought and act are subject to con-



stant guidance. The system of integrating all learning into a unified whole is excellent in theory, but in actual practice on the grammar school level it is hindered by the fact that the child must grasp a number of specific examples before he has any basis for comprehending a general concept. As a long range program for education the integration plan is not without merit provided that the integration be done by the child himself, but when the theory is applied in the grammar school, it results in a great number of laboriously planned projects most of which are simply an artificial series of activities superimposed on the child's experiences. The whole idea is pseudo-realistic in that it requires life to be adapted to the child, whereas a realistic education teaches the child, sometimes quite incidentally, to adapt himself to life.

And I am saddened, as I see them skating by on their way to school, by the thought that these carefully cultured hothouse children will in a

few years be jolted abruptly into an inflexible and unsympathetic world which will force them to accept life as it stands. They have been denied the discipline of struggle, either physical or mental, and as a result of this flaw in their education, their initial contacts with world inertia will tend to discourage them from further effort rather than challenge them to strive with the problem. The older one grows the more difficult adjustment becomes, and a child whose education has proceeded entirely on the basis of the new theory will be confronted with some major readjustments when he leaves school.

Fortunately this is a case in which the practice in many instances falls far wide of the theory, and my anxiety about the youngest generation's ability to face life is somewhat relieved by the invariable success of the small boy who never fails to sell me that five-cent weekly which I have no desire to read. It may be that one learns in spite of education.

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## The Old Philosopher

By MARY MERRICK

THE rocking chair creaked complainingly as my friend, the Old Philosopher, shifted his bulk and stretched his feet out toward the blazing fire. The shaded lamp near my elbow lit the room dimly, and the fire cast fanciful figures on the ceiling as it crackled and sputtered its way around the oak logs. I pushed the tobacco jar nearer the old man's elbow and waited for him to fill his pipe. I hoped the influence of the cheerful fire and good tobacco would start one of his philosophical monologues in which I learned so much about the old gentleman's inner nature. He tapped the tobacco gently into the bowl of his pipe, accepted my proffered light, and settled back in his chair.

"Yes, Jim, I've seen a good deal of life in my day. Now, I'm ready to take a back seat and watch it flow past me. Thank God, I am not

one of these querulous old gentlemen who think only of their comfort and make existence a hell for those who are compelled to watch them slowly die. I have lived seventy-five years, and they have been good ones, and I do not resent the fact that I am old now. Old age must come to everyone, and if more people accepted that fact gracefully, this would be a better world in which to live. It is peculiar how men show their real natures when they have to step out of the fast moving currents of everyday life and watch younger people take their places.

"The most contented old person I have ever known is your grandmother. She must be about ninety now, and for many years has been unable to keep up with the modern tempo. It has been a revelation to me to watch her calmly subside into the chimney corner with her Bible and knit-



ting and wait for the coming of her new day. I know she expects a new day, too, Jim. She told me not long ago that death meant little to her, as death, I mean. She expects to close her eyes just as if she were going to sleep and then will wake up in some other place. I find she is rather vague about the physical characteristics of that place, but there she will start life anew. That's contentment for you. Can you find any young person today with the same rational beliefs? Her idea is rather like reincarnation.

"You know, I am rather half-inclined to believe in reincarnation. Oh, I do not think I was Napoleon or Mark Anthony, but I do almost believe that I did live and will live again. When one thinks of all the millions and millions of years that have gone by in this world, one cannot believe that a man is so carefully constructed and then set down here for only sixty or seventy or eighty years to turn to dust and be no more. I believe that, even though these conceited, young college graduates seem to think there can be no hereafter. Take that dog there," he motioned toward my police dog drowsing on the hearth. "He is on a far higher scale of life than a yapping, little Pekingese. He is almost as intelligent as many men. Is it not reasonable to suppose he will grow in intelligence through his various reincarnations, if you want to call them that, until he will equal us in brain capacity on some future day? And I feel that each of us was perhaps a dog or a horse or a savage on some far island before our consciousness expanded enough to enable us to be born as men. Every generation has to know more to get along in the world. We know more facts than our fathers, and many more than our grandfathers. We have learned how to control electricity, how to develop natural resources, and how to explain some of the mysteries of the universe. We must have a more highly developed brain to comprehend these things. As time goes on, people will learn more and more about the curious world in which we live. It would not hurt lots of young men to know more about it now. I do not believe anything is ever forgotten. We have to be able to develop so that we can take in all these new facts and sort them out so each will fall into its allotted place with the older bits of knowledge. It seems reasonable to me that we will be born again; I do not mean physically, but, perhaps, as entirely different beings on an entirely different planet with the accumulated knowledge of the ages for

a background. And we will go on from there to some future span of enlightenment.

"But I see you don't really follow me. You, too, think I am just a carping old fanatic. Ah, well, when you have run your race and are nearer the stretch of tape at the finish, perhaps you will be willing to agree with me that there must be something more than a crumbling into dust."

He leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes for a minute. I reached for the poker and stirred the coals as I pondered on what he had said.

"A homey little thing started me to thinking today, Jim. The wife had just baked a pie and was dissatisfied with it. 'Harold,' she said, 'I can't imagine what is wrong with this pie. I used the same ingredients and made it just as usual; and now look at it. That crust is soft, and the filling is runny. I can't imagine what is the matter.' And do you know, that is just the way with people. The Divine Creator uses the very same ingredients, follows the same recipe, and we all turn out differently. You may say it is the environment, or that it all depends on heredity. Who am I to quarrel with a rising young psychologist? But I do wish there were some better explanation of the established fact that all men are different. Some of these so-called brilliant young men could get to work on that idea with profit instead of spending their lives catering to the God of Money.

"But there is nothing so unpredictable as human nature. One young fellow may come from the best of stock, say a Methodist minister and a cultured woman. He is carefully reared according to the best traditions, educated in a fine university, and turns out to be a criminal lawyer, than which there is nothing lower. Another young man is the son of a brothel-keeper and a prostitute, has the slums for a background, and develops into one of the most brilliant products of our age. Can you tell me what is the reason? No, you cannot, and no one else can. It is just like the wife's pie; they both have the same chemical elements, combined in a similar pattern, and yet are so totally dissimilar that one would never guess they have the same Creator watching over them."

The Old Philosopher struck a match and held it to the bowl of his pipe, drew in a lungful of smoke and expelled it carefully, and went on.

"I read in the paper yesterday that Slick Vernon is to be paroled from the state penitentiary. Now, I call that a crime. Such things could never

have happened when I was a boy. Our public officials were men of honor! The governor of our state is committing a far worse crime toward humanity by letting that criminal loose to prey on decent folks than Slick will perpetrate in the future. And he will have plenty more crimes on his head before his end comes. I looked up his record, out of curiosity, and found that he had been convicted of six major crimes in fifteen years. Now he is to be let loose to commit some more. Oh, he promised to go straight. He has reformed and all the rest of that 'blah,' but a criminal never reforms. I mean a habitual criminal, such as Slick. Four of his sentences were given for sex-crimes. Doesn't that indicate to you that he has a mental quirk? Just suppose, by some inconceivable chance, that he does go straight, marries some unfortunate woman, and settles down to rear a family. He may be able to restrain his sexual passions or divert them into a safe and sane channel, but how about his offspring? There's where your heredity comes in. If he has five children—we will be conservative in the number—four of them may be decent, law-abiding citizens, but it is almost a certainty that the fifth will follow in his reformed father's footsteps. And there will be another person to prey on little children and defenseless women. Is isn't a pretty picture, is it? But suppose, as is most likely, Slick does not reform. He is still capable of begetting a family who will have their daddy's influence and their mother's, as Slick will never take up with a decent woman. That will be a big help to them along the path of unrighteousness. And that is an even uglier picture! By the way, I suppose you would call that the result of environmental influences. Oh, well, words really don't mean very much. What I am attempting to do is to make a protest against our parole system. Something is surely wrong with this world when supposedly decent public officials will sin to the extent of giving habitual criminals their liberty. Each generation sees the world becoming less concerned about integrity. Would to God some of the good old men of my day were alive to protest! Something should be done about it, but we all wait for the other person to do it.

"And that is another grave fault in human nature. God erred when he gave us all the faculty of letting someone else do the dirty work. Wouldn't it be a different world if each of us saw his duty and did it? I wonder if it would be a better world. How would you like to be constantly doing your duty? It would not leave

one much time to do anything else, would it? And 'duty' is such an ugly word. It seems to imply unpleasant things. Can't duties be pleasant tasks? I presume a soap-box orator, shouting about Communism, thinks he is doing his duty by enlightening the working classes. That may be a case of duty being pleasant, to the orator, I mean. But most of the time we think of duty as being an old harridan sticking her nose into our personal affairs because she thinks it is a moral obligation. Why does not someone coin a less repulsive word to signify the doing of a less desirable deed? Whenever a new fad comes along there are plenty of word-purveyors ready to rack their brains to create a term that will classify that fad. And they call that thinking.

"In the general sense of the word, few people think nowadays. They think they are thinking when they are really only readjusting their prejudices, if you get what I mean. The ability to think is a lost art," he said sadly. "This thinking we think is in the same class as New Year's resolutions. Most people wake up on January first, reach for a pad of paper, and jot down things they intend to do or stop doing in the coming twelve months. And you know, Jim, that is the greatest confession of failure a man can make. He is confessing to himself and to anyone who will listen to his so-called resolutions that he has failed miserably in the past. He is not saying that he will be a better man in the future. He is just admitting failure. As if that would do any good! When a man actually puts down on paper the fact that he has failed, he is lowering his own defenses to the extent that he is going to be more vulnerable to failure in the future. It is a custom I wish some authority would start a petition against. And there is an example of my willingness to let somebody else do his duty in preference to my doing it. Well, as I have said countless times, it is far easier to sit back and watch someone else struggle with the facts of life than to take any hand in the combat. When I was a boy every man gloried in such a battle, but now—" he broke off abruptly.

The wind came down the chimney in a great gust and blew sparks around the hearth. Chief raised his head, yawned, and slowly got up to move over by the Old Philosopher. He laid his head on the old man's knee and gazed trustfully move over by the Old Philosopher. He laid his the animal absent-mindedly, and we sat silently watching the flying sparks and shooting flames.



Presently the old gentleman stirred restlessly and spoke compellingly, "I tell you, Jim, there is a lot of injustice in this world. Of course, you know that without my telling you, but a little incident the other day brought the fact startlingly to my attention. I met a working-man on First Street. He had his lunch-box in one hand and a paper bag in the other and was striding along unheeding of the passing throng and muttering to himself, 'God damn the sons-of-bitching souls! I'll get even with them!' I half-turned in my tracks to watch him make his way up the street. He bumped into a lady and strode on as if he did not realize the accident. Something had happened to that man; some great injustice had been done to him. Maybe he had been dismissed without reason. I have no way of knowing the reason for his preoccupied and revengeful state, but I am sure it was due to an injustice. And so life goes; the weak are trampled on by the strong, and the strong are cursed by the weak. Oh, the injustice of it all! And it is getting worse with every year I live! People in this modern day expect such things and accept them passively. I wonder if the Heaven the preachers rant about will be my ideal of Paradise, where everyone is of equal strength, morally, physically, and mentally, and there are no injustices perpetrated in the name of fair play. We are told to be good sports and take life's knocks on the chin with a grin and a whistle of disdain, but when life continually reaches for the 'button,' in the parlance of the ringside, and finds it so often we are constantly in a state of 'punch-drunkenness,' then I realize how much injustice there is. If I had my way, this world would not be a place where we are advised to turn the other cheek and get another slap, but a place where the first slap would never be administered. Well, these are the ramblings of a foolish old man. It does no good to yearn constantly for the unattainable. I suppose it is better to take life as it comes and be thankful we are living in a so-called 'enlightened era' instead of in those riotous years before the birth of Christ."

The fire had burned low on the hearth, and suddenly it seemed very late. The Old Philosopher sensed the lateness of the hour and rose abruptly. "I've let myself ramble on more than I had intended, Jim. It isn't often I have such an attentive listener," (this a bit wistfully) "but I must not impose on your good nature any longer. So I am off to bed. Pleasant dreams, Jim."

I remained before the dying fire for a last pipe. The Old Philosopher had given me plenty to think about, if I really could think. I chuckled quietly, but I realized that all he had said was underlain by a good deal of truth. The old man was a fine stimulus for anyone. I shivered unconsciously and realized how cold the room had become. It was time for me to retire, too.

## Character Sketch in Free Verse

BY HILDA HANCHETT

We were all his friends.  
At least he let us sit and listen  
While he talked, and watch  
The sparkle of his face  
And wait wide-eyed through the pauses,  
Knowing his next word would be  
Worth hearing. If one of us—  
Say, I—should catch his approval  
With a phrase, he'd smile the same  
Warm, promising smile he gave  
To anyone else.

From time to time he missed  
The high, strong tenor of his former life,  
And wished to know again  
Dogs, and hills, and clean wind  
Playing in his hair.  
Then for a week, perhaps, or two  
We saw nothing of him  
Save those flashing pictures  
Of face or body, or the sound  
Of his voice which lingered in the mind  
After knowing him.

Now, when there is no longer any prospect  
Of his walking in some day  
To shock us with the force and beauty  
Which were his, still—  
Calmly and without regret—  
We see for a moment his face  
As it was when the quick light  
Of his pleasure turned to us,  
And we seem almost to listen  
Waiting still for words he never said  
Though always seemed as if he might.



## A Command Performance

BY MARY MERRICK

UNTIL one day last fall, I had had only the usual hunter's encounters with gray squirrels. I had tried to sneak up on them and had watched them cleverly sidle around the tree trunk so as always to keep it between them and my gun. I had watched them spring lightly and gracefully from one tree to another, using their tails as parachutes to float tranquilly to the ground if they should miss their grasp on the tree limb. I had even caught a glimpse of one basking in the sun in his favorite position, stretched along the limb of the tree with his tail lying out behind and his chin resting on the limb, for all the world like a child lying at full length before the fireplace with his chin on his clasped hands. But on this marvelous autumn day, I had what I believe and hope was a unique experience.

It was a perfect autumn day, and I was hiking in Alum Rock Park. The fallen leaves were piled ankle deep along the paths and made the most entrancing rustle when one waded through them. The sky was crystal clear with a dim, smoky haze along the horizon, enhancing the deep, azure blue of the arch overhead. I had been tramping for a number of hours and was thinking of returning home. As usual on these excursions, I had seen numerous squirrels and other small animals; so I wasn't paying very much attention to them any more. Suddenly one squirrel bounced across the path in front of me, instantly compelling my attention and admiration. He was the largest and most beautiful gray squirrel I had ever seen. The thick, glossy fur of his pepper-and-salt coat shone as if it had been groomed and groomed. His bushy, luxuriant tail was a fur masterpiece, for it was so large that it looked as if this huge tail were bouncing along and pushing the body in front of it. I'm sure the animal had spent countless hours combing and fluffing it, and was very vain of its appearance.

And so this unusually handsome squirrel bounded gaily down the path ahead of me, seemingly in the best of spirits and unafraid of man, beast, or devil. Suddenly a rustling in the underbrush at one side of the path startled him. He turned and leaped in the opposite direction, down a somewhat steep slope, and toward a clump of

oak trees which grew at the bottom. You understand, the squirrel wasn't really afraid, for he'd just decided at the same time as he heard that rustling to go hunting more acorns. He gave a couple of graceful bounds, and then leaped a bit higher so he could clear the lowest wire of the fence which ran along the slope.

I had been admiring his beauty and agility, and perhaps he looked over his shoulder to see if I were still watching; I couldn't say it for a fact, but I had the impression that he was "strutting his stuff" for my benefit; so the squirrel and I were both surprised when he failed to clear the strand of wire and was caught by the skin of his snow-white belly on a barb of that treacherous fence.

He uttered one shrill, sharp cry of pain and alarm. After that one piercing note there was silence. The whole surrounding universe seemed to quiet suddenly and draw near to watch the squirrel's gyrations. He whirled around on that wire, end over end, like a revolving ferris wheel with the bit of skin as the hub.

I involuntarily started toward him, but at my movement he became frantic. He clawed desperately at the wire and at himself with his senna-colored paws. I froze in my tracks for fear I would cause him to injure himself severely, and stood there watching, powerless to aid his struggles.

His antics were marvelous to behold. He whirled around on the wire in a series of masterly somersaults that would have been the envy and despair of any acrobat. He bit at the wire. He clawed at it with all four feet. And he continued his spinning on that small, pointed barb, first one way and then the other. He grew more and more alarmed as the seconds passed and all his vigorous efforts hadn't freed him from his ignoble position. His beady black eyes seemed to become clouded with fear. No doubt he thought he had been caught in some trap of human devising, and that I was only waiting for my opportunity to pounce on him.

I have never felt so impotent. It seemed as if hours went by, and still I stood motionless. And

still the squirrel kept up his desperate efforts to free himself.

