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1956

VISITING WRITERS

FRANCES GRAY PATTON

The author of the recently successful *Good Morning, Miss Dove*, Mrs. Patton has published stories in such magazines as the *Kenyon Review* and the *New Yorker*; two collections of these stories have appeared—*The Finer Things of Life* and *A Piece of Luck*. *Good Morning, Miss Dove* has been recognized by the Book of the Month Club, acclaimed by critics, and adapted for the motion pictures.

KARL SHAPIRO

Poet, critic, and editor, Mr. Shapiro's chief works are *Poems, 1940-1953*, *Essay on Rime*, *Trial of a Poet*, and *Beyond Criticism*. He has been Consultant in Poetry at the Library of Congress and editor of *Poetry* magazine, and has taught at Johns Hopkins, Loyola, and the University of Iowa. Mr. Shapiro is now at the University of California in Berkeley.

WILLIAM GOYEN

Texas-born novelist (*The House of Breath, In a Farther Country*) and story teller (*Ghost and Flesb*), Mr. Goyen has taught at the University of Houston and at the New School. He has, as he says, "lived almost everywhere" (Texas, Oregon, Chicago, New Mexico, London, Paris). He is now living in New York City.

RANDALL JARRELL

Mr. Jarrell, a member of the English Department of the Woman's College, has won fame as a critic, poet, and novelist. His *Selected Poems* appeared last year, and he is also known as the author of *Poetry and the Age* and *Pictures from an Institution*. Mr. Jarrell has been literary editor of the *Nation* and has taught at Princeton, Kenyon, and the Salzburg Seminar.

Leaders of the Panel Discussions:

Professor Carolyn Brandt, teacher of writing at Greensboro College, moderating the poetry panel.

Professor William Blackburn, teacher of writing at Duke University, moderating the fiction panel.

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spring 1956

the woman's college of the university of north carolina
greensboro, north carolina

writing arts festival committee: blue cameron, june cope,
jo gillikin, alma graham, nancy mcwhorter, betty mcgee, martha moore, carolyn teachey, student chairman. professors marc friedlaender, leonard hurley, randall jarrell, jane summerell, robert watson, and robert humphrey, faculty chairman.

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Stirb und Werde

by Marilyn Goetze

Tower Hall
May 8th

Dear Miss Kreuzer,

I am writing to apologize for my conduct in class this morning. You were right: I *was* "stubborn". Only not purposely so. I will try again, and write the kind of German paper you expect from a major.

I couldn't tell you what the trouble was then, because that required looking at you and saying things that embarrass in the light.

I *am* interested in *Faust*, really. Only I might not be here much longer to pursue that interest. Dad has threatened to take me out of school, for loving somebody it's wrong to love; and I have been so afraid of having to leave, that I practically ushered myself out, this morning in class.

I will write on your theme, "Death and Becoming"; I only hope I can do it justice. I'm not sure I really understand it. But I'll try.

Please be patient with me. You certainly have been, up to now.

Sincerely,
Laurie

Holliston
May 10th

Dear Laurie,

My tribe (two dachshunds: Billie and Tophie) and I would like to have you come to Flämmchen Monday afternoon for tea. That is my house in Holliston, where I sip tea and pet dogs and listen to my favorite music all day until it is time to drive out to school.

If the afternoon is pleasant, we can sit in the yard and take our tea with the spring worms.

Herzliche Grüße,
B. Kreuzer.

Tower Hall
May 11th

Dear Miss Kreuzer:

Thanks—very much—for the invitation to tea. Shall I "dress properly" for the occasion—or may I come in knee shorts? "When in doubt, underdress" is my motto; but if you object, please call me, and I will rapidly change my motto.

I am anxious to meet Billie and Tophie. And to visit a house that doesn't have six floors and a tower and many young things living in it.

I will see you Monday.

Laurie

Tower Hall
May 14th

Dear Miss Kreuzer:

It's very late and very cold; and I'm up writing a thank-you note because I have to. Not because it's proper or nice-to-do, but because I have to just say something or do something to let out the jumble of feelings I've had since returning from Holliston this afternoon.

Flämmchen wasn't just a house. It was a way of looking at, a way of believing in; and I felt as if people could talk there without having to use words, without ever having to worry about being understood.

I wish I had the back-bone to live the way I can see life being lived; but I guess it's enough for now to be alive at all. I wanted to run, when I went back out to the lake tonight. And I did. But I made myself stop and walk like you said, and it wasn't as hard somehow. I've even been listening to Brahms' Violin Concerto tonight without running. And that's an achievement, because it's the kind of music that

blares THINK all over the room and you have to or run.

I don't know exactly what I'm trying to say—except that I'm aware of finally having found someone who speaks my language in an alien world; and it's the strangest, most awe-full, wonderful thing that's ever happened to me.

Tell Billie and Tophie they are lucky.

Gratefully,
L.

Holliston
May 16th

Laurie—

Thanks for your note.

And you are right, there are moments—and bitter long ones—where it takes all “to be alive at all.” That's where “stubbornness” helps!

It is hard for a father to see his little girl grow up and out of his hands and into something he is sure can do nothing but hurt her. I think you are wise to stop seeing Tim for a while; and I admire your courage.

Billie and Tophie say they approve very much of my new young friend. They would like to see you again sometime soon . . . next Monday, if your schedule permits.

But here is fair warning: I should like (notice the subjunctive) to have you read your paper to me then. The bribe? You may do it at my kitchen table, or in the garden if the day permits.

B.K.

Tower
May 21st

Miss Kreuzer—

Flämmchen was there again, just as it was before. I was afraid it would have changed.

Only I cannot come again next Monday as you suggest; I don't want to. I *did* find something in the orchard we walked in today—something that wasn't in anything else. But the higher I climb the deeper I fall; and it isn't worth it to walk in heaven for one minute if it's going to make everything else seem like hell.