Finally, I could stand my feeling of helplessness no longer and started forward. Any wound he might inflict on himself would be preferable to the agony of watching his mounting terror at his plight. On seeing my approach, the squirrel stopped his gyrations for a second and stared at me out of his wide, terror-clouded eyes. He seemed to be imploring me not to add to his misery. Then as I came nearer, he gathered all his muscles together and made one tremendous attempt to release himself. That supreme effort brought results. He fell to the ground with a thump.

He dazedly picked himself up and started toward a clump of oak trees. His flag of identification no longer pushed his body ahead of it. It trailed ignominiously behind as if sharing in the shame or pain of the squirrel. Flattening his body

to the ground, the animal ran laggingly toward his destination. I stood and watched him climb the nearest oak tree. He was too tired from his exertions to climb easily. He worked hard to get up that tree trunk. The last I saw of him was his tail dragging along a limb as he disappeared into the upper reaches of the tree.

I didn't follow to see where the squirrel stopped to calm his nerves and still his trembling legs. I like to think he got safely into his nest, let the flapping curtain fall behind him, and was comforted by a waiting mate. I am sure for a time he had lost some of his glorious self confidence.

As I continued homewards, pondering on the scene that seemingly had been enacted for my special benefit, another squirrel came bounding along toward me. I stopped to watch his antics, but he, unlike his poor friend, calmly continued on his way, unperturbed by wire fences and mere mortals.

## The "Divine Discontent" in Koheleth

(Author of the Book of Ecclesiastes)

BY EDNA MAE STEELE

WHAT is this mist of time, this strange miracle of living? Generations merge into generations. The sun, the wind, the rivers revolve in a ceaseless cycle. Where do all past years go? Is there a place where all things clasp in one hour—where the past and future movements of races can be seen as a whole and not in mere fragments? What is reality?

Thus the soul which painfully gave birth to the ideas in Ecclesiastes struggles to comprehend the meaning of things. There is a burning desire to know the great spirit ruling the natural universe. Definitely and with great emotion is felt,

" . . . . . a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things . . . . ."

Carefully and unpoisoned by prejudice the eternal verities are weighed in Ecclesiastes. There is no skirting around the question, but a bold facing of facts. Generations of doctrine are elbowed away to make room for innovation in the concept of wisdom—the belief that everything is vanity and ends with the grave.

Certainly it is not sacrilegious to start with an open mind—to start at the very bottom with skepticism and slowly reason things out for yourself. For no one can ever feel happy until he has grasped, in some measure, the meaning of life, even though certainty is never reached.

While Koheleth was attempting to grasp above and beyond, I think he always felt,

"The Gods laugh in their sleeve  
To watch man doubt and fear,  
Who knows not what to believe  
Since he sees nothing clear,  
And dares stamp nothing false where he  
finds nothing sure."



Pretension at understanding the whole is only philosophical bragging. Koheleth assumes no such pose. Instead, the extreme insignificance of his birth and death to the order of things—to the entire plan of the world—is felt deeply. One soul is certainly no more than a raindrop in the sea, but that one soul can be filled with weariness enough to flood the universe—weariness of watching, listening, waiting for something unknown and undiscovered. "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." This same eye and ear observe that "That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun." Man shall find nothing after him. "All are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

Not without sanity this open-minded skeptic seeks his knowledge from experience which arises outside the mind. He searches "all that is done under heaven." Knowledge of the world is in the mind, but the world exists as a reality outside the mind. He admits, then, (and rightly so to my way of thinking) that we are in the world—this all-too-real world—and the world is not in us. This is definitely opposed to Kant's theory that we know only appearances; and that if we were to take away minds, the world would disappear. To this realist, Koheleth, the existence of the world is proven by the infinite succession of different things which grow out of action upon his senses. This infinite succession of things is time. The world has always been even though we were not here to distinguish it as such. It comes and goes as far as awareness is concerned, but it is permanent.

But why were we placed here? Is not all "vanity and a striving after wind?" wonders Koheleth. Here he strikes the same note so characteristic of Levin in Tolstoi's *Anna Karénina*: "All this world of ours is nothing but a speck of mildew which has grown up on a tiny planet. And for us to suppose we can have something great—ideas, work—is all dust or ashes."

I think we can have ideas and work. Perhaps death is simpler than life, and infinitely more kind; but there is a measure of splendor here if one can find it. I think the values of life can be found by working for them—by "directing experimentation by intelligence" as the pragmatist would have it.

Koheleth doesn't suggest this point of view, however. Instead, he admonishes one to return

to natural pleasures for comfort. Labor, to him, is useless. All is made vanity by the change of times and seasons. In the light of death, work is hateful. Why work just to leave your possessions to a fool?

Such reasoning, I think, is based upon selfishness. According to a consistent follower of this point of view, no one should ever feel it his duty to work for another. I don't think social obligations can be cast aside in such wholesale lots. Why work for money when money is nothing, when wealth is vanity? muses Koheleth. He doesn't say do not work for money because it is worthier not to do so, but because all is vanity. This part of his philosophy is not, to my way of thinking, very admirable.

The ensuing ideas, however, are not without truth. A philosophy of "Times and Seasons" is presented. Just as a knowledge of the rise and fall of ocean tides is an essential element to a successful fisherman, so success in life can be insured by a knowledge of the "season" or opportunity. For is it not inevitable that, "To every thing there is a season, And a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born,  
And a time to die;  
A time to plant,  
And a time to pluck up that which is planted  
A time to kill,  
And a time to heal;  
A time to break down,  
And a time to build up;  
A time to weep,  
And a time to laugh;  
A time to mourn,  
And a time to dance;  
A time to cast away stones,  
And a time to gather stones together;  
A time to embrace,  
And a time to refrain from embracing;  
A time to seek,  
And a time to lose;  
A time to keep,  
And a time to cast away;  
A time to rend,  
And a time to sew;  
A time to keep silence,  
And a time to speak;  
A time to love,  
And a time to hate;  
A time for war,  
And a time for peace."



Strangely enough, this was Napoleon Bonaparte's philosophy of life. He believed that everything depends upon circumstances, and stamped his name indelibly on the pages of history just through his will and power to make his own circumstances.

I cannot quite agree with Koheleth when he vacillates to a kindred point of view, but reaches a different conclusion. "I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor yet bread to the wise, but time and chance happeneth to them all." Such fatalism is entirely a too passive point of view—a too listless and submissive outlook on life. True, we don't know where we came from, or how we got here, or where we are going; but we do know we rule ourselves while we are here.

What place would God have in a world where all is vanity and nothingness? Certainly the conception of the original writer of Ecclesiastes is not one of a civilization directed by a God sitting on a throne. There is the feeling that the course of civilization is directed by the hearts of men. "There is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him back to see what shall be after him?" "The misery of man is great upon him, for he knoweth not that which shall be. For who can tell him how it shall be?"

I think this is true that the course of civilization is directed by the hearts of men. It should be, but isn't, directed by men who know most of truth—"The Unknown God" as Alfred Noyes names it. They should know most of those qualities without beginning or end—most of perpetual things.

Koheleth seems to cling stubbornly to a belief in God in spite of what speculation tells him. He does not prove there is a God. Aquinas believed that the "paths of reason" lead to God. But Koheleth finds these "paths of reason" (or "Notes by the Way," as they are called) end by being useless analogies. Like Rousseau, he found reason to be a bundle of prejudices.

I think Koheleth felt, and justly so, that reason is superfluous to faith. He clings to a belief in God because he has experienced God. Experience is reality. Something is known to be true when it is felt to be true. I nor anyone can prove there is a God, but you can't deny experience. If one has experienced God, there is no possible way of denying that He does exist.

It is not strange that Koheleth finds it impossible to reach wisdom which is so distant and

deep. Complete understanding has never been and, perhaps, never shall be reached. Certainly all a man can do is to make a few useless "Notes by the Way." The last word has never been spoken, and many of the few which have signify little.

Koheleth concludes that the highest good is natural happiness. We should enjoy life as it is, things as they are. There is not a turning to suicide as a means of escaping the nothingness—the vanity of it all. Instead, there is the admonition to enjoy the wealth given to us by God. "A man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat and to drink and to be merry." "Eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God hath already accepted thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let not thy head lack ointment. Live joyfully with thy wife whom thou lovest all the days of thy vanity . . . . . Live life with all your might, in other words, "for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

Would not such a life lack an honest enthusiasm? I think so. To follow this view consistently, one would, of necessity, be forced to lead a sham existence. Just to be cheerful, just to be pleasant, is certainly not enough.

Koheleth's last essay holds a conclusion universally felt. He finally conceives life to be a joy shadowed by vanity. We must endure the bitter to be able to appreciate the sweet. "Truly the light is sweet, but it is the best possible thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. Yea, if a man live many years, let him rejoice in them all; and remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many."

I like Koheleth's religion—a religion that makes a heaven on earth where everybody can share it. Of course it isn't a comfortable or beautiful heaven. There are no angels around plunking on harps of gold, but it is the best possible heaven.

But I wouldn't go so far as to say the summum bonum is natural happiness. Surely love is the locus of the universe. Only the love of anything or anybody that carries you beyond yourself is certain. And,

" . . . . . all experience is an arch wherethrough  
Gleams that untraveled world whose margin fades  
Forever and forever when you move . . . . .  
 . . . . . that which you are, you are;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield!"

Koheleth felt this, too. But the results of his thinking end with the same mournful note that all is vanity. He sees the endless revolution of birth, life, death. Dead souls vanish before him; yet the seasons come again, and the "clouds return after the rain." He finds reality insoluble, and the mystery of time haunts him to the end.

"And the almond tree shall blossom,  
And the grasshopper shall be a burden,  
And the caper-berry shall burst:

Because man goeth to his long home,  
And the mourners go about the streets:  
Or ever the silver cord be loosed,  
Or the golden bowl be broken,  
Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain,  
Or the wheel broken at the cistern:  
And the dust return to the earth,  
As it was;  
And the spirit return unto God  
Who gave it."

## Balaam

(Portrait of a Gentile)

BY EDNA MAE STEELE

ONE word from Balak and a host of Moabite warriors would clash with the Israelites camped on the plains of Jericho. These Israelites—these squatters on the soil—were increasing in number and strength. Hadn't they just defeated the Amorites? They were expanding—pushing into the Moabite's land where they were licking up all about them "as the ox licketh up the grass of the field."

Why the delay? Where was this word from King Balak? Certainly he feared this people who were growing much too mighty for him. Balak was awaiting the report from his embassy. He must first have the Israelites cursed to insure his victory over them. To perform this function of extreme importance, Balak had sent for a Gentile seer of international fame, Balaam. Balak had heard that Balaam was an expert in the field of cursing and blessing. Whatsoever he cursed, was cursed for all time; whatsoever he blessed, stayed blessed. Balak eagerly awaited his arrival so that this deed of national importance might be performed as soon as possible.

But Balak was to find in Balaam a man who ranked earthly orders far, far below divine mandates. Balaam was not a mere heathen magician

out for hire, but a man of strength and centrality of mind—a man dominated by the determination of the Divine.

Although Balaam, for the most part, appears as clay in the hands of the potter, it is not difficult to individualize him as a human being—a man who actually lived, breathed, and was subject to foibles and failings common to all. One can feel the personal magnetism of Balaam behind his words, actions, and relations to others. From his prophecy—his self-expression—one can understand his inner life; from his inner conflicting tendencies, the motives for his decisions and judgments are comprehensible. With these facts in mind, I will attempt to depict Balaam, the man, as he shines through the narrative.

Balaam knew that the source of his strength lay in Yahweh; therefore, he naturally consulted his God before undertaking such a proposition as the princes of Moab presented before him. He urged them to remain until morning until he prayerfully considered the matter.

God's answer settled the question for Balaam. "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed."



Courageously Balaam sent the princes back to Balak. He could send with them no more than the humble message that as long as God counted the Israelites as blessed, he could not curse them. Here was a child-like trust in Yahweh. Here was one of the first instances of the fact that a Hebrew's God could be the God of a Gentile. Balaam was frank and open about his beliefs. He made no excuses or apologies; he just presented Balak with his party platform on the issue.

Perhaps Balak concluded that this greedy Gentile was holding out for a higher bid for his services, for he sent more princes this second time. These new diplomats were even more distinguished than the first. They offered him great honors in exchange for his curses.

But Balaam answered, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God to do less or more."

This shows the great strength of Balaam. He had the sheer force of will power to inhibit his natural tendencies. He would not compromise with any form averse to the will of Yahweh. There was, perhaps, a great struggle going on within him; but Balaam does not divide his allegiance. In this, he was magnanimous. This part of his nature is vividly brought out by the contrast of the shallow character of Balak who had no comprehension of Balaam's God.

Balaam does not pester his God with the same question for the second embassy. He shows his wisdom and good judgment in that he accepts Yahweh's first answer as final. He does, however, lodge his guests for the night in case a fresh order should, by any possible chance, modify the first.

It was God who came to Balaam this second time. "If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I say unto thee, that shalt thou do."

Balaam, ever ready to carry out Yahweh's slightest demand, took this as an order for immediate departure. He saddled up his ass, and sped off with the princes without the slightest notion that he was rushing the issue. The actual signal to go had not been given. Balaam had jumped the gun. In doing so, he shows his first spark of independence of mind—his first spark of human nature.

This spark was soon to be fanned into a flame. God's anger was kindled against Balaam for leaving prematurely. The angel of the Lord planted

himself in the pathway of the oncoming company. In his hand was a sparkling sword. Balaam, however, could not see this angel. It was visible only to the ass. The beast slowed down to a jerky gallop; then detoured into a nearby field. Balaam, feeling his animal to be stubborn and contrary, gave her a whack and pulled vigorously at the reins. This, if nothing else, humanized Balaam; for he acted on natural impulse—the way you or I or anyone today would have acted if given similar circumstances. Balaam, here, displayed a temper which dims the halo some would place around his head.

But this isn't all. When the angel of the Lord stood in the path of the vineyards, the ass thrust herself against the wall, thus crushing Balaam's foot against the stone. He hit the beast again; this time, with his staff. This helped to ease the pain of his injured foot; and, at the same time, provided an outlet for his temper.

Nonchalantly the ass opens her mouth and questions, "What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?"

Such a phenomenon as a talking ass would have floored a man of lesser backbone than Balaam, but Balaam shows no surprise. He has been humiliated before these stately princes of Moab. In a heat, he answers the donkey's declaration. "Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now I would kill thee!"

Suddenly the angel of the Lord was visible to Balaam. He saw the sword flashing fiercely in the air. Balaam immediately bows down his head and falls flat on his face. He is humble again. Contact with the Divine brings out the softer spiritual light in his character. His animal instincts and petty failings are subdued in the presence of the magnetic will of his God.

Balaam is big enough to admit his mistake. He quietly states, " . . . if it displease thee, I will get me back again." Balaam is repentant, and will gladly retrace his steps homeward to Pethor if Yahweh will but give the word.

But Yahweh commanded, "Go with the men; but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak."

So Balaam continued his journey. Nothing seemed to ruffle him. As soon as an incident was closed, he dropped it abruptly for all time. Balaam never looked back to ponder or to regret; instead, he was ever eagerly probing into future life—future problems.



Balaam greets the anxious Balak with the frank, direct, and matter-of-fact statement so characteristic of him. "Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak." This shows he was not one to evade the main issue. He is outspoken, and lets Balak know just what to expect from him. There is nothing impatient about his greeting. Balaam obligingly agrees to consider the matter all over again if Balak so desires. Balaam will consider the matter again even though he knows that there will be no other answer than the one first given.

Balak, however, is not disheartened. He prepared the usual lavish sacrifice by which he and the princes waited while Balaam went off alone to receive the message from the Lord. When Balaam saw the haunts of the Israelites below, his heart expanded with joy. His words came to him with flow and fervor. Balaam spoke not in mawkishly sentimental phrases, but with divine inspiration he took up his parable and said:

"From Aram hath Balak brought me,  
The King of Moab from the mountains of the East:

Come, curse me Jacob,  
And come, defy Israel.

How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?  
And how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?

For from the top of the rocks I see him:  
And from the hills I behold him:

Lo, it is a people that dwell alone,  
And shall not be reckoned among the nations  
Who can count the dust of Jacob,  
Or number the fourth part of Israel?

Let me die the death of the righteous,  
And let my last end be like his!"

There is a certain emotional sweetness in these lines of a man whom we have just seen before as so firm, practical, and matter of fact. Balaam just melts. He realizes he can go no further. The command from God has been given. To Balaam, this command is changeless. Nothing that a mere human being can do will ever alter it.

In sharp contrast to Balaam's lyric comes the growl from the abashed Balak. "What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether!" Balak is concerned with the demands of the present time. Balaam, on the other hand, is concerned less with time and more with eternity. His is the

mind of a prophet—a mind all-seeing and penetrating.

Poor old Balak shows admirable persistency. He will now bring Balaam to a choicer spot. Perhaps Balaam didn't get a good view of the Israelites, he thought. Then, too, Yahweh might change His plans; or perhaps Balaam might yet yield to offered riches and honors in return for just a small curse on the Israelites.

Balaam lets himself be led to the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah. He permits Balak to do these little human things to him. He knows God's commands are changeless; but he lovingly tolerates human failings which are, to be sure, not lacking in himself. Here, in this high place, the same lavish sacrificial arrangements were made. Balaam returns from meeting the Lord yonder and says:

"Rise up Balak, and hear;

Hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor:

God is not a man, that he should lie;

Neither the son of man, that he should repent:  
Hath he said, and shall he not do it?

Or hath he spoke, and shall he not make it good?

Behold, I have received commandment to bless:  
And he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.  
He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob

Neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel:  
The Lord his God is with him,

And the shout of a king is among them.  
God bringeth them out of Egypt;

He hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.  
Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob,

Neither is there any divination against Israel:  
Now shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel, What  
hath God wrought!

Behold, the people riseth up as a lioness,  
And as a lion doth he lift himself up:  
He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey,  
And drink the blood of the slain."

"Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all," sighed Balak exasperatedly.

But Balaam, true to his nature, answered obediently. "Didn't I tell you that all that the Lord speaketh I must do?" Balak had pushed him on thus far. The more curses Balak demanded, the more blessings were bestowed upon Israel.

This third time, Balaam sought not for enchantments. There is a certain transformation taking place within him. His eyes are fully opened. He sees more clearly into the future.

With face lifted toward the wilderness—toward the tents of Israel—a vision of Yahweh comes before him.

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob,  
Thy tabernacles, O Israel!  
As the valleys are they spread forth,  
As gardens by the river side,  
As lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted,  
As cedar trees beside the waters.  
Water shall flow from his buckets,  
And his seed shall be in many waters,  
And his king shall be higher than Agag  
And his kingdom shall be exalted.  
God bringeth him forth out of Egypt;  
He hath as it were the strength of an unicorn:  
He shall eat up the nations his adversaries,  
And shall break their bones in pieces,  
And pierce them through with his arrows.  
He couched, he lay down as a lion,  
And as a lioness; who shall rouse him up?  
Blessed be everyone that blesseth thee,  
And cursed be everyone that curseth thee."

By this time, Balak was all but frothing at the mouth. He slapped his hands together in contempt for such a seer as Balaam who manifested so little power over his God: "I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast altogether blessed them three times," he exploded. "Therefore flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honor; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honor."

"I go unto my people," returned Balaam calmly and without temper. "But, come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days."

Balaam was not one to obey Balak, a mere man, as readily as he obeyed Yahweh. He would not flee back to Pethor to avoid being murdered by the volcanic Balak and the princes of Moab. Instead, he stood his ground and looked further into the future.

"I shall see him, but not now:

I behold him, but not nigh:  
There shall come forth a Star out of Jacob;  
And a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel,  
And shall smite through the corners of Moab,  
And break down all the sons of tumult.  
And Edom shall be a possession.

Seir also shall be a possession, which were his enemies;

While Israel doeth valiantly.

Out of Jacob shall one have dominion,  
and shall destroy the remnant from the city."

After more prophecy, Balaam left for home. Balak, also, went his way stunned by the utter immobility of the man from his single guiding ideal.

I would like to have the story end here, but there are shadowy hints that Balaam did not remain as constant to his purpose as in his dealings with Balak. In *Deuteronomy* he is charged with the seduction of the Israelites from Yahweh. In *Revelation* he is portrayed as being unable to resist temptation. Surpassing all these conflicting reports, however, is this worthy Balaam who shines through the climax of *Numbers*.

## To An Epicurean

By ELIZABETH SHOW

When you are old, and carnal joy decayed,  
When others who have loved the body less  
Stroll hand in hand with Plato in the shade  
Still gathering the fruits of happiness,  
Still finding life a rich experience,  
I doubt not, pausing, they may hear a moan  
Broken in anguish from a brain grown dense,  
A bitter retrospective human stone.

## Hymn to the Elements

By KATHERINE JEAN SANFORD

Softly in pity, ye winds, across the night  
Blow them a dream of peace, and let them be,  
Poor hearts that cannot break nor find delight,  
Trinity in sleep with sky and sea.  
Whimp'ring like babes they lie when day is done,  
Far in that finite town that blinks with pain,  
Crushed with the emptiness from sun to sun,  
And wond'ring why it must repeat again.

Earth, fill the awful measure of their days  
With the eternal whisper that to you  
Imparts the sense of elemental ways:  
Tell them that Time itself is born anew!  
And point within the crux its own release:  
Life is so good; so ultimate is peace.



## Octavia

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

### 1. Octavia to Her Children

Believe not what the little Mentius tells.  
He prattles like a rill that takes its notes  
From wind-tunes in the yellow asphodels,  
From wild fantasias surging from the throats  
Of song-birds, from the great warm pulse of  
earth,  
From every sound it hears, without a thought,  
And chaunts them blithely, careless of their  
worth.  
He knows not what he says, believe him not.

If in his talk were words of Antony  
That leave you thus bewildered, smooth again  
Your two unquiet brows. Some men there be  
Who slander him, some turbid-spoken men  
Whom Mentius is echoing in this.  
Be reassured, 'tis but the snake's vile hiss.

### 2. Octavia to Antony

The blame lies not with you; I should have known  
Your exquisite pale-flowering love for me  
With conscientious, trembling fingers sown  
And nurtured, of necessity must be  
A brief thing, gathered by an early death.  
How could it have been ought but languorous,  
Poor product of the sultry hothouse breath,  
To droop and perish prematurely thus?

It is forgotten; you are free to go  
Whither you will, and I shall never follow  
As once I did, to tremble in the snow  
Of your disfavor like some misled swallow  
Lost in a swirl of winter. In my life  
Are other roles than this grim part of wife.

### 3. Octavia to Herself

Pale mirrored woman, you who have been called  
Unnumbered times, most beautiful of all,  
More beautiful than she who holds enthralled  
The heart once in your power to enthrall,  
What is this change in you? Your face is thinned,  
Your great eyes dark and empty on the glass.  
Is this the first chill breath of winter's wind  
Ominous in the bright September grass?

Time was when Antony was all your own,  
When his allegiance brushed your life with sun,  
And Cleopatra seemed a name unknown.  
Now that the shining interlude is done  
Take not the bitter bread of grief to eat,  
For that of service still continues sweet.

## Smoke Dreams

BY JEAN HOLLOWAY

A smoky blue curl  
Sways upward  
Through my long solitude of thought  
Like a long slender hand  
Reaching—reaching.

I watch it ruminatively,  
Letting its misty fingers  
Twine themselves about my soul,  
Filling me with the peace that is evening,  
Lulling my consciousness  
Until my soul  
Looses itself like a blue wraith  
And mingles with the shadowy presence—  
Drifting up—up  
Until my far-flung visions  
Become vague and indistinct  
And lost in the pungent haze  
Of ghosts  
Rising from the smoulders of my fire,  
Held in thrall by long blue fingers  
That once were pine trees.

And I, who would imprison this moment forever,  
Drift up and up,  
Lost in an eternal anguish  
For one young star  
Following a crescent moon  
Across the spaces of illusion.  
And at last, when I can almost touch  
The smoky phantom,  
It evades me,  
Leaving me alone  
To gather up the edges of a frayed desire,  
Alone in the mist of eternity—  
Itself free in a velvet vastness  
To follow a young star  
Across the vistas of the world—  
Beyond the vista  
Of my dream.



## June Tradition

BY ELIZABETH BEDFORD

IT WAS early, and the auditorium was almost empty; nevertheless old Heinrich Scholtz selected an aisle seat back under the balcony and sat down quietly, removing his hat and holding it respectfully in his hands. Directly in front of him were empty rows which would be filled, half an hour later, by admiring friends and adoring relatives. The footlights had not been turned on, but the curtain swayed back and forth occasionally as people crossed backstage. The auditorium itself was decorated with great sprays of yellow climbing roses, intermixed with jasmine and festooned along the walls. There were boxes of flowers on the edge of the stage.

It was a balmy June night, just right for graduation, Heinrich thought, and he inhaled the sweet scent of the roses and sat back contentedly in his seat. Everything about the scene bore its familiar aspect.

Presently excited whisperings in the back of the auditorium announced that the ushers had arrived. There was a pause, a few quiet words of instruction and then they walked down the aisles. Heinrich nodded to himself at the rightness of the scene. It was an old tradition that the girls of the junior class should usher at the graduation ceremony, and this year as always they wore long full skirts which swayed gracefully as they walked. Heinrich noted the bright eager faces with pleasure; they looked like the ballet dancers whom Heinrich had seen when he was a little boy. The auditorium filled rapidly, and as they went by, a number of people nodded and smiled to old Scholtz. The little German shoemaker was almost a part of the annual high school commencement; each June he was pointed out to the new faculty members.

"Yes, there's old Scholtz. A shoemaker here in town and as honest as they come—fine old chap. Always shows up at graduation. I s'pose he was graduated way back when; probably got his diploma in the old music building. That used to be the only structure on the campus, you know."

Heinrich half rose as Mr. Milton and his wife spoke to him. Mr. Milton was state senator now, but he was just as friendly as ever. Heinrich remembered the day when he and Henry Milton had started school. They had been in the same grade and were great friends. Henry'd gone on

to the university and studied law and then got married. Tonight Heinrich knew that Richard, their youngest child, was graduating from high school. As he watched the swiftly moving ushers and the passing audience, Heinrich saw in his mind's eye the red slate roof on the old Washington school. Reading and spelling had been his favorites; Henry Milton was good at arithmetic. He remembered the games they'd played: "run sheep run" and "Andy Over" if they could get a ball. Those were great days.

His reverie was interrupted by the orchestra, which filed in and soon filled the auditorium with sounds of tuning instruments. The conductor rapped sharply on his stand, the audience was suddenly quiet and then the deep rich chords of "Pilgrim's Chorus" rolled out over the rows of seats. Tears filled Heinrich's eyes; Tannhauser was dear to his heart.

"Once more, dear home,  
I with rapture behold thee,"

The doors swung open and in came the graduating class, solemn and dignified in their grey caps and gowns. These caps and gowns were a new innovation; in earlier days Heinrich remembered that the boys went up in their plain dark suits and the few girls wore simple dark dresses. One by one the graduates ascended the platform, met at the footlights, turned and filled the tiers of gilt chairs which were always borrowed from the caterer's for graduation exercises. Next came the addresses. As he bowed his head for the opening prayer, Heinrich felt the dignity and value of an education. How worthy and deep an experience! Rich and wonderful the land which offered so much to its children.

The speaker rose and began; gradually the warm sweet air made people drowsy. Somewhere in the audience a sleepy child whimpered, and a violin bow dropped with quickly muted clatter down in the orchestra pit. At last the diplomas. Heinrich clapped when young Richard Milton's name was called. He was a good boy; Heinrich had mended his boots ever since he'd been walking, and often Richard came down to the shop to get help with his German lessons. The orchestra struck up a gay march, and it was over. The aisles were filled with happy parents and proud young graduates, and Heinrich made his

way through the crowd with difficulty. He met the Miltons at the door, and they walked out into the cool night together.

"Give you a ride, Heinie?"

"No, thank you, I guess I'll just walk on across the park."

"It was a nice ceremony, didn't you think so,

Mr. Scholtz?" inquired Mrs. Milton.

"Yes, M'am, it was nice."

"Well, goodnight, Heinie."

The old shoemaker walked home slowly. Always he wished it, but this year more deeply than ever he wished that he had been able to go to high school.

## Remonstrance After Death

BY MARY MONTGOMERY

Back in the cold night air  
Out of that bright clear room  
Where lay my body, dead,  
Where my body, crushed and broken,  
Lay dead. And its soul  
Or some strange thin essence of brain  
Went quietly out into the streets  
Wounded, dumb and ill  
With heavy, lurching tread.

Why do they say  
That the soul on passing  
Floats skyward as a trailing wisp of smoke?

Oh, I had come so quickly to you  
With such a young laugh in my stride  
And young confidence, held in each hand  
And a sweet essence of you seeping through my  
muscles  
In fiery waves of tense and vibrant energy.

The body, soul and all, on coming  
Was lighter than the ghost departing.

You stood across the room and looked at me  
And with a laugh I went toward you  
But brought up sharp, surprised and hurt.  
Strange that a wall, a high stone wall  
Should have been in that brightly lighted room.  
And I could not scale it, nor go around,  
Nor tear it down, though God! I tried!  
But there it was, all cold and solid  
And I must batter at it, and again,  
And throw myself at it  
Until my head was bruised and bleeding  
And my two fists broken  
And still must fight that wall  
And gasp and sob in fury  
Till I lay senseless

And even then, up and at that wall again.  
'Twas more than brain that drove me to it.

And suddenly, as the ghost deserted,  
Left reluctant its battered shell,  
I understood who piled that wall.

In death I learned what you so clearly meant  
And understanding, slowly, passed from the  
brightness

Back to the dark, the bottomless dark  
That was before the womb,  
Back through the hostile bitterness  
Back through the night of frustration,  
Blinded by the brilliance of a moment.

I knew it well before. It was dull and grey  
And I, drifting within, stolid and hebetuous.  
Yet never having lived  
I knew not I lived not  
And was but vaguely discontent.  
So shall it be again, in time,  
Some day my soul will cease to cower  
And cringe and tremble at remembering.  
And the void will be no more than void.

Yet you could have saved this, had you deigned.  
But no matter. You gave your favor  
Your smile, the touch of your hand once—  
Why should you give, or I expect it always?  
Only because we love  
Gives no right to ask consideration.

You gave more life than I had known there was.  
Led me through the door to some strange sweet  
world

Where desire is sometimes answered.  
You gave that brief sojourn freely. I ask no more.

Yet some wayward voice within rebels  
At the anguish of knowing what might have been.



## The Creative Process

BY MARY MERRICK

TO THE uninitiated, the working of a creative mind is a mysterious process. When reading a masterpiece, one marvels at the beauty and grace of the lines and usually shrugs off the implications of mystery with a, "Well, that fellow has a creative mind, whatever that is." But the creative process is not as incomprehensible as one would believe. It can be analyzed, and it is found to have three stages in its action. The first stage we can call the gathering of information. Then there is the period when these facts lie dormant, waiting to be called to consciousness. And the last period, when a novel or a play or a poem is the result, consists of the conscious recalling of those facts and of the shaping of them into the finished product. It isn't possible to create a work of words without taking into consideration all of these processes. The great majority of readers believe that what they are reading was casually put down on paper without any preparation. They do not realize the hours and days and even years spent in accumulating facts and in storing them in the innermost recesses of the mind before they emerge on the printed page.

Every result of the imagination rests, not upon unknown quantities, but on concrete facts. From the time of the first printed essay to the present era of multitudinous works, each writer of any merit has carried with him his little black notebook. These notebooks are the repositories of waifs and strays of poems, essays, and observed actions. They are conglomerations of facts which struck a responsive note in the mind of the author. Besides the visible data each writer has his mental notebook upon which vivid phrases are stamped as indelible impressions. This mental notebook is the most potent factor in the creation of a new work. It is crowded with widely divergent impressions which swarm in all directions in what has been called "the deep well of unconscious cerebration." One after another graphic bits of what an author reads or observes drop into that well. There they lead an intimate life. A vision of ethereal beauty may rub shoulders with memories of the gustatory delights of a plate of beans. These images and impressions lie to all intents and purposes in utter non-ex-

istence. But they awake at the often involuntary summons of a definite suggestion. When they emerge again into consciousness, they are linked in new and sometimes astonishing combinations.

Flashes of association are matters of general experience. Ideas caught up have a curious trick of blending. In this way one may recall an incident that happened yesterday, and so start a whole train of associations which reach back into childhood, return to the present, and then go back again into the past. The sudden leap of widely sundered recollections, through some flash of association, oftentimes gives a new and startling unity to unobserved facts. The images and impressions of every day existence converge and blend in the deep well of unconsciousness. We may liken them to gaseous molecules which collide to produce new combinations.

Every work of art is at first only a confused mass of thoughts tumbling over one another in the dark. Then fancy begins to work and moves the sleeping images toward the light where they are either chosen or rejected by the artist. And this choosing or rejecting of floating images of reverie constitutes the workings of the imagination. Its work is usually unconscious. Seldom does an artist sit down and command the well to give up its secrets so that he may compose a work of art. But the more incongruous and chaotic the welter in the well, the freer play it offers to those darting threads of association which reach out in all directions through the mass. Imagination dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate. It is an assimilating energy. It pierces through the dissimilarity to some underlying oneness in which qualities of the most remote nature cohere. But the shaping spirit of the imagination must have materials upon which to work. It never operates in a vacuum. Its stuff is always fact of some order, somehow experienced; its product is that fact transmuted. So a real creator possesses at once the instincts of the scholar and the instincts of the artist. He reads everything with an eye which habitually pierces to the secret spring of beauty beneath the crust of fact. Every great imaginative conception is a vortex into which everything under the sun may be swept.