What I mean is, I'm back again. Back down in my room alone, trying to write the second chapter in a theme on death and becoming. I know what Faust means by it now and I know what Goethe means by it, and I know what you mean by it, too; I *believe* Goethe found rebirth in Italy, and Faust found it in nature; and I don't know why but I couldn't find it in anything short of death *that* I know but I can't even find it there because I haven't got the guts to. I almost had once when I jumped off a jetty in a

storm, but when the lightning wouldn't stop I couldn't stop either and I swam till I reached shore which I didn't think I wanted ever to see again but I was too damned scared to just stop and sink. *Wby?*

I'm sorry, I know I shouldn't ask stupid questions and I guess I don't really want any answers. I don't want to read or study or think or do any of the things that probably lead to the kind of rebirth life needs. Sometimes I think I want to run off on a hill and write about dragons and then I just want to get lost in a choir that sings every other note and rests in between and mostly I just want to sleep and can't. It's because I'm so lazy not because there's anything on my mind, because there just isn't anything on my mind, except my own numbness to things I can't understand anymore.

So I'm trying to let you know how hopeless it is to try to really teach me anything because I just can't hold any idea heavier than what time is it. I know a college is no place for that kind of head, and maybe I'd better give up trying. But sometimes it's even harder to give up than to float.

“After-midnight thoughts should never be written.” But they'll never get said if I leave them till morning, and they've got to get said somehow.

So forgive me, please, if I've made you the buffer.
Laurie

Holliston
May 23rd

Laura:

Thanks for your after-midnight remarks.

Well, you sure have put *me* on “floating”. I can't ask any questions, I mustn't give any answers, you don't want to come to Holliston—but I am a good floater! Didn't I tell you that I spent my four weeks last summer at Lake Michigan with only one ambition to keep me busy: to turn into a fish. I almost succeeded—one day the gulls mistook me for one and started diving after me.

I am sorry, Laurie, even while I am floating I still keep on talking (with two tongues at that!) What a poor fish I am!

What a beautiful day yesterday was. But it almost turned into a hatchetday here: I just caught our dogcatcher snatching up Billie to put him away. “He had bitten a boy” (the boy had bitten Bill first). Now the three of us (Tophie, Bill and myself) are in the doghouse. Just had a formal visit from our town policeman in full uniform. Well, we won that round, too. I bought a 100 ft. clothesline—we are tied up. What the next round will bring I don't know.

Well—enough of fish-floating, dog-biting talk. I am looking forward to your last chapter on *Faust*.

Wie immer,
B.K.

Tower
May 25th

Hi, Miss Kreuzer—

The world is great, the sky is sunny, the birds are twittering, and I am a lucky fish. Someone has at last recognized my very great and awesome genius by dropping in my mailbox a huge prize for a poetry contest I entered weeks ago, and I cannot believe it's real. It is the first money I ever "earned" on my own, it is something to send home to dad and say look, pa, I'm writing, it is something to make me want to keep trying, in this world full of furriners, it is being alive and not too numb anymore.

I am leaving you an autographed copy of *Hourglass*, in which two of my first-published poems are now published, and I am letting you know how lucky you are to be acquainted with the likes of this young poet. (That's what I'm going to be, I've decided. You know what you told me once: anything you want really bad enough, you can have.) So here I am on the path to fame, and I'll not stop until I've burned everything behind me in a huge fire of poetic success.

Whew.

Laurie

Holliston
May 26th

Laurie—

Thanks for what I found on my desk today. It made it a happy day!

Please come to lunch Wednesday at Flämmchen. And bring your English poems with you: I want to hear them—all.

Let's celebrate: it's Bill's first day off the leash after eight long days of it.

More than one lucky fish!

B.K.

Tower
May 28th

Dear Miss Kreuzer,

Thanks for the invitation. After a firm decision to stay away from Holliston, here I have succumbed again. Shows how much faith not to put in my decisions.

I apologize for having been so carried away with my petty literary success as to have plopped same under your nose. I have returned to the depressingly small but actual picture of me and am no longer oppressed by visions of grandeur. The smoke has cleared, and revealed a very small flame in a very lonely pit; but it may grow some day. And I am still bent on seeing that it does.

I am anxious to see Billie and Tophie. And to say good-bye to Flämmchen for the summer.

"Let's celebrate" brings to mind an infinitesimally

small bottle of Madeira I have left from the case dad gave me last time I was home. Will Miss Kreuzer be offended at its inclusion in our luncheon? Most probably. I'll bring it anyway. We can always give it to Billie.

L.

Sea Bright
June 18th

Dear Miss Kreuzer,

You have most likely reached Soden-bei-Salmünster by now, and I want to be the first to greet you in your home away from home. I had a dream last night that you didn't want to come back; and I wouldn't blame you.

That's probably because I'm wishing I was there with you. The sea is intoxicating, as always; and the summer is quiet. But I am lonely. Dad doesn't say anything much to me; and I can tell by the look in his eyes that he's hurt about the letters I've been getting from Tim. At least the incessant preaching has stopped, though, the eternal right vs. wrong sermons I got every morning when I first got home. And there are times when I think maybe the whole thing will work out—when dad has had a chance to see what a wonderful guy Tim really is. But I guess it's hard to convince somebody of anything, after you've spent a life-time lying to him. It amazes me that he believes me at all.

Tell me about Soden. Is it green there, or is it near the sea? It is probably another Flämmchen.

I'm sorry I have no poems to send you. There is so much that is art around me; and all I can do these days is finger paint. Will you accept such an outline, until I can sketch you something better?

CONQUEST

A wind hissing with yellow sand
Strikes music against the rock
That juts its head all fearlessly
Out into the open sea.

And Death is here to spread his hand
Of guidance, and to mock
The questionable treachery
Of even the open sea.

His wind hissing with sanguine sand
Strikes pain against the rock
That dares defy so recklessly
The power of destiny.

And Love is here to spread her hand
Of guidance, and to mock
One so less able than the sea
To conquer even me.

L.

Soden-bei-Salmünster
June 30th

Dear Laurie:

What a wonderful, hectic trip I have had! And how good it is to be home with my family for a while. I have two brand new nephews: Dieter and Fritzchen; and right now I am undergoing the ordeal of passing their inspection as Tante Barbara. They are the most discriminating judges in the world!