A new creation is the result of all and of none of these raw materials. A flash of vision may leap, unheralded, out of the blue, to carry in its train the gradual unfoldings of an imaginative design. Or there may be no initial flash at all, but only a persistent groping of the imagination towards a point where the magical synthesis is reached. Every expression of an artist is merely a focal point of the surging chaos of the unexpressed.

It is the control of these images which surge from the deep well to the conscious mind which is the deciding of a genius. We all have flashes of recollections which are associated with former impressions, but, unless these recollections are marshalled into order by the creative faculty itself, one is never able to compose a great poem or write a truly living novel. And that is one reason why we are not all geniuses. Creative genius works through processes which are common to our kind, but which are superlatively enhanced. The creative forces may operate without reference to the bidding of the will, but the capacity of the human brain to think through chaos makes

a poem a poem and not the maunderings of a feeble brain.

Floating images hover in the mind and are captured by the imagination and resolved into a permanence of union. These images achieve expression in the finished product as fact takes form before the eyes of man alone on an endless stretch of desert. As the conscious imagination moulds the clamoring images, the links of association are obliterated or obscured, and so a smooth and unified whole is produced. The character of the finished product owes its quality to the amount of synthesizing control which the creative faculty itself exerts. To that—and to the potency of the will.

And so the creative process may be summed-up as follows: there is a long, slow storing of the well, a flash of amazing vision, and the exacting task of translating the vision into actuality. In the world of the shaping spirit, save for its patterns, there is nothing new that was not old. The work of the creators is the mastery and transmutation and re-ordering of known facts into new and beautiful shapes.

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## Dog

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BY RALPHA WRIGHT

THE dog lay up on the mountain top with his leg in a trap, and when we found him, he was dead. We could not cry, nor could we speak, for we were filled with wondering, and a feeling of helplessness. At our feet lay the dog which had so briefly touched our lives, and which we knew had died as he had lived—peacefully, patiently, and uncomplaining to the last. It was difficult to understand why he had chosen not to struggle, why he had merely laid his head between his paws and waited—and died.

On the long trail homeward, I strove to recall some little incident that might disprove all that I was beginning to know—that might supply some other happier solution to the strange enigma that was our dog. I remembered him as a

frightened pup running under the furniture and whimpering at the sound of a voice. At first I had not been allowed to do any more than look at him, for my father was strict regarding his training; he did not want any counter-influence to spoil him. And so I had only looked at him, but it was those wide, dark eyes which had stared back at me from under the chairs that helped to bring understanding on the mountain top.

I realized that my father, who had reason to care less, was perhaps more grieved over the dog's death than any of us. It was he who had planned for the dog's future, he who had chosen him, and had purchased him for a sum that exceeded the usual price. An English setter, the dog was to be his companion in the field; and he had dreamed



of a sleek-skinned, swift-footed animal at his side, eager for the command to "fetch," and passionate for the feel of yet warm feathered bodies between his jaws. This dog was to be a mighty hunter, a staunch companion, and a loyal and courageous slave to his one master. Such were my father's dreams, but the pup that hid beneath the chairs had somehow missed his calling.

The older the dog grew the less remarkable was his appearance. His body did not grow, and his legs took on inches. His ears, too, were over-large and flapped disconsolately from side to side of his drooping head. Tiny flecks of black hair, which my father had hoped would spread, remained to dot his face and shoulders, and the rest of his body was simply white. His walk, which seldom increased to anything faster, was unsteady and awkward, and it was a long time before he ceased worrying over each step. He was dreadfully unsure of everything, and would stand whimpering and trembling at our feet; yet not once could we suspect him of being cowardly.

My father was still hopeful, for the dog was only a pup, and he waited another month before he decided to test him in practice. If the dog had any instinct, or had inherited any of the qualities of his breed at all, they should be aroused on the hunt, and so we took him to our mountain cabin. My father was delighted when it became evident that the animal enjoyed the change of atmosphere. He seemed possessed by some inner excitement, and he would curl one front foot under him while he sniffed the air. It was a characteristic position of the English setter, and it thrilled my father no end. He took out his gun and called the dog to him, and then he patted the dog until he felt that the relationship had been firmly established in the dog's mind. A robin lighted on a near-by fence post, and my father aimed his gun and pulled the trigger. At the noise the dog started, and then stood quite still, quietly waiting—as he later must have waited on the top of the mountain. "Go fetch," said my father, and he led the dog to the dying robin. He patted the dog and patted the robin with murmurs of "Fetch—fetch." The dog was wary. He sniffed the robin and pushed it gently with his nose, his legs trembling, and he whimpered slightly. Suddenly he settled down, and taking the robin between his paws, he began to softly stroke its feathers with his tongue. There was a long silence, in which the dog continued to lick the dead bird, and in which my father

gazed hopelessly at the animal. Finally Father picked up his gun and strode silently back to the cabin.

I understood the gesture and knew that the dog's training was at an end. But more than this, it meant that the animal could be mine, and as sorry as I felt for my father, I could not help being thrilled at the prospects of having a pet of my own. My first thought was to give the dog a name, but of all names that came to my mind, none seemed suited to this particular animal. Nor were the other members of the family any more successful, my father even refusing to discuss the matter. And so we continued to refer to him as "the dog," and in time we dropped the article and called him merely "Dog." To establish an understanding between Dog and myself was even more difficult. Whereas I had once been eager to caress the animal, I now found it difficult to approach him. Patting his head embarrassed me, nor could I speak to him in an easy, casual manner. I made the bitter discovery that the dog was no more mine than he had been my father's; we could not understand somehow, what lay between us and this strange and lonely creature.

Therefore, I found it simpler not to attempt to approach him with open affection. I only asked of him his companionship, and I believe that is all he ever asked of me. We took long treks into the woods, and deep in the pines we would rest and listen to the breezes in the tree tops and to the faint bird calls. On these occasions there grew in me a wondering, and I would study the animal that lay at my feet. Unlike my father, I was not content to lay the cause of his freakishness to bad breeding. Nor did it seem just to describe him as a moron dog. There were vitality and a mental alertness in this animal. Even as he lay peacefully at my feet, his ears would pick up at a bird call, or at a rustle in the underbrush; and often on our walks he would stop in his tracks to curl a front foot under him and to sniff the air. But other than this, all instincts seemed to be dead.

During the last few days of our two weeks' vacation, the dog suddenly began to wander off into the woods by himself. It was not unusual for him to be gone an entire day, to return weary and with a multitude of mysterious cuts and bruises. As I watched him slowly ascend the hillside in the early mornings, I would be filled with a strong and helpless pity; for I believed that

he felt the bitterness of his failure and that he was seeking his own comfort in the solitude of the mountains. But there came an evening when I had a strange foreboding, and I anxiously watched the hillside where he would first appear. As the shadows grew deeper and the mist of evening had settled in the lowlands, I set out to meet him. Deep in the woods I called his name, and my cry echoed and re-echoed forlornly against the great mountains. Far away came the cry of a bird calling to its mate, and it, too, sounded lost and lonely. I turned homeward, and now the foreboding was replaced by conviction—the dog would never return.

We waited, and searched the mountains for a week, and then, with one last glance at the hillside, we unwillingly returned to the city. But in the city we found no rest. The thought of that despairing dog roaming the lonely wilderness in search of rest and comfort, weighed on our hearts. My memory was pierced by bird calls, deep in an endless forest, and I could imagine the dog, panting and bleeding, stopping in his tracks to listen, and then to follow. In another week's time we were back in the mountains to make one last, thorough search. We left the cabin early in

the morning, and by noon had reached the second ridge. My father was walking ahead, prodding the bushes and undergrowth with a large stick. Suddenly there was a snapping sound, and when my father withdrew his stick from among a cluster of leaves and twigs, a glittering steel trap was dangling from its end. Silently we gazed at each other, and in our hearts was sickness.

The next trap was on the mountain top, up where I knew the wind whispers one to sleep, and where the stars dare one to reach out and pick them from the skies. Even as we moved about that other trap, I saw how golden were the shafts of sunlight that fell between the trees, and how tall were the pines that towered into the sky. I gazed across at my father, and his eyes were blurred with a sudden realization. I felt the cold fingers of understanding envelop my heart, and then the beauty about us became tragic to me, for I knew it had never been seen by the animal that had died alone. He that lay with his leg in a trap had been lulled to sleep by a comforting breeze, and other than that he had not cared. For him, the stars, the pines, and the sunlight were only a part of a great blackness; being blind, how could he care?

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## The Conduct of Fancy

By PHILIP SHERIDAN

AN AFFAIR of the heart can be carried on along perfectly rational lines. Alfred Ronald tried it. That he failed was not the fault of Alfred Ronald, but of an extra unknown that showed up in his mathematical formula. The unknown was the out-of-bounds nature of feminine psychology.

Alfred Ronald was majoring in mathematics. He plotted curves and extracted roots with efficiency and grim dispatch. There were wheels within wheels, as far as Alfred Ronald was concerned, but he had reduced them to nice obedient wheels that never made him any trouble.

A human problem was merely another algebraic expression with a varying number of unknowns. To solve it, one simply isolated the unknowns and hammered away at them until they simply surrendered.

Alfred Ronald knew two girls. We will call them Vivian and Virginia. Alfred Ronald would have called them A1 and A2. He had read Bernard Shaw. Alfred Ronald thought a lot of Vivian, but he liked Virginia too.

Let two equally pretty girls appear, and all eyes go to one. Such was Vivian. Perhaps it was the way she walked, the way she wore her



clothes, the way she arranged her expression. The other might turn into a pink-and-yellow crocodile and go up in violet smoke, and no one would notice. Such was Virginia.

Vivian was red-headed—spectacularly so. Virginia was a rather dubious blond. Vivian played all games competently—none expertly. Virginia played some games expertly and some not at all.

For example, when one played tennis with Virginia, one worked hard to break even. In contrast, when one played tennis with Vivian, one displayed at once superior athletic ability and magnanimity. Boys like to play tennis with Vivian.

With Vivian life was whipped cream and high adventure; with Virginia it was "give us this day our daily bread," and an assignment due Wednesday. Virginia nourished, Vivian titillated the fancy.

One trusted Virginia. Boys told her all their troubles in the daytime and took out Vivian in the evening. Virginia listened patiently and from seven to ten studied her French.

Alfred Ronald talked with Virginia in the library. He told her about Schopenhauer and Spinoza and relativity and aesthetics. He told her about T. S. Eliot and about Havelock Ellis and the binomial theorem. She knew something of each. It was fun but not very exciting.

Alfred Ronald went over to Vivian's house in the evening. He talked the sheerest kind of twaddle and on occasion imagined himself in love. It was easy to imagine oneself in love with Vivian. She was like a moth perpetually looking for a flame.

What was Alfred Ronald to do? Why, push the matter to its logical conclusion, of course. Alfred Ronald detested loose ends. If he imagined himself in love with Vivian, he should determine if she were in love with him. If she were—alors, it was Romance, the loose end tied up. If she weren't, he would have more time for his studies. He was doubtful but adaptable. She was either plus or minus or zero. She was an unknown. He must solve her. How was he to do it?

"I am human, Vivian," he said one evening. "You must really believe me—I am human."

Alfred Ronald was fond of Virginia, too. That also must be taken into consideration. She knew more of his state of mind than he knew himself. If one likes, she had the run of his mental wardrobe. Alfred Ronald was fond of her and sometimes bought her a cup of coffee when they had been studying together.

Alfred Ronald really knew little of Virginia, but she knew all about him, and about Vivian, and about Kant and about the inductive method. It had been an osmotic process—the full into the less full.

Alfred Ronald one day asked Virginia how a man (a hypothetical man) could win a woman (a hypothetical woman). What was the effective attitude?

"My lad," said Virginia, in a considering tone, "I am going to tell you a story. Take heed. In the Polynesians or Melanesians, or the South Seas or some such place are many coral atolls. These are tiny and doughnut-shaped. A white trader once bribed some natives to maroon the village belle on one of these for a night. He himself landed on the other side and sent his boat away.

"It was a clear night, and the belle, used to a healthy outdoor career, could, he found, run just about as fast as he could. I give you the picture of the two sprinting around that atoll under a tropical moon.

"In the morning he was exhausted but the belle remained diametrically opposed to him, in position and intention. Imagine, Alfred Ronald, the result, feminine nature being what it is, had he quietly sat down and pretended to be fishing. Go thou, Alfred Ronald, and do likewise, or otherwise go not thou and do not otherwise."

Alfred Ronald believed in consulting all available sources of information. He had located the proper attitude on the "x" or Virginia axis. Now he would try the "y" or Vivian axis. He spoke to Vivian that evening. "Vivian, what is the proper manner? How does a man succeed with a woman? I mean a hypothetical man with a hypothetical woman, all other things being equal?"

Vivian was flattered. Most boys used only words of one syllable in addressing her. And besides the sentence was phrased in quite an academic manner.

But there the appreciation ended. Vivian had been in the world for many years and in college for several. She was in popular parlance "a sharp chick." She thought not in terms of theory but of the example, the problem.

All women are a little sadistic. "Who is the girl, Alfred Ronald?" she asked, turning on the radio.

Alfred Ronald lit a cigaret. "Virginia," he said with unscrupulous coolness and aplomb. It

was quite convincing. But it was also quite unlike Alfred Ronald.

Vivian chose to draw an analogy. This was quite unlike Vivian. For this simple-hearted girl disclaimed all dealings with pretense, academic sophistry, deceit, double-living, false witness, and misleading profundity—at least verbally. Had she known what she was doing, she would have disclaimed it. But perhaps she believed it herself.

Vivian's method was to compare a boy and a girl to opponents in a tennis match. The boy often gives the girl little advantages. This is quite proper. She appreciates them. But more often than that he, so to say, discards his racquet and plays with a ping-pong paddle. That is when he is in that happy condition known as infatuation. Naturally she is disgusted and quits the game. Take heed, Alfred Ronald.

"Be indifferent, Alfred Ronald," said Vivian. That she believed either Alfred Ronald or her own advice is a different matter. But it was a purely academic answer to a purely academic question.

Now Alfred Ronald thought. Women are notoriously contrary—contrary and unstable. Almost every writer who had ever treated the subject, had been severe with women. There was Isaiah, Shakespeare, Homer, Plato, Pope, Chaucer, Moliere, Schopenhauer, Dr. Johnson, Aristophanes, King Solomon, Scott, Descartes, Ambrose Bierce, H. L. Mencken, and Francis Bacon.

"Oh Woman! In our hour of ease,  
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,  
When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
A ministering angel, thou."

Alfred Ronald felt no pain or anguish, but he did feel that life owed him a ministering angel. An angel would be useful to pick up his papers, see that he had a clean handkerchief, and oversee the small bothersome details of living. All he had to do would be to make an angel of Vivian. That was the problem. But, logically, what was correct procedure?

Virginia and Vivian had counselled indifference. But one never believed women. They were contrary. They were also very acute, but of course not as acute as Alfred Ronald. Women are acute in a low, underhand, instinctive way.

They are acute enough to see through the hypocrisy of any such silly pose as indifference. Of course—now Alfred Ronald saw the answer. They are running true to form and actually be-

ing contrary to their very sincere advice. The proper answer is not indifference—but attention.

Alfred Ronald charged, horse and foot, heavy artillery and hand grenades, against the Hindenburg line of Vivian's affections. Alfred Ronald was attentive to Vivian.

He asked her to dances. He asked her to football games, to boxing matches, to symphonies, to track meets. He did her chemistry for her, her French, her art appreciation, her music appreciation and her comparative anatomy. He played tennis with her. He escorted her to and from classes. Vivian was quite gay and congratulated him upon his address. Virginia didn't seem to notice.

Vivian soon found this tedious. She had a vagabondish fancy and any form of regularity irked her. She found Alfred Ronald just useful enough, and just obliging enough, and just simple enough to form a sort of base of operations. But she didn't want the base to become a Bastille. So one day she told Alfred Ronald to take off and fly away, or to take his affections elsewhere. He was "getting in her hair." So the moth sent the flame about his business.

The referee counted eight, and someone rang the bell. Alfred Ronald somehow found his way back to his own corner. But it had been a tough round, and he wasn't so keen about going another.

There was always Virginia. There always had been Virginia. It was as if some English heroine said in a modern novel, "But Lord Gordon, there are always the crocuses" (or the roses, or the delphiniums—the flower didn't matter). Alfred Ronald felt that he could count on Virginia. She was durable—she wore well. She was a good long-time investment, and she would look about as well at thirty or forty as at twenty.

Virginia, surprisingly enough, was distinctly phlegmatic about Alfred Ronald. It was as if she considered him now a cut-rate article. He asked her to lunch. She was sorry, but there was a group of girls with whom she always ate, and she couldn't think of disappointing them.

Was Virginia going to the Junior Prom? Yes, she was. Oh—well, maybe he'd see her there. Then they talked of Art and Beauty in Nature. Alfred Ronald told Virginia about the full moon coming up over the cliffs in the Mojave. Virginia told Alfred Ronald about a moon she had seen one night over the Pacific at Capitola.



"And do you know what it reminded me of, Alfred Ronald?" she asked. "A big piece of cheese!"

Someone invited Alfred Ronald to a party. On the invitation was the instruction to escort Virginia. He called her up. "Take someone else, Alfred Ronald," she said, over the telephone, "I've got a headache."

Alfred Ronald felt that he could be indifferent until the second coming of the Coqquignues and no one would care. Alfred Ronald felt that no one loved him. What did anyone care for a broken heart? He recited lines from Byron, from Kipling, from Tennyson and from Shakespeare to prove the point and then started working on his mathematics like all the fiends in hell.

He now wears a long black beard, has his Ph. D., and the reputation for brilliance and cynicism. (The two seem to go together in the undergraduate estimation). He tells his classes that mathematical reasoning cannot be applied to human conduct—especially to affairs of the heart. "Love is a great deal like a belly-ache," he says, "you feel so good when you're over it."

Or again, misquoting Bernard Shaw, he says, "Young men commonly fall into the error of imagining a difference exists between any two young ladies."

The girls in his classes speculate among themselves as to an unhappy love affair in his past. But he could correct them—it was merely a mistake in unknowns.

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## Ah, Sweet Mystery

BY PEGGY GEISENHOF

THE costumes the girls wore for the finale had class because they were background for the little Jew. Dorothy had never been background for anybody before, and she didn't know if she'd like it so good, just walking down a mess of stairs in an outfit that didn't leave any leg showing for the front row boys and flowers over her arm and all. But it felt sort of nice after you got used to it. The girls looked pretty good in those big skirts all different colors. There were even candles burning against a blue back drop, and the stairs were wide and curving and white. The girls all sat down and draped themselves on them when the little Jew started tuning up his fiddle. That was what the whole ritzy set-up was for—a little Jew and his fiddle. He was short and fat and bald, but he could swing out good enough to be in the big time. First it was radio and then the movies and now personal appearances. And it wasn't as if he played hot licks or jam stuff. He was real class.

The costumes had an awful lot to them, but then it was nice to be covered up for a change.

And there was something about this business of coming down stairs that reminded her of something. The first couple of performances Dorothy couldn't remember what it was. Tonight it came to her just as she was coming around the curve in the stairs trying to keep from stepping on Margie's skirt. Margie was always in front of her in line, and she walked too damn slow. Always putting on a good act and then overdoing it—that was Margie. Anyway the set-up reminded Dorothy of a movie she'd seen once. It was a long time ago, before she'd started out in the chorus at the Orpheum, and that was six years. She couldn't remember the story so good, but it was something about a war. A blonde had come down some long white stairs in the same kind of an outfit almost, only better. White lace or something over a hoop skirt. And she carried roses over her arm too, only they were the real McCoy. Funny how it was all coming back to her, Dorothy thought. You sure got to thinking about the damndest things, just standing there on those stairs trying to look like a saint. Dorothy

looked down at her dress. It wasn't white lace by a long shot; it was green rayon on account of her red hair. Why in hell did they always stick green on her? Of all the lousy colors. The roses she carried were paper. They looked O. K. from out front, the stage manager said. Dorothy didn't see how they could look O. K. any place, because, God, they were a mess. But still it had its points, coming down the stairs slow and easy and with all the trimmings. Anyway it was different and easier than shooting out of the wings kicking like mad.

The blonde in the movie had come down real slow too, with a sort of dreamy look on her puss, and there'd been a good looking young joe at the bottom of the stairs, Dorothy remembered—a soldier. That was the best part. The blonde's face had gone all soft and gooey, and the soldier boy had kissed her. Dorothy's face never went soft and gooey. The girls called her Dead-Pan-Carlyle. That was her last name—Carlyle. Or it had been ever since she'd got it out of a phone book six years ago. And there wasn't any soldier waiting at the bottom of the stairs. After the show there'd be Eddie waiting for her at the fire escape like he always did, ever since they got acquainted at the first rehearsal. Eddie was one of the Harvard boys—the tenor. Show business was an awful big laugh. Paper roses and the Harvard boys. Eddie had told her once when he got confidential like he always did over beer, that he never went past the eighth grade. But what the hell, he was big-hearted and he sang a good tenor even if his nose was too big and his hair too curly, and she was getting tired as the devil shoving him away all the time. But he was good for a spaghetti dinner at Angelo's after the show.

The little Jew was finally getting his fiddle tuned, and they were turning the lights down. This part always bored Dorothy. Violin music gave her the jitters, but she didn't know why exactly. She wondered how the rest of the girls were taking it. She could just see the corner of Margie's face. Margie could sure put on a good act; you'd think she was enjoying it. Dorothy bet she didn't know her eyebrow pencil was screwy. Dorothy wondered about her own eyebrow pencil. Faces were a heck of a bore. You worked yourself into a frazzle over them, and what did it get you? By the time you got to be twenty-five, they started to burn out. Well, what the hell, hers was still keeping her in the front row. No matter what they said, a face helped

some. And she had three more years. Dorothy looked down at the orchestra on the stage. Like always she wondered about the second sax. He sure was different than the rest of the boys. He looked sort of like Jimmy Stewart, young and tall and serious, with a little bit of hair always hanging in his eyes. Dorothy wanted to push it back, but then he never looked over any of the line girls; not even, she'd noticed, in the South Sea island get-up they'd used in the second number. Margie said he was saving his money to go to college. Margie was always shooting off—just as if he'd told her all about it himself.

The little Jew was sure in the groove. Funny how the audience was soaking it up. What was the name of that piece? Eddie'd told her last night. Oh, yeh—"Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life." The stage was all dark now with just a dim spot on the little Jew. It showed up his bald spot, but he could sure make that fiddle talk. That song didn't have much sense to it. Life wasn't so sweet, and what was the mystery? Dorothy looked at the dark lad that was second sax in the orchestra. She could just see his profile. He was sure soaking it up with the rest of them. Well, it was sort of peaceful and nice with all the lights down, and the house real quiet, and the little Jew making that fiddle sing like a bird. It sure would be funny as hell if it started to get under her skin at this late date, and when she'd never been able to listen to violin music without getting the squirms. Then all of a sudden just as she was sitting there thinking about it, Dorothy saw a picture of the blonde in the movie. Only it wasn't the blonde; it was herself. Her hair was that soft henna shade that she was always hoping it would come out, and her dress wasn't green rayon, but white lace. She could see herself real plain with white roses over her arm—red ones wouldn't go with henna—and she was sitting on the steps of the big white house, like the blonde had been, with the soldier at her feet. Only now the soldier was just the second sax with his hair in his eyes.

"Ah, 'tis love alone the world is singing—"

Eddie was crooning along with the violin. Dorothy saw her long white hand—it wasn't really, but the blonde's had been—reach up and sort of easy like brush back that dark hank of hair. And the second sax—only he was a soldier—took it and kissed it.

Dorothy woke up just as she felt the stage-smile she was wearing start to melt. The girls



got up off the stage because this was the end. Then they all stuck out their arms and smiled wider. The orchestra came in loud at the end, and the little Jew's violin rose above it, higher and higher and real sweet. Dorothy felt awfully funny—like her face was going to fold up and

go soft under her make-up. But she didn't care much; it felt swell. She turned away from the audience and looked at the orchestra. Just before her face got all out of control, she smiled real wide at the second sax. He didn't see her.

Eddie was waiting at the fire escape like always.

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## Strangers That We Are

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BY PHILIP SHERIDAN

SHE stood beside the table and wiggled as a puppy wanting attention would wiggle. He looked up from his book, and she gave him a little-girl smile. He was a bit cross because he had given up his lunch to cram for an examination.

She was so worried about the examination, and she wondered what "he" (the instructor) was going to ask. She wished that she were "smart" and "always studying." She bet that he got swell grades, and if she were as smart as he was, she wouldn't be worrying about the ex at all. There was a calculating glint in her eye that made the remark a question. But this made no impression on him.

She was now sliding down cosily beside him in a vacant chair. She put her feet up on his chair and talked. He was going to enter law school, and he told her how hard he was studying. She nodded and smiled at the proper places and as she bent to retrieve a paper, he was aware of a disturbing fragrance originating behind her left ear. She had lost all her notes, and she wondered—. Her smile was now like that of an angler when the strike is made. But he paid no attention to this.

She forgot to return his notes next day, and she was awfully sorry and they had been such a big help to her in the ex. And the notes were permanently lost. He said he didn't mind. They would meet in the hall, and she would give him a tight, chirpy little smile. He would go home and make faces at himself in the mirror. Her

smile now had something in it of a cow fondly contemplating a turnip. But he didn't think of it in that way.

The next year they took math together. The instructor returned the first papers with oral comment on the identical mistakes of two of them. He was embarrassed, and she was chagrined. She was feeling better the next day, and she let him work out two of the most difficult homework problems for her. Her smile was just a little bit forced and worried. But he didn't notice this.

She borrowed his student-body card the day before the Big Game. "You're sure you don't want to go?" she asked. She had a friend who was coming down from Berkeley. He spent the next afternoon by the radio, and when he ran into her in the hall by accident the next week, he got his card back. It was torn half-way across and wrinkled, but he was thinking of other things.

Sometimes she would let him walk over to the Co-op for coffee with her. "You ought to get away from your studies—don't you ever go out?" she would say. And he would get red and say that all that was out of his field. She was very beautiful he thought—but of course not very intelligent. Still she was young—so young and naive. Whole flocks of little birds burst into song in his breast when she spoke to him. And other times she would smile on meeting him in an absent, fleeting sort of way. But it never occurred to him to wonder about it.

One quarter she was on probation. Her mother wanted her to study. And he was the smartest

person she knew, and she wanted to know how he did it. She was properly impressed at the very proper advice he gave her, and she gasped a little when he explained how he budgeted his time.

In return she told him how she was going out only once a week from now on. She was going to the Fairmont this week, and the next week to Brookdale Lodge, and the week after that was the Junior Prom. She hadn't been asked to that yet. Then she showed her good intentions by sitting beside him in the library for a whole hour and a half with a book before her. Finally she remarked that the chairs were mighty hard, weren't they? It was time for her to go downtown, and her voice had a bored undertone. But he missed it entirely.

They graduated and began preparation for the Great Play. He went to law school, and she began preparatory studies for matrimony. They studied with equal diligence and met with different success. When he came home, she would flit by him in a dashing low-slung car with red leather cushions, and if she saw him, she would toot a euphonious horn. She had a disappointed look, but he thought it was something else.

Her parents announced her engagement in the papers soon after this, and he sent a manly little note of congratulation. He received an invitation to the wedding. He turned out for a long solitary walk, came home, drank two bottles of beer and went to bed.

He was part of the wedding decorations at the reception. He threw a handful of dignified rice and later a shoe at the departing taxi. She looked pensive and a little dubious as they drove away, but he didn't notice it.

Now it would be only natural to suppose that thereafter he rose and she fell, so that he had the opportunity of dragging her up from the gutter or of helping her to save her honor in some way or other. But it turned out to be just the opposite.

His father died, and he had to quit school. Her father died, and she and her husband moved up to Nob Hill. He kept books for a little place. She kept two maids instead of one. He lost his job and stood, not in the bread-line, but in the Municipal Soup Kitchen. She lost her wisp of a figure and stood to receive the British Ambassador when he visited the city.

One morning he was reading yesterday's newspaper in the park. Something made the sparrows

around his feet jump up and away. She looked down on him seated in much the manner that she had used to in school. She still had her little-girl smile, and she was very trig in her tri-cornered hat and tailored suit.

She said, "Hello."

He said, "Oh—hello."

And she said, "I'm so glad I saw you. How are you getting along?" She needn't have asked because she saw the frays on his ankle-cuffs.

He was numb like a silly, stunned rabbit, and he gasped vaguely. His chops were grizzled because he hadn't shaved.

She said, "I'm so worried. I think our chauffeur drinks and it's so hard to find a reliable man, I wonder if you—?"

But he was looking very intently at a pigeon sunning itself on the lawn. "No," he said, "I couldn't—"

She saw the bags at his trousers' knees, and he saw the way her foot bulged over the straps of her gaberdrine pumps. She said, "Well—" slowly. Then she said quite cheerfully, "I hope I run into you again sometime."

She went, and his eyes went to his newspaper but all the devils in hell were yelling in his heart. Her chauffeur helped her into the car, and they drove up Post Street. And she was crying a little, but then he couldn't have been expected to have noticed that.

## *A Wife's Prayer*

On the Tenth Anniversary of her Wedding

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

God, let it be forever just like this.  
We have shared moments, he and I together,  
When all the world was sweet with sudden bliss,  
Moments of beauty in the sheer spring weather  
When hearts ached, full to bursting with the thrill  
Of loveliness new-wakened in the world,  
But spring soon ages. Now our hearts are still,  
And buds, once sweet with promise, have un-  
curled  
And yielded freely all their fairest store.  
Where spring once sang is drowsy, silent peace.  
The strange, hot wonder that we felt before  
Has ceased with time as such things always cease,  
And now we linger, quieted, content  
To love each other, passion being spent.



## No Dividends

BY WILL RYAN

GORDON MATESON stopped the watch and pulled up in front of the cement grandstand. The early spring dusk had dropped over the field, and he had to hold the watch close to his face to read the figures: 9:58. He looked at the hands a second time to make sure that he had read them correctly. At last he shook his head and started walking down the track to keep his muscles from tying up.

Still too damned slow, he thought, savagely. Always too slow. A whole minute slower than Fred Ronald. Ten seconds slower than Keats and Miller. Slow for the amount of training he had put in.

Now he took air into his lungs in great quantities, and soon he was breathing normally. He walked over to the broadjump pit and pulled on his sweat clothes and headed across the infield for the club-house.

The night air was warm about him, and the sky was a great plain of blue-purple, sprinkled with myriads of pinpoints of light. Thousands of insects turned the air with their droning wings, and over by the river he could hear the frogs.

Gordon felt the night and the warmth of spring. He drew it into him, and it burned through his veins and spread like a fever. It was the fever to run. To run far and hard. To feel your feet pound against the track. To hear the rasp of spikes cutting into the cinders. To hear the bands and the cheers. He felt all these things surge through him, like the evening breeze through the tall trees on the campus.

He showered, and the cold water made his skin feel firm and tight. When he dried himself, he stood in front of the mirror in the locker room and looked at the man that stared out at him.

He saw the faint ripple of the muscles in his chest and stomach; the well-built, long, tapering legs. "I'm built like the rest of them," he thought. "Even better. And I train as much. And still I can't run as fast."

His eyes travelled to the top of the mirror, and he looked into a rather boyish face. He saw the smooth mold of the features, the wide-set, clear, brown eyes; the crew-cropped hair that was very black.

Then he met the eyes, and they seemed to say to him, "There's something holding you back. It isn't physical. It's inside you. It's mental. You've got to lick it or it will hold you back the rest of your life."

He heard someone coming down the hall, and he started to dry himself again. Tippy Hodgeson, the trainer, came into the room and smiled at him.

"Well, how did you do tonight?" he inquired. "You must have done a lot of running. You're late."

"Just a two mile. I'll be on my way in a minute."

Tippy scratched the bald spot on the back of his head.

"How fast?"

Gordon smiled. "9:58."

The trainer rubbed his hand over his chin.

"You'll get there," he prophesied. Then he laughed. "Just show plenty of interest and hard work. Goodnight."

Gordon nodded and pulled his sweater over his head. He wondered if Tippy was trying to be friendly or laughing at him. He had wondered that about everybody since he had been here. They all looked at him and laughed.

He heard the clock in the lounge strike six and he hurried over to the door. But first he stopped and read the lines he had read so many times since he had started coming to this club-house. They were there above him on a silver plaque:

Frederick Ronald—Two Mile—8:58  
University Record—American Record  
World's Record  
Class of '37

Gordon walked out into the night, but he had forgotten about spring and the track fever. He was thinking of the words on the plaque. "There are no dividends there for any runner," he thought. "It's like running into a stone wall when you read those words. There isn't much left to shoot at. Everything's Ronald around here. He had graduated last year, but they still worshiped him. His name was in front of the track record,

the university record, the American record, and the world's record. Ronald runs 8:58. He had read that headline a hundred times. And a hundred thousand times he had dreamed of being just such a star as Frederick Ronald. And tonight he had run 9:58."