I am enclosing a picture of *my* shore-line. It is not so good as the ocean; but the walk around the edge of those pine-trees is enough to raise my heart and wear out my feet each evening just after dinner, as I take my "thinking walk" in the Rhön Mts.

Send me some more finger paintings, please. They are a part of that other home, which called me so clearly from this one many years ago.

And keep your chin up, poet!

B.K.

Sea Bright
July 8th

Dear Miss Kreuzer:

Thanks for your letter.

I have been reading Wiechert's fairy-tales all evening; they are about all I can digest these days. I have trouble eluding "The Boy and the Water-Spirit", both in dreams and in reality. But there is such a thin line between what is real and what isn't, and why shouldn't it *all* be real anyway if it's better that way? So I have decided it is real. Everything. Even me. And you. And Billie and Tophie especially. Now that I have given my royal approval, it is all right for us to go on existing. Would you have stopped otherwise?

Soden sounds like the world of Flämmchen, to be sure. And there is Dieter and Fritzchen to share it with you. I am envious of them.

Last night I was alone with my father for two hours—an unusual thing these days. I was taking my walk along the beach, when dad caught up with me from behind and said he would walk with me. He started talking, first about nothing and then about somethings, and all of a sudden he was down on his knees, weeping, holding onto my hand and begging me not to throw myself to the devil—the monster I'm in love with, I guess. I never felt so scared before—standing above my father, looking down at him and the waves slapping his body the way my silence must have been slapping his face. And with all the fancy phrases I thought I knew, and all the fine words I've cherished like pearls, there wasn't one word in any I'd ever heard, not one sound to give my father when I needed to. I just stood there and stared at him and at my hand on Tom—till the moon finally ducked its ugly head under a cloud, and my dad's

hair wasn't silver anymore, and he looked strong like he always is, only soggier. Suddenly he was up on his feet again; he picked me up in his arms, dumped me in the foam, and said next time I pushed him down on his knees like that and got him wet, he'd *really* "drown" me. So we came rollicking home, pushing each other all over the Atlantic coast—and not another sober word was spoken.

I'm afraid to be alone with the soul of my father. It makes me look at myself and my own greedy I WANT sticking like a huge thorn in his side, and God, I don't *know* how to stop.

Gosh, I'm sorry. Why do I keep bombarding you with this stuff? Lots of happy things have been going on. I always seem to forget to tell you about them.

Same old feud going on: still looking askance at WORDS and waiting for them to jump when I start grasping for them. They always do. What is your secret? You seem to lay hold of them, and they don't run away. They are as well trained in your hands as puppies. Maybe that's because you are gentler and more patient with them; my frantic pouncing must scare them. They leave me alone; and I am left floundering in the bog of real vs. unreal. Who can say that last night on the beach was real? It was as unreal to me as Wiechert's fairy-tales—or as real. I think I could very easily lose my mind.

Except that that would be assuming I have one to lose. If I were to set it loose in the Rhön Mountains I know it would never *want* to come back. I have let it wander through those evergreens as far as the edge of the postcard. That's enough for one night.

I'll have to try writing you sometime when I'm not too sleepy to see the paper.

Forgive me,
Laurie

Soden-bei-Salmünster
July 20th

Dear Laurie:

Come along and I'll take you for a walk through Soden!

The first postcard is of my old school, where I went until I was eleven (when they shipped me off to a bigger cage and so-called better school.) In my time the same building housed the village jail and the town hall. I spent some time in all three of these functional places. Which do you think I enjoyed most?

The second card, of the old stone tower, was my favorite playground. Here we played robber barons, rather mild reproductions of former true-to-life types.

If my neck could be broken, I surely would have broken it up in this tower; before I was eight or nine, that's what my mother used to fear. But we don't break our necks as easily or readily—nor lose our

souls as quickly—as our parents sometimes must fear. Even if we start out on some early flights of our own, that may look like the point of no return to them, temporarily—later on they learn to trust our own wing-power. Sometimes it seems to take them a little long to come to that trust. It took mine about twenty years, during which time I changed more than my passport. Some things got a little pushed around in my so carefully furnished soul—but the foundation was strong enough to admit some new additions.

Now I shall take you to the “magic mountain” that still throws its spells over me every time my feet touch it. It’s only a hill—but this may be the spot where once in a time my life’s pendulum may want to stop. It’s the hill behind that old ruin—where all the skylarks seem to like it best. If you ever come to Germany, you must try your toes on it—and its wingpower.

No, the camera’s eye won’t catch it—just as little as the old dictionary words you complain about.

Thanks for your last letter—it is as real as I know you are; and your silence on that beachwalk was more truthful than any already coined word could ever have been.

If it weren’t for such moments of being caged-in in silence, how would some tongues ever have burst the gates to break into song!

Ihre,
B.K.

Sea Bright
August 19th

Dear Miss Kreuzer:

That “changeless, endless, inescapable and insistent music” of Williams has been reaching my ear; if only I had “skill sometimes to record it.” All I could do Saturday was listen to it: we went water-skiing, my cousin and I. We started out around the Hook in the late afternoon; and when we reached the ocean and got onto our skis (tandem, one from each side of the stern) it was getting toward evening, and the sky was clouding over. All of a sudden all hell seemed to break loose: lightning was crashing around us, the waves were rising, and the rain was slashing into our faces so that we could barely see. I was scared at first; but it got so dramatic I forgot all about life and death and everything except skimming over the waves like a bronch-buster. Dad made us stop and climb into the boat till the lightning was over; but as soon as the storm subsided we were up on our feet again, gliding over waters that were suddenly as still as glass, and listening to the red sky turn darker and darker till we had to give up and let the music die.

There’s nothing like feeling you’ve conquered nature for a change and made her crunch under your relentless toes, dragging a couple of miles of ocean

behind you behind a powerboat. SPEED so fast that you haven’t time to think, or worry, or breathe—only listen and laugh. It’s a wonderful thing, to laugh.