Business was unusually slow at The Fountain that night, and Gordon helped Jane with the dishes between orders. He handed her three koke glasses, and she smiled up at him. If he had not been thinking about Frederick Ronald, he would have noticed her smile and pleasant face. He would have noticed the pink glow of her skin and hair that was blacker than his.

She saw that he was not looking at her, and she asked, seriously, "Did you run two miles to-night?" She realized that track was a serious business with this boy.

He looked at her now. "Yeah. A 9:58 two mile. Some speed, eh?"

She gave him a handful of spoons to take out front. When he returned, she asked, "When's your first meet?"

"We run against Chicago this Saturday."

"You'll do better then," she said confidently.

"I'll be lucky if I place," he said concisely. "I can't beat Miller or Keats, and if Chicago has anything, I'll probably run last."

Then he was smiling at her. "Say, I wish I had the confidence in me that you have."

She went on drying the glass she was holding, and without looking up she said, "I think that's what you need most."

Ten o'clock came, and they closed the store. Gordon walked across the campus to the little rooming house where Jane stayed. Since his first night at The Fountain, he had always walked with her. He had noticed that there were never any boy friends waiting for her. He guessed that her work and studies didn't allow her much time for boys.

Several times he had started to ask her for a date. Once when he was going to take her to a show. Another time he thought about taking her to a student dance. But their work had always interfered, and he had never taken her out yet. He realized that there was nothing between them. He had never touched her or tried to kiss her. Oh, there had been times when he wondered if her lips were as soft as they looked. But he had gone right on wondering. And now that the track season was here, he had nearly forgotten about asking her out. He had nearly forgotten

about everything, except Fred Ronald and the two mile.

They stopped in front of her house, and Gordon asked, "Did you know Fred Ronald?"

Jane looked at him with a puzzled expression.

"He was in one of my classes last year. He used to speak to me once in a while."

She paused for a moment. Then she said slowly, "But, Gordon, you're surely not worrying about Fred Ronald. He graduated last year."

"Ronald will never graduate," he said quietly. "His name and pictures are all over this place. You can't get rid of him."

"That's because he was a great runner," she pointed out.

"Is a great runner," he corrected. "He's still running in New York."

"He's something to look up to," she went on. He's something to work for."

"I think he's a mental hazard," Gordon said quickly. "You know, when I went out there and told them I wanted to run the two mile, they practically laughed in my face. They took me around and showed me the club-house and all the pictures of Fred Ronald and told me how many records he had broken. By the time they finished with me, I felt as if I couldn't run a lap."

"I don't think you're looking at it the right way," she said, and her tone was just a little sharp.

Gordon started to say something and then stopped. He saw that it would be no use to argue with this girl. She just didn't understand.

He said, "Goodnight, Jane. I'll see you in class tomorrow . . . ."

The Chicago meet came and passed into print. Miller won in 9:35, and Keats followed him to the tape. Gordon ran third.

After the opener, the season hit a fast pace, and before long it was June and there was talk of graduation on the campus.

It was two days before the Northwestern meet, and Gordon was walking home with Jane after they had closed The Fountain when he said, "I think I'll quit track."

She didn't say anything until they stopped in front of her house. Then she took hold of his arm.

"You were joking, weren't you, Gordon?"

He shook his head. "No. Why should I? I've run seven races for a total of four thirds and three fourths. And I'm still ten seconds slower than our fastest two miler."



She stood looking at him for some time before she opened her mouth. The lights from a passing car revealed her face for a second, and he saw that her eyes were blazing.

She said, "Gordon, you're not going to quit. You're not going to quit because I don't want you to. I've learned to like and respect you. I don't want our friendship to cease. I know you're too fine a man to be a quitter. You see, I—I—"

She faltered again and finally said, "Well, Mr. Mateson, if you're as slow on the track as you are at other times, I really don't see how you get around at all. Goodnight."

Gordon ran the fastest two mile of his life and placed second in the Northwestern meet. He clipped eight full seconds from his best time, but he was twelve yards behind Miller when the race ended.

He showered with the rest of the fellows that night, and Tippy was giving him a rub-down when Keats burst into the room and yelled, "Hot news! Coach Crawford just told me that Fred Ronald is coming here for the Jubilee Homecoming next Friday. He's going to run an unattached two mile in our dual meet with Purdue. How do you like that, Miller?"

Miller groaned and rubbed a towel over his head. "There goes my winning streak," he laughed.

Gordon looked at Tippy.

"Is he really going to run here?" he asked.

Tippy nodded his head. "Sure thing," he grunted. "It will give you a good chance to see how a world's champion two miler works. Of course, you'll only see the back of him, but if you watch closely, you might learn something."

Thursday night, Mr. Nebbel, the owner of The Fountain, said to Jane, "You and Gordon can go home at nine tonight. If we're going to beat those Purdue boys, Gordon's got to get some sleep."

When they left the store, Gordon said, "Let's walk over by Fraternity Row. They're all having a big time tonight."

A full moon had just topped the university tower, and the campus was all moonlight and shadows. The air was soft and balmy, and from somewhere across the laws the glee club was practicing.

They walked up past the Student Union, and it was easy to see that the Jubilee spirit had arrived. There were cars going in every direc-

tion, and the square was filled with strolling couples.

Along the River Drive they stopped to see the moonlight on the water. From up the river they could hear a guitar and the soft splash of a paddle.

Gordon looked at the shimmering silver on the water and then at Jane. He said, "I'm sure anxious to see Fred Ronald tomorrow."

Jane said, "Fred Ronald and moonlight. How romantic."

Gordon gave her a funny look.

"What did you say?"

"Never mind. Let's walk, Gordon."

There was an orchestra playing in Fraternity Row, and the houses were ablaze with lights. The street was lined with cars, and the moonlight danced along the chromium trimmings.

Boys with white ties and girls with backless formals and orchids were walking across the lawns, and others were sitting and smoking on the porch steps. The crooner with the orchestra was singing, ". . . this is my night to dream; don't mind how hold I seem . . ."

Now and then a white head could be seen, and the hoarse laugh of an old grad would ring out on the night air.

"Even the old boys are having their fun tonight," Jane said.

Gordon nodded. "The idle rich. They don't have to worry about much, do they?"

Jane laughed. "Only about money. They must worry a great deal about how they're going to spend it."

She was still laughing when her foot struck the broken piece of sidewalk, and Gordon grabbed her hand to keep her from falling.

He felt the soft coolness of her hand, and he held on to it as they crossed the street and headed for her house. As he walked, he felt something creep up through his body and make his heart race, and he didn't quite know that this was the awakening of desire. For the first time he noticed Jane's laughter, the sound of her voice, the whiteness of her teeth, and most of all, the feel of her flesh.

When they reached her house he asked, "Can't we sit on the steps for awhile?"

He noticed that she seemed pleased and surprised. He continued to hold her hand, and he wanted to talk about a great many things, but his throat felt hot and dry and finally he said, "Do you like working your way through?"

"Anything for an education."

"Sure. Anything for an education and running."

He noticed the moonlight on her hair, and he found it hard to keep his eyes from her face. The feeling that he had had a few minutes ago came over him again and he stood up and said, "Jane, I know I shouldn't ask you this, but—but may I kiss you goodnight?"

She answered him with her lips hard against his, and the warm softness of her body sent something running through his blood that even track fever could not produce.

He went home and went to bed, but it was a long time after he put his head on his pillow before he could get to sleep . . . . .

Gordon arrived at the track just after the first call for the mile. As he cut across the green infield, he felt the warm June sun on his back, and the pleasant odor of fresh cut grass came to his nose. There was no wind, and it was a perfect day for the Homecoming meet.

The packed grandstands were a maze of color, and he wondered where Jane was sitting. The sun reflected from the instruments in the band section, and the muffled undertone of conversation carried across the field.

There were officials with black coats and white pants in front of the judges' stand, and pole vaulters and burly weight men, in bright sweat clothes, were warming up.

He walked into the club-house, and Coach Crawford and Miller and Keats were talking to a man in a brown plaid suit.

The coach called him over and said, "Gordon, this is Fred Ronald. He's going to show you how to run the two mile this afternoon. Gordon Mateson, Fred."

Gordon found himself shaking hands with a young man that was about his own height and build, and looking into a smiling face that was pleasant, if not handsome.

"Glad to know you, Mateson," he said, and Gordon liked his quiet voice. And when they went in to dress, he liked the spring in his stride as he watched him walk into the dressing room.

Gordon waited for the others to dress and take their rub-downs before he started to take off his clothes. As he slipped into his track suit, his mind came back to Fred Ronald. He looked like an ordinary person, he thought. He didn't seem to be superhuman. Then he thought about facing him on the track within the next few minutes,

and his heart began to beat fast and he felt that excitement that always came over him before a race.

By the time he was ready for his rub-down, the half-milers came in, and Tippy was busy again. Gordon stretched out on the rub-down table by the door and called over and told Tippy he would wait for him there.

The warm sunshine came through the door, and Gordon kept thinking about Fred Ronald. He wondered what kind of sensation it would be to pass him in the home stretch. He smiled to himself. What a dream!

Soft air and the smell of wintergreen and alcohol made him drowsy, and he forgot about the world's champion two miler for a while. He heard the droning of flies in the room and the crack of the pistol outside and the roar of the crowd that told of each event as it was run off. Runners came in and went out, and their spikes made a grating sound on the cement. The crowd quieted down, and from somewhere far off, he heard a train whistle.

Then a manager came in and said, "Purdue's out in front by five points. It's too bad that Fred Ronald's two mile won't count anything for us."

Gordon rolled over on his stomach, and when he thought about Fred Ronald, there was a hollow feeling in it. The crowd was roaring again, and he kept thinking about passing Ronald in the home stretch and the crowd rushing out to carry him around the field.

At last Tippy came over and put his soothing hands on his legs. The rub-down felt cool and he completely relaxed.

"Tippy," he said, "I've been thinking. If I'd run right in back of Ronald, I could learn a lot from watching his style, couldn't I?"

Tippy smiled. "You could learn a lot," he said, "but it would be a hard job. Ronald isn't going to run very slow, and there are going to be a lot of boys out there that will want to watch him."

Gordon nodded his head. The soothing slap of Tippy's hands brought the drowsiness on again. He heard the coach's voice coming from the lounge and he was saying, "I think he's got the stuff, and this race will tell me how right I am."

Gordon wondered whom he was talking about. Miller came through the door and called, "Hurry up, Mateson. The first call just went out."



He stepped out on the track, and the drowsiness dropped from him. He felt hard and cold inside, but his legs were light and loose. He jogged up and down the back stretch, and almost before he knew it, he was shaking hands at the starting line and listening to the starter's instructions, and then the gun sounded.

When they came out of the first turn, he found himself running in fifth place. Ronald was out in front and Miller and Keats were right behind him. A Purdue man was in fourth position.

They came back around that turn four times, and Gordon noticed that the Purdue man was beginning to roll. He pushed his legs on the stretch and pulled up in back of Keats. From a long way off, he heard the voice of the crowd. When they passed the stands, a man held up a card with the number Six printed on it.

He drew air into his lungs, and his legs still felt light and loose. He passed Keats on the straight-away, and then someone fired a pistol, and they were coming around that first turn for the last time. And suddenly Gordon was afraid; afraid that he wouldn't get to see Ronald run. Since prep school he had dreamed about running against Fred Ronald. Now he was getting his chance, the only one he would probably ever get, and he was going to fail it unless he hurried.

He sensed that they were on the back stretch now, and he got up on his toes and sprinted. Miller heard him coming and gave him a startled look, and then dropped back.

His mouth and throat felt as if they were jammed with hot cotton. His legs no longer felt light, but he kept driving them out in front. Now he was running up a ladder, and his insides were on fire, but he kept on coming. A great wave of sound broke over him, and the roar from the stands was all around him. Objects swept past him, and he kept watching Ronald's legs and getting so close he could see the hair on them.

Then it was all over.

Ronald came over to him, and the tape was in his hand, and he patted him on the back and said, "Great race, fellow."

Gordon felt someone take his arms and help hold him up. The crowd was milling around him, and above the pounding in his ears, he heard bits of "—a new champion in the making—" and "—the kid's a sensation—"

And all at once he knew why the light feeling was no longer in his legs. It had gone up to his heart.

## The Flowering Peach

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

This is the rich fulfillment of a dream.

The earth has slumbered long, but through her sleep

She has held hope of beauty. When no gleam

Could penetrate the dark peace lying deep

Upon her heavy eyes, yet in her heart

Has been a vision of just such a thing,

Of loveliness beyond the ken of art—

A picture from the magic brush of Spring.

This is the waking she has foreseen

Through somber months—this slim tree standing high

On sloping meadows cool and thickly green,

And clouds of rose bloom blown against the sky.

## To a Statue of Washington

BY JEAN HOLLOWAY

Valiant he rides here

Etched against the gray

Of winter skies. One great hand lifted

As if, in ringing tones,

He meant to say,

"This is my own—"

Now the snow has drifted in a thin blanket

About his stalwart shoulder;

Rain and storm have buffeted

And left a trace

Of something sad, yet proud

And growing older.

Men of this era look into that face

To dream a bit—

So stands his country,

Flag still proudly furled,

Battered, unbeaten, rising still

To fling its challenge forth

To a tired world.

## Chuck Miller, Stunt Man

By WILLARD DALE BRADLEY

BESIDES being the youngest flyer in the 94th Aero Squadron, Chuck Miller was generally considered the best. He could get more out of a stubby little combat ship than anyone else; and when it came to practice dog-fights, Chuck was tops. There were those in the squadron who claimed that if Chuck had been in the World War, he would have whipped the German air force single-handed. This, of course, was an exaggeration that Chuck recognized as another form of ragging, but it pleased his ego no end.

Chuck was a long-legged, skinny individual with flaming red hair and blue eyes. His face was freckled and homely and practically divided into two halves by a most generous mouth. His ears bore a marked resemblance to wings and were the source of much pleasure to his fellow pilots. But, despite the continual ragging and crude jokes that he suffered, Chuck remained good-natured, self-satisfied, and very well liked by all the other flyers.

Chuck's greatest fault, in the opinion of his friends, was his passion for old planes. He spent most of his spare time tinkering with an old American Eagle that he had salvaged, and, although it lacked a good deal of fabric and was badly in need of a majoring, he would defend with heat any disparaging remark about its qualities. Chuck insisted that a plane had no personality until it had been cracked up at least once.

"When you crawl into a new job, you know just about what to expect," he would say. "Now take those new Boeings we got. If you want to dive, just dive and forget about the wings; you know they won't come off. You know you can't break 'em up. But it's different with that old Eagle of mine. There's a ship that's almost human; it will stand only so much rough treatment before it begins to kick back. You have to know how to handle it or it might leave you sitting out on a cloud."

Jeers and derisive laughter usually followed Chuck's outbursts in defense of his pet, but every one knew that Chuck was right. There was a vast difference between the Boeings and the Eagle, and it did take a lot of nerve to fly the old crate.

Chuck's reign as crack pilot in the 94th had gone unchallenged so long that his fellow pilots feared he would become unbearably conceited, and so it was with pleasure that they welcomed into their midst a transfer from Pensacola who had a reputation for being one of the best flyers in the service.

Soon after Al Gordon came into the squadron, Chuck's prestige began to wane. Gordon's feats of piloting and his uncanny accuracy in machine gunning became the main topics of conversation at the field. It was Gordon this and Gordon that. To hear the fellows tell it, Al Gordon could do just about anything.

Chuck, at first, believed that the men were just spreading it on thick for his benefit, but if he had had any false impressions about Al Gordon's ability, they were dissipated in his first clash with Gordon's flying skill.

The transfer from Pensacola was cold-blooded in his flying. He apparently considered it a serious business. In tight formation stunting he was steady as a rock; and when it came to gunnery, it seemed that he could not miss. He would come down out of the sky like a thunderbolt, guns blazing, streams of smoking tracers boring into the targets; then he would send his shrieking ship zooming back up into the blue sky, calmly awaiting his turn to dive at the targets and riddle them with lead.

It was an unpleasant awakening for Chuck. On every hand it was Al Gordon who got the honor and the glory, and deservedly. Gordon was the best flyer Chuck had ever seen, but he could not believe that Gordon was unbeatable. True, Gordon had taken high place in gunnery practice, and had more than proved his excellence in routine flying, but Chuck told himself stubbornly that he would prove, somehow, that Al Gordon was not another Chuck Miller.

The solution to Chuck's problem came one evening after mess when he went to the hangar to check over his ship in preparation for the following morning's formation drill. Charley, the grease monkey, was there tuning up one of the new jobs, and when Chuck came in, Charley



left his work and limped over to where Chuck stood gazing critically at his plane.

"Can I help you, Chuck?" he asked, hopefully, peering at the flyer with wide, curious eyes. Charley had been a flyer too, but a crack-up had left him with a limp and, it was said, an affected mind. They had kept Charley in the service and made a grease monkey out of him, since taking him away from planes altogether would have broken his heart.