Dad is downstairs now, banging on the violin and making noises like I’m supposed to come down and accompany his “Fritz Kreisler Medley”. That’s as deep as we go these days. And it’s welcome relief. A less “insistent” music—more like the postcards I received in a huge envelope from Germany last week.

Those are the little things that pick up the pieces. Thank you, Barbara Kreuzer. Maybe they’ll prove worth saving.

Say hi to the magic mountain for me. Does it speak English?

L.

Soden
September 6th

Laura—

“Freudvoll und Leidvoll
Gedankenvoll sein—”

I am close to the turning point. When your last letter came into my hands I was just fixing two packages for Flämmchen—small things that will take with them enough to remind me of another round-trip from home to home. Tomorrow I’ll start the fourteenth of them.

During the last ten days I went for a few short trips with my sister. We sat for two hours in the old castle park in Heidelberg, stood on old familiar bridges crossing the rivers Main and Neckar, visited some castles and churches I had always liked. Now my eyes have all they can hold for a while; and I am eager to be on my way.

When I get back to Flämmchen I must listen to your Brahms’ Violin Concerto. Funny, now I remember how “insistent” a music that was to me during my dormitory days. Life seems to follow a strange pattern. I hope yours will be more fruitful, but as happy, as mine.

And how does the world of man and the elements look to you today?

Wie immer,
B.K.

Tower Hall
September 28th

Dear Miss Kreuzer—

I’m sorry I was not in today when you called. I did receive your message, however, and am grateful for the chance to see Flämmchen again. Thank you for letting me come.

There has been too much death, Miss Kreuzer, for me to make sense tonight the way I want to. But I am trying, because I have to. I don’t have to explain

(Continued on Page 28)

poem

by June Cope

I ran down to the water
As the salt flavored child
Fell under, and rolled over, and fell under again.
His bubbled cry slitting my nerves.
And my feet stumbled through the soft suck of
 dead beach,
Till I half fell, half flew
Into the wallowing water.

I found a slimy hand, a foot,
A rough red suit,
And swung him up with the sway of the sea
Holding him high and close
As he pouted and kicked,
Stretching sharp hands to the teasing, biting water.
His eyes were blank with the emptiness of innocence.
His face was a smile to chill.

I watched the sea
Which growled at me, baring white, jagged teeth,
And quickly hiding them,
Caressing, and softly holding my body,
Coaxing, teasing me outward.

I didn't know the stranger's child
I half dragged, half carried, screaming to shore.
A flock of people like frightened hens
Clucked and ran to peck him from my arms.
And he laughed, and coughed, and spit out salt
 with attention.

I hurried back to the taunting, laughing water,
Hating the slow and sensuous curving waves,
Hating the peevish, unused face
 with the bright blank eyes.
But of all I hated,
I hated most
The pallid, lumpy, fright-soiled face
And the dog-dumb eyes of the mother.

Spirit of Worship

A God's-house, white-shirted, black roof-back
Raking the black rack of night sky,
Floodlit as by a million near moons,
Ray-shining whiteness,
As a streetlight seen through an eyelash.
High clean sedge-edged, etched on inked iron;
Doors high narrow, polished gold-knobbed,
Enamelslick panels, and, save Sabbath,
Locked.

Or golden glinting altar, canopied in
Fierce brocades—
Set about with painted Virgins,
Silk-clothed idols, golden-calf-like,
Brass tablets, pain-portraying Stations.
Dim-lit with votaries,
Candle-glim, hushed, musty aura of a burning taper;
Mellow stone half hidden in a rivermist,
Only the great gaunt cracks
Marking, scoring the sulphur-sickly walls—
In fog-dawn, fire-noon, night-pitch,
Open.

Sheila

Kortlücke

Baltimore -- its Sunset from a Train

Skyblue, greyhaze, mauvemist,
A great goldorange sun
Hovers over Baltimore.
Traingrey, carriagerust, sootgreen,
Thin lightning stripe of sun'blood
Settles over Baltimore.
Factory-fog, violet-cloud, house-white,
A nightsnow mist hazes the trees
Beyond Baltimore.
A stream of clouded dulled greenblue
With scruffy rush-reed banks
Ever flows through Baltimore.
In a mauvemist, inkblots of pheasantfeather gold
Bordered by mare's-tail—grey-violet.
Skyblue with little peachwhite wedgwood clouds,
Brush-tipped with grey,
Screaming redgold lacerations
In a long curtain of mauvemist.
A sandpit, over the horizon,
The nights now soft quiet greyhaze sets about,
Envelops Baltimore.
And green is green,
Is green of pine, growing in the slag
But the sky above is the heaven of an opera.

CARRY ME

THEY hadn't wanted her to go to the funeral. They didn't know it, but she had heard them talking, heard Edna Mae say, "I know it's her Mammy, as well as mine, but you know how Essie is. We wants it to be a real nice funeral. Essie might have one of them spells of hers, and anyway, since she's been at the penitentiary, it just ain't fitting." That's what she had said—Edna Mae, her own sister. After that, she had sat still and quiet in the kitchen, not hearing then the voices in the front room, hoping they wouldn't come and find her there.

But she had gone, though; she had gone to her Mammy's funeral. And now the thought of what she had done scared her a little so that she stopped suddenly just to stand and look up at the sky. Lord, won't Edna Mae be mad, she thought. But somehow it didn't seem to matter. She had waited until they had all left the house—Edna Mae and the preacher and all the sisters who sang in the choir. The other man, too, the one with the long black car, the one who had put Mammy in the smooth-looking board box and had carried her away. After they had gone, she had put on her Sunday dress, the one with the flowers; and when she had started out the door, she turned back suddenly to tie a piece of ribbon around her hair. Mammy always bought her hair ribbons. "Chile, you looks *good* with them ribbons," she always said.

A leaf fell from above, twirled near her face, then touched her dress before falling to the ground. "Maybe Edna Mae won't be so mad," she said to herself and started to walk again, pushing her feet through the leaves that lay in deep piles along the street. She liked the soft prickliness against her ankles, the rattling sound that they made when she kicked them apart. They reminded her of the red and orange streamers that hung from the ceiling over at Lottie's Sweet Shop. She hadn't been there for a long time. Edna Mae didn't like for her to go—said she would get to drinking and fighting and get sent back to the penitentiary again. But they were nice to her

there. They didn't stare when she came in. They didn't laugh.

She tried to think of what she would say to Edna Mae when she got home; but as she walked past the trees and the brown-looking houses that were beginning to be closer together, she couldn't keep her eyes from the sky where she could almost see the way she had looked going to the funeral—her in her Sunday dress and the pink ribbon around her head, coming out the front door and not even turning back to close it behind her. She had gone down the hill, past the little houses where people sat looking at her as she went by, saying behind her, "There goes that Essie Hunter. She's a-going to her Mammy's funeral. They ought not to let her go." At the bottom of the hill, where there were paved streets and sidewalks, she had walked faster. She didn't like it there. The people didn't know her, and they turned around to look when she went by. She almost ran past the stores that tumbled against each other like the boxes on the sagging shelf in the kitchen at home.

She knew the way to the church—not that she had been in a long time, not since Mammy had got sick and couldn't go. Edna Mae wouldn't take her. Every Sunday she would watch Edna Mae pin on her hat and go down the hill, and she would think of her Sunday dress hanging behind the door. "It's all right," Mammy would say. "You is my chile;" and she would raise her arm that looked like a dried-up black stick and put it around her shoulders. It made everything all right then. She was glad she couldn't go.

She had kept on walking fast, past the houses that became further apart on out to where there were no houses, just trees and tin cans scattered along the road—no people at all. A few cars passed her; but she walked with her head down, conscious only of the rush of air that swirled around her for a moment. They had already started when she got to the church. The long black car was there, and the other cars, parked under the trees; and she could hear the singing inside. The sisters had sounded good. *Swing low,*

HOME

sweet chariot, comin' for to carry me home. Mammy liked that song; she could almost see her rocking back and forth slowly on the side of the bed, her face raised, her eyes closed. Mammy would sing and sing and then look down at her and brush her hair gently.

She didn't go in; she really hadn't planned to. With Edna Mae there and all those other people who would turn around and look at her—she couldn't go in. There was a window at the back of the church and she had stood looking through it, down the aisle right up to the front where the preacher was waving his arms and Mammy was lying in the board box with the flowers on top. "It's an ugly old church," Edna Mae used to say. But she thought that it was pretty, so nice looking with the rows of benches running out to the sides and the windows at the end. It reminded you of pictures you cut out of magazines to put up on the wall. She had tried to listen to what the preacher said, but it was like always; she would look at his face and would see a hundred other things at the same time, never knowing a word that he said.

When the people had started getting up, she had run—way back to the trees that grew thick behind the church to watch them as they all went over to the grave. It was just as Mammy had said it would be. "One of these days, I'se going home to my sweet Lord Jesus," she would say. And she would tell her not to cry. "Don't you worry 'bout me when I'se gone, and Edna Mae'll take care of you. Then, one of these days, them angels will take care of us both together." Mammy had said that, but now it didn't seem right somehow. Before it had been like something far away, like a person in the distance that you couldn't quite see. But now Mammy was gone, and she couldn't ask her all about it. They had put the box out there, and then it went down into the ground all by itself. The preacher had kept talking, not paying any attention at all to Edna Mae. She was falling around and carrying on so much that some of the good sisters had to hold her up. She ought not to have acted that way. Mammy wouldn't have liked it.

And then they had all gone, driving away in the cars, even the men who put the dirt back in the hole and spread the flowers out on the ground. She walked to the grave after they left to stand for a long time looking down at the flowers. It was like the quilt on Mammy's bed at home—many, many colors all spilling together so that it almost made you dizzy to look down at them. There were big bows on the flowers and gold letters that spelled things she couldn't read. It all looked so pretty; she wanted to tell somebody about it. But when she looked up, there were only the still trees and the church and a signboard in the distance. She turned away and started toward the road. The sun was near the tops of the trees and the lights made the church look very white. The flowers seemed to shine. Just like a picture.

She was still looking at the sky when the roofs of the buildings came into sight. The flowers and the church faded into the blur of darkness that was spreading through the trees. Reluctantly she pulled her eyes from the sky and looked at the houses that were thick about her now. She could see lights in them that made faint moving shadows behind the curtained windows. The sound of voices floated out around her, making her walk faster, vaguely afraid. It had become dark all of a sudden, and the lights were coming on, mingling with the feeble lights that burned in the locked-up stores to make a yellow glow.

She was almost at the bottom of the hill, almost ready to turn off into the darkness before she saw the children. They were playing under the street light, hopping between squares drawn with chalk on the gray sidewalk. In the light, their faces seemed to shine. When she got near them, they stopped and turned around to look at her. Big round eyes that stared at her. Then someone laughed, a sort of animal sound that they all seized and made into a roar. And she knew why; it was like all the other time, every time she tried to speak. She could feel her lips twitching and drawing back over her teeth, her head jerking to one side. Even if she spoke they would not hear her because they were laughing too hard. "Marked by a mad dog, marked by a mad dog," she had heard her Mammy say. "My poor, poor chile. I couldn't help it. That dog just kept a-coming and me a-running as big as a cow with you. You is marked 'cause of that. My poor chile." And Mammy's arm would be around her, holding her and trying to make her stop crying. Sometimes the trembling would go all over and she would go off to sleep suddenly in blackness without even wanting to; and when she would wake up, there would be a fuzzy foam on her lips that she brushed away, trying to wipe the dampness from her hand. "Marked by a mad dog," Mammy would say, rocking back and forth over her, crying. "My poor chile."

And now she was running—up the hill into the

darkness, stumbling in the ruts that twisted between the houses. But the faces still were in front of her, the teeth shining white as they seemed to snarl at her, and the eyes coming out to stick into her body. "Mammy," she was crying, "please help your baby."

"That you, Essie?"