Charley had always liked Chuck better than anyone else. Perhaps it was hero worship; but then, Chuck never treated Charley as though he were not a flyer. Sometimes Chuck would solicit Charley's opinion on matters pertaining to planes and flying, and this always left the grease monkey radiantly happy.

"Hi, Charley," said Chuck quietly. "Just thought I'd drop in and go over the old tub. Maybe you can help. We'll see."

Charley dogged Chuck's footsteps around the plane, admiring the thoroughness with which the pilot checked every inch of his plane.

"I guess the tub's okay," said Chuck finally. "I don't want it to buckle up on me tomorrow."

"You're figuring on some pretty tight flying, eh, Chuck?" Charley looked at him quizzically, a sly glint coming into his eyes.

"Right. I aim to put this baby through her paces, and when I'm finished, you can write home to mamma and tell her that you saw someone fly an airplane."

"I don't think you like this guy Gordon," said Charley abruptly. "Do you, Chuck?"

Chuck stopped tinkering with the motor and pointed an oily finger at Charley.

"Now listen, Charley Boy," he said, "don't you start jumping to conclusions just because a few of the nit-wits around here have been blowing off. Of course I like Gordon."

"I don't believe it," said Charley emphatically. "That Gordon's pretty hot. He can make a plane do everything but the Big Apple, and he's been in your hair plenty lately."

"Well, maybe he has done some better flying," conceded Chuck grudgingly, "but that doesn't mean that I don't like him. He's a swell fellow. All I say is, he hasn't got more guts than I have. I aim to prove it, too."

"How?"

"Well, I don't know, exactly."

"I'll tell you how," said Charley. "Take him up in your Eagle and see if you can stunt him down."

"You've got it!" yelled Chuck. "Charley, you son-of-a-gun, you deserve a medal for that idea. But listen, don't mention to anyone that I intend using the Eagle. We'll just let the word leak out that I'm willing to match nerves with Gordon in a stunting match. If Gordon accepts the challenge, we'll wheel in the Eagle on him, and it will be too late for him to back out. Boy, I'll make his hair curl!" Chuck dashed gleefully about, wiping the grease off his big, freckled hands.

"Do you want me to leak the word out?" asked Charley.

"Sure. When you're through here, go over to the Recreation Hall and gab with the fellows. I'll drop around tomorrow night and see what the results are."

"Well, uh, say, Chuck," stammered Charley, "those fellows will be making bets on the match."

"Let 'em go to it, Charley Boy. Let 'em bet all they want."

"Well, what I was thinking is . . . well, shucks, we've been friends for a long time."

"I know," said Chuck slowly. "You want to lay a wad on Gordon. Is that right?"

"That's right. You wouldn't be sore, would you?"

"Of course not. I just don't like to see you throwing your money away. But go ahead, you should lose it. And get over to the Rec as soon as possible, will you, Charley?"

"You bet!" said the grease monkey. After the flyer had gone, Charley grinned to himself. "I didn't like to say it, but boy, will he fly now!" he chuckled.

On the following evening, Chuck went to the Recreation Hall and settled down before the fireplace with a book. The usual card games were in progress, and the billiard tables were busy, while scattered about in easy chairs, singly and in groups, airmen chatted and read.

As Chuck sat down with his book, he noticed several pairs of eyes upon him, but beyond nodding a greeting, he paid them no heed. He knew that Charley had done his work well.

Chuck had read less than a chapter when someone sat down beside him. Chuck glanced up, then continued to read. It was Al Gordon.

"I hear that you don't think much about my flying, Miller," began Gordon.

Chuck carefully marked his place in the book before answering.

"I didn't say I didn't like your flying. As a matter of fact, I do like it. You're really good, but I still say you haven't proved your guts."

Their eyes met. There was no emotion in Al Gordon's gaze.

"How do you mean, prove?" he asked quietly.

Chuck glanced around at the interested listeners who had gathered about them, then turned back to Gordon.

"Well, you see, it's this way. When a new fellow comes into the 94th, he is expected to show the rest of us that he has what we call intestinal fortitude. Ordinarily that is done during regular practice, but somehow, the fellows have apparently mistaken your good flying for proof of your nerve."

"And you call them liars," sighed Gordon dolefully. "All that's getting you, Miller, is that you can't stand being bested in anything you undertake. I admire your ability, but not your sportsmanship."

"It isn't my sportsmanship," snapped Chuck with resentment. "It's their sportsmanship. These yaps you see standing around you," and Chuck swept his hand out toward the circle of grinning flyers, "they are duds. Take it from me, they are a pack of bone-headed half-wits that the Government collected from God only knows where. It's their idea that you are a better flyer than I am, not mine."

"I'm afraid I'll have to string along with the half-wits," Gordon grinned. "I was rather interested when I heard that you wanted to match nerves with me. Did you have something special cooked up?"

"No, nothing special. I merely stated that I could take you up and stunt you down, that is, until you took over the controls or hung your head over the side."

Laughter followed Chuck's solemn statement. The airmen had heard this challenge many times before. They knew that the red-headed flyer's pet Eagle was entering the play, but without the knowledge of Al Gordon.

"When did you want to stunt me down?" Gordon asked.

"How about tomorrow morning after inspection? Meet me behind hangar number seven. My ship will be ready."

"I'll be there," promised Gordon.

They shook hands, and Chuck, smothering a happy grin, left the gathering amid cat-calls and cheers.

Chuck was waiting for Al Gordon behind the hangar as he had said. The dilapidated old American Eagle stood against her chocks, idling asthmatically. Most of the 94th was there too, eagerly awaiting the outcome of Chuck's first accepted challenge.

Al Gordon rounded the corner of the hangar and stopped cold in his tracks, staring at the ancient relic as though he were seeing an apparition.

"Not that thing!" he shouted. "I thought you said an airplane."

"And just what is wrong with this?" Chuck wanted to know, beaming fondly upon his treasure.

"Wrong with it! You idiot, that thing won't even fly, at least, not with me!"

"Then you admit . . . ."

"Not a thing! You're crazy, but if you want to fly that wreck, all right, I'll go. We'll see now how much guts you've got." With that Gordon climbed into the front cock-pit of the Eagle and snapped on his belt.

As though expecting Gordon to change his mind and jump out again, and not wishing to give him time, Chuck hopped in, jammed the motor open, jumped the blocks, and went pounding out across the field, taking off cross-wind.

The ancient American Eagle leveled off at five thousand feet and turned its tail to the rising sun, guy wires humming, loose edges of faded fabric fluttering in the wind. The O-X-5 clattered noisily.

Chuck's wide-mouthed boyish face was smeared with a grin of satisfaction. At last he had Al Gordon just where he wanted him. This was his chance to get even for all the jeers and ridicule that Gordon had caused him to suffer.

Chuck tugged at the stick. The Eagle responded sluggishly, came around in a creaking forty-five.

Yes, it was going to be fun. Gordon was one of those matter-of-fact flyers; a robot without human emotions when it came to putting a ship through predetermined maneuvers. But just wait until the Eagle started through her giddy performances with her wings bending like spatulas while she shivered as though she had the chills. Al Gordon would squawk before it was over. He would have his head hanging over the side, begging for mercy. Well, he was going to see some stunting now, the kind of stunting that makes a fellow's hair stand on end.



Chuck's blue eyes were bright with anticipation. He glanced back at the tail assembly, raised the stabilizer one degree, opened the radiator shutter, and settled back in his seat.

The nose of the Eagle dipped below the horizon and the O-X-5 burst into a roar. Chuck pulled the stick back into his lap. The plane shuddered, trembled in every strut, then zoomed upward. Up, up, up it went! The engine labored, was dying slowly. For a moment the Eagle hung on its prop, then fell off to the right in a wing-over and went shrieking earthward.

The headlong dive ended abruptly. With screaming wires threatening to break loose, the plane leveled and pounded into a roll. The earth reeled crazily overhead, jerked back, and then fell away again as the Eagle swooped over in a loop that had the wings curling up in a terrifying manner.

Up in front the helmeted head remained motionless above the coaming. Chuck Miller swore into the whistling wind. His own face was slightly gray. That last loop had almost torn the wings off. The Eagle creaked at every joint. It couldn't stand much more. If a single wire snapped, the old crate would tear itself to pieces.

Chuck gritted his teeth. Well, what the hell! What if he did rip a wing off? Al Gordon had called him crazy, said he was an idiot. Crazy, was he? Then Al Gordon would get the craziest ride of his life!

Chuck jammed the stick forward viciously. Black smoke belched from the short stacks as the engine roared wide open. Down they went, then up and over and finished in a roll. An Immelmann! The wings vibrated. Pieces of fabric ripped away and went fluttering toward the earth. Great slices of it were rolling back, exposing the frame-work of the wings. Like a madman, Chuck wheeled the Eagle over in a vertical and sent it down in a power spiral that made the earth spin like a top. The grin was gone from his face now. It was set, and white. Fear gnawed at his heart. But Al Gordon would squawk! By God, he'd have to squawk!

The Eagle flattened out in a sickening spin. Chuck closed his eyes and prayed, but the plane came out of it, slowly, then went screaming off into a side-slip. Once more the earth dropped away. The flashing prop was straight overhead now, biting into the icy morning air with a hungry hiss. Smoke and fumes whipped back in the slipstream, stinging the eyes, choking both

men. The motor was fading fast. It was losing its power, running jerkily. The tired old plane shuddered like a spasm-wracked body, poised for a breathless moment while the men hung on their belts, then whip-stalled. As it careened earthward, Chuck felt the controls jerk, then waggle.

Ha! Al Gordon had squawked! Chuck's colorless lips drew back in a grim smile. He released the controls and slumped in his seat, pleased with himself, ready to enjoy his hard-earned victory. Let Al Gordon have the ship. Let him land as soon as he wished, since it was he who would face the jeers of the flyers below who watched this duel of nerves. Anyway, Gordon knew now what real stunting was.

But the Eagle didn't straighten out. It plunged downward in a screaming bank and gradually tipped over into a slip that brought the landing field rushing upward with terrific speed. The field began to revolve, slowly at first; then it became a blur as the plane went into a flat spin. Down, down in a dizzy whirl it went. One more spin and it could never be dragged out.

Suddenly the Eagle staggered drunkenly, broke out of the spin and plunged crab-wise into a steep glide, striking the earth almost immediately. The landing gear was wiped away with the first jolt. The plane bounded into the air, came down on a wing, then went on over, digging the prop into the ground. The second wing crumpled like paper, and the Eagle flopped on its back and skidded to a grinding stop.

For a moment there was no sign of life in the tangle of wreckage. Far across the field two trucks of men were racing toward the scene. As the breeze lifted the dust cloud from over the demolished Eagle, Chuck Miller crawled out of the wreckage to face a furious, but apparently unfrightened, Al Gordon.

"Scared, huh?" croaked Chuck.

"You rattle-headed fool!" blazed Gordon. "Those other stunts were bad enough, but I did think you had better sense than to put an old crate like that into a flat spin!"

Chuck stopped mopping the blood from his battered nose.

"Me?" he gasped, turning even whiter than before. "A flat spin?" He reached out unsteadily and grasped a piece of twisted fuselage for support. There didn't seem to be enough strength in his long legs to hold him up. Suddenly his red head disappeared from view behind a bit of wreckage. A moment later it bobbed up again,

and Chuck blinked owlishly at the sneering Gordon.

"I never put it into a flat spin," he said huskily. "I dropped the controls right after that stall. I thought you wagged 'em, but I guess it was only a wire breaking. Ye Gods!"

The sneer suddenly fled from Gordon's face, leaving it white as he stared at the drooping Chuck. He sagged limply against the Eagle's twisted body. His lips moved. He was trying to speak, but instead he was making some very queer noises.

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## On Cynics

By RUSSELL McGAUGHNA

I SPEAK in defense of cynics. Not the hypocrites one so often meets, but the honest cynic—the man who has found himself in a shattered, materialistic world and is determined to eat his pot of honey on the grave. This man is usually introspective with himself and tries to be honest with others. He is not a reformer, but still he is aware of the tragedies of life. The main tragedy, he usually finds, is not the ignorance, stupidity or smallness of man, but man's inhumanity to man. History has shown him that the prophets and reformers are usually crucified for their pains and, furthermore, that the world does not want reforming. But everything passes eventually.

I have found that most cynics have become philosophical stoics. They get what pleasure they can from life by rejecting its illusions and accepting its ironies. Far from being bitter, the cynic more often than not is a kind person because of the very attitude he has, but he refuses to allow people to take advantage of him; and thus he is a cynic.

Jonathan Swift, the greatest doubter in the English language, was also one of the greatest cynics. Bad, the fervent ones called him; yet one of the greatest works of literature came from the pen of this man who was a ruthless cynic. Swift committed the unpardonable sin of disbelieving in human perfectibility, and of expressing that disbelief in terms so memorable that timid souls were shocked, labeled him cynic, and did their best to forget. Anatole France is another notable

example of the cynic who told the world about it. There is an echo of Swift in France, especially in that merciless last chapter of "Penguin Island," where France's vision of the future is not a very inspiring point in that vicious circle known as the story of mankind. Those two men are probably among the most emancipated intelligences the world has produced. Their sound reason and sanity stand out distinctly in a world of hopeless, muddling confusion and petty vanities. Each had a keen sense of humor and was endowed with warm humanity. Each was a kind and generous person—perhaps, too much so.

The story goes on and on. While the world condemns the cynic and leaves no place for him in Heaven, he remains a potent influence to mock our inhumanity. But for the cynic, who would be the first to doubt the little houses of cards we build up? Whom would we have to gently smile and walk away? One has only to dip at haphazard into the life of most cynics to realize that the picture of them as malevolent hypochondriacs rests on nothing more substantial than the common superstition that a cynic must be abnormal and miserable. His capacity for seeing himself in perspective does not even absolve him. But nothing could be further from the truth than the idea that a disillusioned view of life is the mark of disappointment and personal unhappiness. There lives more joy in honest cynicism than in half the creeds for which hollow-eyed and gloomy fanatics die or struggle on behalf of progress.



## Autumn Recessional

By KATHERINE JEAN SANFORD

The good Earth's waning with the harvest moon,  
That imperceptibly forsakes the sky;  
She yielded timely up her annual boon,  
And now begs surcease with a cosmic sigh.  
Let us depart. Her matrix bounteous proved  
At parturition, and 'tis fit she sleep  
At length beneath her ermine cloak unmoved,  
While firmaments an astral vigil keep.

Nostalgic too for squally nights and dreams,  
I seek the peace that fields aslumber know;  
My veins, wine-tired, would rest with frozen  
streams;  
My mind fulfil the quietude of snow.  
Deep in the mould I'll wrap me to keep warm,  
And rise with spring, rejuvenate of storm.

## Prayer of a Spanish Mother

By ELIZABETH SHOW

Madre Maria, now I know your grief  
And kneel more humbly at your holy feet  
Than ever in the days when my belief  
Was sure and easy, when I had the sweet  
Of soft, rough kisses from a hearty son.  
Slaughtered! My Pedro—young and laughing-  
eyed!

The bitterness is futile; it is done,  
And surely there is reason why he died.

Oh, you whose son was crucified for man,  
Teach me that this is right, that Pedro's life  
Was given not for nothing. If you can,  
Teach me the meaning of this brutal strife  
That I may have not hatred for the God  
Who led my son along the path yours trod.

## A Princess Passes

By RALPHA WRIGHT

I'M NOT sure that I can describe George accurately. The picture I have of him in my mind is just a little difficult to put into words because I actually saw him only two or three times, and his appearance on those occasions was so sudden and startling that I never could remember afterwards if he was partly bald or entirely so, or if he had dimples, or none at all. That he wore spectacles I am quite sure, and he was quite round, with at least two chins.

But of George's personality I know more. He was very jolly and often made me laugh when I should have been crying. We had many a good laugh together over something the King and Queen had done, and George was especially clever in mimicking the Grand Duchess. I'll explain more about the Royal Family later, for George and I were always discussing them. However, George wasn't always jolly. He could be

quite serious, especially when I asked him to make an important decision for me. He was very acute and could point things out so clearly for me that I always wondered afterwards why I had had any doubts in the first place. At times George would become quite rhetorical over some major issue, and his little body would fairly shake with emotion. But if George became excited, it was justly so. You see, George was always right.

My first meeting with George occurred about twelve years ago, after I had had some especial trouble with the King over matters of State. I had crawled under the willow tree, where I always went when I felt particularly upset. There, under the willow, I decided that the great trouble with the Royal Family was that there was far too much partiality displayed, and that if the Royal Family had to be divided, it should be divided evenly so that the Royal Princess (being

myself) would have some political support. I was thoroughly indignant over the unjust opposition of the King, the Grandfather King, the Grand Duchess, and the Prince. The Queen, it was true, seldom openly criticised me (the Princess), but neither did she stand in my defense; therefore the Queen did not count.