Her hand trembled on the screen door as Edna Mae's voice cut through the house to meet her. She knew then that there would be no need at all of looking over in the corner at the bed because Mammy wouldn't be there. The quilt would be folded up at the foot, and some of Edna Mae's fancy pillows would be propped up against the dented iron frame.

"Come on in this-here house."

Through the wire, straight back to the lighted kitchen, she looked and saw Edna Mae bending over the table, just the curve of her legs, the edge of her dress that moved in the light. With a creak, the door opened as she pulled the handle, her hand gripping the metal so tightly that it cut into her skin. The room was dark, the bed empty—just as she had known; and the frilly little dolls on the mantle looked ugly now, not pretty the way they did when she and Mammy had laughed at them together. The door to the next room looked like a hole cut out by the light from the kitchen. She went through it, now looking at her and Edna Mae's beds at the side of the room, just going toward the kitchen to stand in the light with her head down, her fingers pulling at a thread in her dress.

"Where you been?"

Edna Mae did not look around but stayed turned toward the table, her hands flying over it to arrange the cakes and pies that all the good sisters in the choir had brought. She watched her dress as it danced up and down behind, pulling from the armpits.

"I ask you where you been?"

She could not look up at Edna Mae, could not even try to answer. Her mouth twitched but she said nothing. If she did, then Edna Mae would know what she had done, that she had gone to Mammy's funeral.

"I know where you been."

Edna Mae's hands had stopped and just stayed up over the table as if she were going to grab something.

"You been to the church."

And now she had whirled toward her, reaching out still with her hands. She could feel her eyes go deep into her as if she had cut a hole in her body and could see right through. Drawing back, she pressed her head against the wood of the door.

"You thought I wouldn't know. The neighbors done told me. Said you come a-running out soon as we left."

No matter how hard she pressed her cheek against the wood, her lips still quivered and her head began to jerk sideways. "Pse sorry, Edna Mae. I . . . I just wanted to go to my Mammy's funeral. That's all. I'se real sorry."

"That don't make no difference. No difference a-tall. You just mean and no-count. Won't do like nobody tells you."

Edna Mae was still looking in the hole and she bent over trying to hide it, slipped slowly down against the door until she felt the cold linoleum against her knees and then against her forehead.

"Get up from there. Get up, you no-count thing."

Edna Mae was screaming as she bent over her. She could feel her warm breath on the back of her neck. But she could only press her twitching cheek against the coldness, smelling there the scent of rot that came up through the floor. She felt Edna Mae's foot under her head, and it pried her face up so that she lay blinded by the light, looking up into white brightness until Edna Mae's eyes shone out of it and she heard a sound that said, "Get up, you no-count bitch."

And she could get up then, could raise her body with her hands, climbing up the frame of the door the way she had done such a long time ago when she was a little girl playing at the foot of Mammy's bed. She stood holding on, her body relaxed, almost swinging in the doorway.

"I knows what I'se going to do now. I'se been thinking— all day yediddy and out at the funeral today, and now I knows. I ain't going to mess with you no more. I done worked my hands to the bone for you long enough. You ain't got Mammy to baby you no more. You always got the hair ribbons—not me. I had to work to pay for 'em while you stayed home messing 'round. You going to work now for what you get—like I has to. You going to work."

Edna Mae had said it all in one breath and she stopped now, her voice hanging in the air. She seemed to feel her head flying up and down as she tried to speak, her mouth twisted around, her lips trembling. "You knows I tried to work and you knows what happened. They said I couldn't. I worked here though. You know it. And I keep on working and helping you here, Edna Mae."

"You ain't going to stay here no more, no more a-tall. You going to move out—tonight—now. This is my house. You can't stay here no more. Here's a little money so you can get a room 'till you finds a job. Go get your things. I'se busy."

"It was my Mammy, too, Edna Mae. It's my house along with you."

Edna Mae did not answer her but poked a crumpled bill into her fist before turning around to the table again. Something turned over inside her then, kept on turning and turning until it reached her head and went all the way down. Before she even knew it, she was running—through the house and out the front door, never looking at the bed or at Mammy's flowers by the steps—running down the hill over the dried ruts hard under her feet. She looked at her legs and watched them go up and down. They weren't her legs at all; she didn't even feel them move. Something was still turning inside, and it made the water

run out of her eyes to drip down and drop off her chin. She brushed her cheeks, and her hand had the greasy smell of her hair. It was dark on the hill and she was running toward the light in the distance, saying over and over to herself, "Why did you go, Mammy? Why did you leave your chile?"

The lights in Lottie's Sweet Shop were dim, and the slice that came out the door made only vague shadows—no real brightness. She had known that she was going there even without thinking about it. They would be good to her. They would understand. Through the door she could see figures moving back and forth, passing in front of the juke box lights that went from one color to another like water in waves. The music came out to meet her, to close up the hole and stop the turning inside. She felt it move down through her legs, giving her a soft, warm feeling. It was like taking a slow drink of wine and feeling spread out inside until it reached up to your skin.

"Well, look who's here; if it ain't Essie Hunter. Where you been, chile? You ain't been here since you got in the penitentiary the last time."

Her head was jerking—she could feel it—but she didn't mind because Lottie was smiling then and had her arm around her shoulders. "Edna Mae don't like for me to come here. Say I get in trouble. But now Mammy's dead—" She stopped because it seemed so funny to talk about Mammy there. They didn't know and she couldn't tell them about it, about Edna Mae.

"That's a shame. Y'all, Essie's just lost her Mammy. Ain't that bad?"

There were voices around her in the darkness, saying, "Yeah, that's a shame;" and she looked into the gloom and smiled. The people were looking at her but somehow she didn't care. Lottie's arm was heavy on her shoulder.

"You needs a drink. Come over here and I'll get you one."

Lottie took her arm away and walked lazily across the room. She followed her to the counter, leaned on it, and watched her bend down to get the bottle out of the cabinet. Her dress pulled tight over her shoulders and the light shone on the shininess of the material. The skin seemed to quiver under it.

"This will help you, chile. Drink it."

Lottie gave her the glass, and she held it toward the light, looking at the wine—red like the leaves that she had swished through that afternoon, then changing to purple and orange in the juke-box light. It was warm in her throat, sinking into her.

"That was good, Lottie. Lemme me have some more."

"That was on the house. You got to pay for more."

"I got the money. I wants a whole bottle." She could feel the crumpled paper in her hand. She hadn't opened her fist since Edna Mae had shoved the money there.

"Where you get that money? You in trouble with the law?"

She shook her head at Lottie. "Naw, Edna Mae give it to me. I ain't done nothing wrong. Lawd, no, Lottie."

"Aw right. Don't drink too much, though. You know how it makes you."

Lottie gave her the bottle and she started to pour out the wine slowly, watching it as it rose in the glass. Bubbles foamed up and it made her want to laugh.

"How you, honey? You looks so cute I just want to pinch your tail."

She felt big hands pressing into her hips, felt through her dress their warmth, the roughness of the skin. She became soft, as if she wanted to cry. The warm wine was making her run together all to one spot deep inside.

"Get your hands off me."

"Aw, don't be that way, Essie. I ain't going to hurt you."

"You get your hands off me." She whirled around with the bottle gripped in her fist, not raised, but clenching the neck so tightly that her knuckles were white in the light. She knew that her head was shaking sideways, that her mouth was open with a little wine running down the side. "You get me in trouble with the law. You go way, you bastard." And he drew back then, looking at her with wide eyes that she wanted to punch out all of a sudden. He walked backwards, his hands behind him feeling for a table in the darkness.

"Don't you start no trouble in my place."

She looked at Lottie standing behind the counter, standing straight now and not smiling, her arms crossed in front of her with her breasts hanging over.

"I got to go now. There's the money." She pointed to the bill on the shiny counter top and drew back. The darkness of the door fell around her shoulders, closing about her and pulling her back. Lottie was still looking at her. She was not smiling.

For the first time she noticed how cold it was. The wind made the leaves scratch each other until it left them and came down to brush against her skin. On her arm the bottle felt cold; but she nestled it against her, pressing the hardness into her breast. The light at Lottie's was still warm behind her, but she kept on walking, not knowing why she had left, feeling strange because Lottie had stopped smiling, because she could not talk to her any more.

She heard the noise, then, far-away, like an animal; but it grew louder, coming along in jerks with the light that looked like a big white eye in the darkness. "Don't you get close to them trains," Mammy had told her. "You get away." So she crouched near a shadow, the bottle raised to her lips, watching the light quiver and grow larger in the darkness. The noise was all around her now, shaking the wooden houses and sloshing the wine in the bottle. It got inside of her and whirled around until she stood up screaming, feeling the dryness of her open mouth and

the vibrations of her throat, but hearing only the roar from the train—not her scream at all. It was only a dim whine that sang deep within her head, that stayed there and would not go away even when she closed her mouth. It was a sound like the one Mammy had made before the man had come to take her away in the box.

There were no sounds at the cemetery. No light either except the cold whiteness of the moon that slanted toward the church and made eye-like reflections in the black windows. She didn't know why she had come there. All the way she had hugged the bottle close to her, asking it, "Where you going. You better turn 'round and go back." But she had kept on coming, had kept walking in the darkness as if someone pulled her by the hand.

Mammy's grave was a shadow in the soft light, and the colors of the flowers were all gone, leaving them swirled gray patches on the ground. They spilled over Mammy's grave to Pappy's on the other side. She raised her leg, balancing herself, then stepped far over into the middle of them. The ribbons brushed her ankles and she could feel the lumps of flowers under her feet. The sweet crushed scent rose up about her, and she sank down into it suddenly, the flowers damp and cold against the back of her legs. She held the bottle up to the light and the wine looked black inside. It tasted the same though—sweet and sour and hot all at the same time, like something you wanted very much that hurt you somehow after you got it. With her hand she brushed the tops of the flowers, feeling the petals that tickled the palm of her hand, the threads of satin ribbon that caught on the rough skin. Suddenly, she pulled on a bow, twisted it until it came free in a crumpled mess. Putting down the bottle, she stretched it all the way out until it shone straight in the light. She wrapped it around her head and tied a bow at the side. "You looks good with hair ribbons," she said to herself. Mammy had told her that. She would like the big bow.

When she lay down, the knot hurt her head until she pushed her face down into the flowers to make a hollow place for the bow. She lay closer to Mammy . . . not that Pappy wasn't right at her back; it just seemed better that way. It had been such a long time since she had seen him, since she had lain like this between them in the iron bed in the corner back home. She hardly remembered what he looked like. But, anyway, she was her Mammy's child. It was Mammy who put her arm around her and sang to her in the darkness.

The bottle was empty now and she flung it away from her. It broke on a rock, sending out slivers of glass that sparkled in the moonlight. She threw it away but the sour smell stayed and got mixed up with the scent of the flowers. She tried to sink deeper in order to get away from the cold, drawing her feet up under her, curving her body down. Her cheek trembled against the ribbon, her lips still wet from the wine.

Put your arm around me, Mammy. I is your chile. The moon is watching me and it makes everything cold. Put your arm over me and sing to me, Mammy. Swing low sweet chariot, like the good sisters sang, comin' for to carry me home. I can bear it now, Mammy. They sure sings pretty. Soft-like, like the angels maybe and sweet Jesus all dressed up in his Sunday clothes. And, ob, Mammy, the lights was pretty, coming out and rolling over like the sun turned all different colors. But Lottie didn't smile no more, and they all looked at me like the little chillun, saying, Mad-dog, Mad-dog. I'se your chile, Mammy; put your hand out and hold me. Don't press in your fingers on my back, but hold me soft and sing swing low. My, those sisters could sing, and they brought all them cakes and things and Edna Mae was fixing—ob, Mammy, the floor was cold and the lights and the eyes come down on me like they is now, going on and off, white and black and red like the wine—red wine like leaves in the sunlight. Sing, Mammy, sing sweet chariot, and then I can't bear the train noises and the mad-dog sound coming out of the darkness. Swing low, Mammy, comin' for to carry me home. Ob, sweet Jesus.