And so I decided that I should have a very intelligent and influential consultant when it came to differences of opinion on matters of State. I closed my eyes tight, and the tears that were in them were squeezed out on my cheeks, and when I opened them again, I saw George for the first time. My eyes were a little blurry from tears, and I saw dots from squeezing them so hard, but for an instant there was George, sitting right in front of me under the willow, and his spectacles were on the very tip of his round nose, and his twinkling eyes were watching me from over the rims.

Although he had vanished right before my eyes, I felt that he was still there. "Hello," I said, and then there was such a long silence that I grew very much afraid that he had really gone. But after a while he said, "Hello," exactly as I had said it. Then I was very much at loss as to what to say next. I could have asked him who he was, but I already knew that: he was my adviser, my supporter in affairs of State. So instead of saying "Who are you?"—I said "Who am I?" And I was very much satisfied when he promptly replied, "You're her Royal Highness, the Princess."

Since he had so politely recognized my royal supremacy, I decided that, as a matter of courtesy, I would tell him who he was. "Your name is George," I said after a moment's deep thought, "and you are my Knight."

There was a very long silence before George declared, "Excuse me Princess, but I don't think I care to be a Knight."

"And why not, may I ask?" I demanded very indignantly.

"Well," said George quite solemnly, "I think I would rather be just George—if you don't mind, of course."

"Hm," I pondered, "you really should be something. A Princess can't carry on affairs of State with just a 'George.' In fact, a Princess shouldn't even talk with just a 'George.' No, you will have to be a Lord or a Duke or something."

"Then," said George—quite meekly, I thought—"I'll be prime minister."

I pretended to give this decision very careful and serious consideration, and finally I said, "Very well, George, you may be my Prime Minister."

I was about to acquaint my new counselor with the affairs of State when the King whistled for me from the Palace.

"I am being summoned," I informed George gravely, "for a very important conference. I will inform you as to the outcome here, in my special office, tomorrow."

"Very well, your Highness," said George, and although I could not see him, I am sure his round form bobbed several times in solemn homage.

After these first formalities of installation, George and I met regularly every day under the willow tree, and I discussed with him the grave conditions at the Palace. We made one very important change at the second meeting. George felt that there was some discrepancy in the title of "Grandfather King," for he made the astonishing statement that Grandfather King should, by all rights, be entitled to the throne. But of course this state of affairs was impossible, and so we agreed that Grandfather should henceforth be called the "Grand Duke" and that his powers would be exactly the same as those of the Grand Duchess, the King's sister. George, on this same occasion, also outlined to me the exact limitations of the rights of a Princess. The Prince, he told me, would inherit the throne, and I, no doubt, would be married to a Prince in some distant Kingdom. I contemplated this future with grave dignity, and I told George my ideas concerning love and marriage. I explained that I believed men were interested in obtaining only beautiful wives, and that unless I were convinced that the man who wooed me wanted me for my "inner self," I would not give my consent. When the Prince came, I declared, I would greet him by making the ugliest face possible. I should stick out my tongue and push up the tip of my nose with my finger, and if he still wanted me, then I would be convinced that it was not for my beauty. George agreed that this would be a fine test.

Then came the day when I was deeply humiliated. I had been sitting with George in our special office, and we had entered upon the gravest of discussions when suddenly the Grand Duchess entered with a great lack of dignity. Her face was very red, and she breathed hard. "So



here you are!" she fairly shouted, "I've been looking all over for you—and get off that damp earth!" I was deeply humiliated, for there was the Prime Minister looking on, and I knew very well that a Princess was far above a Duchess—even a Grand Duchess, but I only mustered what dignity I could with the Duchess pinching my ear, and left the office quite unceremoniously.

The Duchess took me to the Palace, which suddenly looked very much like a house, and we found the balance of the Royal Family at the dinner table. I was thrust into my accustomed chair, and the Duchess sat—quite fussed—at my side. But the Queen smiled at me, and then I felt the tears sting my eyes. The Prince, and heir to the throne, lowered his soup spoon and grinned quite evilly. The Grand Duke did not even raise his head. The King, master of the Palace and ruler of all the land, frowned with displeasure,

and sucked his soup. Now the tears were rolling into my plate. Suddenly I was dashing from the room—in a manner not becoming to a Princess—and I found myself in my special office. I squeezed my eyes quite tight and opened them. There sat George, his spectacles on the tip of his round nose, and his eyes gleaming at me from over the rims. But he vanished almost immediately, and as much as I squeezed my eyes, I couldn't bring him back again. Then I looked out between the branches of the willow, and I saw the King coming towards me with a very rapid and determined stride. There was something very un-king-like in his expression, and suddenly I didn't feel like a Princess at all. "Oh George," I cried out, "please help me now!" But, alas, George could not come to the aid of one who was no longer a Princess.

That was twelve years ago—I have never seen George again.

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## *Last Port*

BY JEAN HOLLOWAY

Old ships dip weary sails against the sky,  
A slow sea rocks them gently on her breast;  
Here in tranquility their brave dreams lie,  
Here, where, like tired birds, they droop and rest.  
And I, who watch, see harbor lights swing low  
To gather all the welcome vagrants in,  
Catch fragrance of strange cities that I know  
Blazed once with all the glory men could win.  
They huddle on the waters, spent with years,  
Gaunt, swaying brigs with old seafaring names,  
As if they knew nor cared, bereft of tears  
That they would go as quiet as they came.

And I, who watch their tattered sails wind-blown,  
Dream the wild adventure they have known!

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## *Beauty of Words*

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

Beauty of words makes heart-fire deep in me,  
And only this can quench the lambent flame  
For one brief moment of tranquility:  
To waive into oblivion the name  
Of everything that burns me. Only soon  
I always find new fuel for the blaze,  
For words more eloquent than those lie strewn  
Like fagots all along the winding ways,  
And I must gather them and throw them on  
To stir the sleeping embers into burning.  
But one fresh stick, and precious peace is gone,  
Turned to a leaping bonfire of great yearning  
For all the words that, slipping from the tongue,  
Have thrilled the ears of man since time was  
young.

## *Garden*

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

Here in the garden where we two have come  
To pause a brief, sweet, transient hour or so  
We breathe the shady fragrance of wild plum  
Cooling the long warm hush. Silk poppies blow  
A splash of red surprise against the wall,  
Too white around the bloom that lies within.  
Here we have learned of love. Behind it all  
The level land where we have lately been  
Lies ugly in the sun, and out ahead  
The way obscures itself among the trees.  
Go? Oh, beloved, let us stay instead,  
For, though there be more lovely buds than these  
In other gardens, seeking them I fear  
We shall but find the region of the Weir.

## *I Knew*

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

When first I looked into your eyes I knew,  
For there was all the laughter of the years—  
Rich, quiet laughter lying deep and blue  
Within them, and the conquered need for tears.  
There was great kindness, and a level rage  
Against all those who hurt the little things,  
Conception, and the wisdom of a sage—  
A wisdom that slow, thoughtful reading brings,  
Not of mere worded volumes, but of days.  
I saw the tempered courage of the wise  
Where we poor foolish beings have a blaze  
Of blind bravado. There within your eyes  
I found a formless sermon, and I knew  
That, humbled, I must ever follow you.

## *Before the Forest*

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

The way leads through a forest, dark as dread.  
If we are brave we shall go fearless there,  
Walking our blind path with a patient tread  
Though there be only blackness everywhere,  
Bewildering and strange to eyes like ours,  
Used only to white starlight on the sea,  
To sunshine spilling gold among the flowers,  
To moonlight-silvered hills. For you and me  
It may seem hard, too hard to follow through;  
Others have faltered, turned, and lost their way—  
But if I give my little help to you  
And you give yours to me, surely someday  
We shall come out together to the light,  
And find it sweeter for the draught of night.

## *Let Us Not Grieve*

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

Let us not grieve, my heart. He who is gone  
Was but a man, and there are many such.  
Hear my soft, healing chant from dawn to dawn:  
Peace, for you did not love him very much;  
His coming lit in you no scarlet torch,  
No dangerous calidity of passion,  
And so his going leaves no after-scorch.  
You loved him only in a simple fashion  
Grown of the quiet comfort of each day.  
He was but bread, but rest, but warming sun,  
But water to the thirst, salve to allay.  
Let us not grieve, heart, now that this is done,  
For surely, meaning only that to you,  
He soon can be replaced by someone new.



## The Medea

By DORIS GROW

IT IS deplorable but true that the square pegs in this round world are as they are, by nature. They were born square. If they endeavor to whittle themselves down to a more seeming roundness, however, they are only encouraged by rebukes from their more fortunate associates.

The most unfortunate case of this kind was brought directly to my attention some years ago, when there came to our household a furry, homeless kitten. Her heartless parents had left her on our porch without so much as a basket or blanket to protect her extreme youth. Wondering what circumstances could have prompted any respectable parents to forsake their offspring in such a manner, we rescued the kitten and gave her some milk and a name. A very little care and affection agreed with Medea, and she was soon frolicking about the living room in the uncertain staggering way so characteristic of the infants of the feline family.

The longer we had Medea the more we became attached to her and the harder it became to imagine any mother so passionless that she could give up such a loving child. Another matter that also caused us some contemplation was the fact that Medea evidently came from a good family, for her fur was long and of a silky fineness; so it seemed doubtful that poverty had been the cause of her parents' deserting her.

After we had had her for a month, Medea was only a larger edition of the plump, purring kitten we had first rescued from the doorstep. My roommate, who feels that pedigree is everything, began agitating the question of securing adoption papers. She thought that we should immediately obtain legal proof that Medea was ours in case the parents should ever return to reclaim their child. I agreed with her, for it seemed wisest that Medea should look upon us as her actual parents as she grew older. So often children who know they are adopted feel inferior to their companions. Thereupon we employed a lawyer to take care of the matter.

A few evenings later, after we had tucked Medea in bed, my roommate mentioned how unkempt our child's fur was becoming.

"She is probably beginning to lose her infant's fur," I replied, "and then too, she spends most

of her time playing outside with the neighbor's kittens. It's impossible to keep a kitten looking neat and clean." As the weeks passed, however, Medea's new fur didn't come in, and the old fur became shorter and shorter in relation to her increasing size. In vain we treated her coat with perfumed soaps, hair oils, and brushes—the fur only became shorter and more scraggly.

We were approaching desperation on this point when we observed another defect developing in our protege. While Medea's front legs were cat-like enough, her hind legs were growing out of all proportion. The grade along her back, from head to tail, became more pronounced. With this unlooked-for physical development there came a deplorable change in Medea's previously docile and cheery personality. When we tried to pet her, she would roll over on her back, hooking all claws into the friendly hand, and, having thus secured the hand from escape, would bite it with a ferocity that was most shocking. After she had mauled one unmercifully, she would leap away, shoot up a curtain, fly to the radio, over the davenport and thus leave havoc behind her in every room. My friend and I were worried. At last my roommate voiced the suspicion we had both been harboring in our souls for many days.

"Do you suppose that perhaps Medea isn't all cat?" she questioned.

"I was afraid you would notice that," I replied. "She looks definitely like a cat in the front quarters, but once you get beyond her front legs, the resemblance ceases."

"Her hind legs look like a pocket edition of a kangaroo's," said my roommate, determined to reach the bottom of the mystery.

"But a kangaroo stays on the ground, while Medea doesn't. She climbs. I wondered if she was part monkey."

"Her curtain climbing ability would point to that, but there is no such physical resemblance," argued my friend.

After considerable discussion we agreed that Medea's other half must be rabbit. This was a great blow to our natural pride in her. From wondering who could have been cruel enough to leave their offspring on a doorstep, we turned to wondering why they had chosen our particular

doorstep. We realized how public opinion would turn against her as well as against us when her discrepancy became more accentuated with her increase in size.

"As if we didn't have enough trouble waging a war against ants, a problem child has to be foisted upon us," sighed my roommate.

"We must not turn against Medea because of her doubtful heritage. She needs our love and protection now more than when she was a handsome infant," I said loyally.

"It's difficult to love such a misconstrued creature," replied my friend, "and I think we are the ones who need protection from those fiendish claws of hers. I see your point, however; her life will never be pleasant. She will always be the object of ridicule and criticism for a thing over which she had no control—her birth."

As Medea grew older, she became more lank and misshapen. Feed her as we would, she did not gain weight. We had long ago given up hopes for her coat. Then as her playmates became old enough to notice the discrepancies between themselves and Medea, my friend and I were confronted with a new and more serious problem. Medea's friends began teasing her about her lanky hind legs, her emaciation, and her scraggly coat of fur. We could always tell when she had been mercilessly ragged by her comrades for she would slink up to the bedroom and yowl at herself in the mirror for hours at a time. My friend and I were touched by pity and remorse, for we could see the inevitable mark this would make on Medea's life. After a while she became sullen, seldom noticing her foster parents, and hardly ever leaving the house.

The atmosphere was most depressive with Medea always moping about the house. She was definitely losing her enthusiasm for life. Since her kitten playmates refused to have anything to do with Medea, my friend hit upon the happy expedient of importing several rabbits into the household, hoping Medea might be accepted by those of the other side of her family. For a long time Medea seemed her happy self again with these new contacts, but the rabbits insisted on ignoring her. Their pride seemed to be greatly wounded at having to associate with a half-breed. In a few days Medea had a relapse, and the gloomy atmosphere again descended on us.

Always seeking solitude, Medea took to straying about at night. One night we saw her doing a fantastic dance in the moonlight on the garbage

can. We feared that this night life would bring Medea in contact with the lower strata of society and lead her into crime, but if we shut her in the house, she was so restless that no one could sleep. We were seriously thinking of taking her to a psycho-analyst when she perpetrated her fatal act.

My friend, on going downstairs to start the coffee one morning, gave a piercing shriek and in a moment was again in bed overcome with shock. I quieted her with the smelling salts before asking what had happened. Struggling to regain control of her nerves, she informed me that Medea had brought a friend home with her. I was prepared to rejoice at this turn of affairs, when my friend told me to take a look at the newcomer. I hastened halfway down the stairs, before I was abruptly halted by the horror of what I saw. To think that Medea had fallen to this. Medea was frolicking about in a happy-go-lucky manner, true enough—but with a snake! I rivaled my friend's shriek, but I took the precaution of locking the bedroom door before returning to bed.

The hours dragged by slowly that morning. With a snake between us and the telephone there was no chance of our being able to call the pound to remove Medea and her friend. Finally the postman came by, and we called out the window to him to please rescue us. That afternoon a representative of the pound called and captured the live stock in our house. We have not heard of Medea since, but we often speak of the unjust fate of those who are neither one thing nor another.

## Prayer of the Betrothed

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

Father, each load is lighter to us now  
With four young hands together for the bearing,  
And the grey, endless hours we knew alone  
Are grown mercurial, but for the sharing.  
Now, pausing here upon the morn-drenched hill  
Where the bright grass is beautiful with motion,  
We scan our way, through chasm and through  
weald,

Over the cliffs, and down along the ocean.  
It may be arduous; we fear not, God.  
We do not ask thee fragrant jonquil weather,  
Nor gentle paths, but only that we go,  
Soaring or plunging, all the way together.



## Plague

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

Starshine and I alone upon a hill  
Observe again our quiet rendezvous.  
Below, the stricken cities huddle, shrill  
In babbling terror, as small children do  
Who do not understand the Thing they fear,  
But blindly sense its power. Let them cry:  
I cannot catch the sound of them up here,  
Where all the shining liquid of the sky  
Pours over me and drowns me in a flood  
Of swimming star-gold in a midst of dark.  
Tranquility goes singing through my blood  
Until I almost welcome death's strange barque,  
Coming to bear so many, wrapped in sleep,  
Out where the blue beatitude is deep.

## Invocation

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

Oh, trees that I have loved, take me again  
In rough brown tender arms and hold me high  
Above the earth whose gifts are gilded pain.  
Take me again into the pristine sky  
And heal me of the ulcer at my soul.  
It eats away this bruised, unwanted life  
That I must keep; it gnaws my self-control  
Until I fain would shriek my inner strife  
In shrill, discordant tones above the wind,  
Wail all my grief abroad like something wild.  
Oh, take me, take me, trees, and let me find  
The nescient peace I loved, when as a child  
I climbed, and all the world seemed at your feet  
A great untasted fruit which would be sweet.

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## Nurse to Juliet

BY ELIZABETH SHOW

They must not love, and seeing themselves bound  
By great hard bands that they can never break,  
They do not chafe at them, for they have found  
That struggle but augments the burning ache  
To agony past bearing. So, instead,  
They stand like docile children, who with awe  
Have heard the words parental lips have said,  
Heard, and accepted, knowing words are law.

But I have heard a footfall in the night,  
A snatch of love-song whispered on the stair,  
Have glimpsed warm fingers twined. And,  
leaping white,  
Oh, I have seen the vital radiance there  
Between them, quenchless still, and unconfined  
By the vocabulary of mankind!