The gravel was rough under her feet, spreading out in a curved line from the administration office up to the building. The tiny chips scattered into the grass as she walked along. Vines grew on the high metal fence, and she brushed her hand over the leaves, feeling suddenly the hard coolness of the wire. They had been nice to her back there, had not even asked her why she had come again—just said, "Go on up to the building, and they'll give you some uniforms and show you where to sleep."

Someone had planted flowers near the door of the building since the last time she had come. Real pretty, almost like Mammy's flowers on the front steps. A group of women sat talking there, laughing as they bent closer together. And suddenly she was afraid. She would hurry by them, would not even look at them as she passed. They would look at her but she would not see their eyes.

"Hey there, Essie. What you doing back here?"

She whirled around, drawing back swiftly, her mouth jerking slightly.

"Come on over here. I ain't seen you in a long time. You had already gone the last time I come back. How long you got this time?"

She looked at the woman who was smiling at her. The face hovered in her memory somewhere, and she looked past her, trying to make it be still so that she could recognize it. Ester Ruth Price—that girl who had s'lept in the bed near hers one time. That's who it was. Ester Ruth was a good chile. "The judge say two year this time. What you back out here for, Ester Ruth? I thought you was gone for good."

"Aw, you know how I is—just can't let liquor and

(Continued on Page 28)

Letter from Sophocles

Few explore the Tragic at its mouth
Or swim its tides as rough as they have been
Red with pain and grief,
For Tragedy flows ever to the south
And keeps forever green
The small oasis of the old belief.

And Few see pathos bushes as they are
Or touch them skin to skin
To feel the sting and stupor of their shock,
For they are found on islands near a star
That shelters them with membrane twice as thin
As light but strong as rock.

by David Berman

At The End of Her Arms

When she was round, always under Mama's feet,
And even now that she was sharp, she wore
Her mother and her father at the end of her arms.
When she was round he had been round, too,
Just as her mother was, and closer to her lips.
Mama, her mother's mommie, had smacked her
 buttocks
And put her to bed, crossed-her-heart-hope-to-die
To read a letter in morning, or write one.
She always forgot, so busy.
Then letters split, doubled by the mail truck,
Mama said, and coming from two far-offs.
Sometimes letters blew away, the mail truck's fault,
Mama said.
She grew the hands then, to play with.
The right palm smooth, the other scarred;
Five nails tapered, five chewed;
One like a baby doll, to be cuddled;
The other a naughty child to be spanked;
One like a lady, the other like what?
One a mommie, the other?
What is a daddy?
Sharp now, she knew:
It is gnawed, rough, at the end of her reach.
No use.
Cut it off.
Mama poured monkey's blood on the slit
And told her not to play with knives again.

by Martha Moore

TWO PICTURES

After Harry Engel's

David and Saul

David in the chamber
Lets his fingers fall
Over his harped torso
To the genital.
Saul the aged lion
Growls in his loins.

Melodies plucked pure
Tiger-red and black
Do not reach the ears
Of the raving king.
Sinewy Jonathan
Consumes the songs between.

David and the prince
Tall and taut as strings
Play upon each other's
Body young imaginings.
Saul the aged lion
Growls in his loins.

by Jack Hirschman

Maria Tallchief

He sees
Her bodily grace
Not as heron or swan
In the limelight spinning,
But harmonies
Of the kind Kandinsky paints,
Stravinsky strings,
Brancusi shapes with bronze:
A breaking through the fables
Of the bird, finding
Pure space
In the limelight winging.

MARILLA found herself walking hurriedly down a long, dark, and empty street. Now and then she started as the echo of her footsteps crept up on her, and cast sharp glances at the lurking shadows. She began to hum softly under her breath, which made her feel better.

"Ain't no be-a-r-r-rs out to-night, Daddy killed them all last night."

She reached the little, round, yellow moon marked Bus Stop and sighed. Safe! The street light was on, but looked sick, and gray-faced. Marilla felt like the street lamp looked. It un-eased her to be out alone so late at night. Oh, why hadn't she stayed home with her parents, she kept asking herself. Herself didn't know. There were all those English papers to grade; and she could have had a nice exciting game of ping-pong with her father; sometimes they won; and her mother would probably have made some fudge Marilla thought of the fudge and smoothed her dress over her hips. She really should have stayed home, she told herself. The movie hadn't been worth seeing, and the pop corn was almost as bad. She puckered her face in memory. She would never have gone if the girls had not whispered about it so. Why, the clothes the leading lady wore, or rather the lack of clothes, was disgusting. A red satin sheath, with no neckline to speak of, not in mixed company.

And the idea of a man that old making love to a young girl. Why he was old enough to be her father. He must have been sixty if a day. It was repulsive. She remembered seeing his age in one of the Intimate Screen magazines which she kept tucked under her mattress. Marilla pursed her lips. . . She would never let a man that old make love to her! Turning, she squinted into the dark glass window of the store behind her, giving her girdle a sharp tug as she did so. Somehow she felt as if someone were watching her. She turned around, excited.

It was almost like being in a movie. She know someone was watching her! Suddenly something chill ran down her spine. It felt like the tiny cold feet of little white mice. She shivered and put her hand down the back of her collar. It was little white mice. She pulled them out and held them dangling before her by their dainty silk-thread tails; there were two of them, tiny and baby-pink-white, one with a blue, and the other with a pink ribbon tied neatly around its neck. They hung upside-down and grinned at her. She stared at them a long time, not knowing what to do.

After a few minutes, one of the mice began to swing slowly back and forth. With every swing his tail stretched longer, and longer, until he had finally reached the ground. Marilla swallowed and watched

with fascination while the second mouse did the same thing. When both mice had reached the sidewalk, Marilla tentatively began to walk them around the bus stop by their long tail-leashes. Someone said, "She looks just like the Queen-Mother." She turned to find the corset lady beaming at her. Marilla didn't know whether to be flattered or not.

"Exactly like the Queen-Mother!" exclaimed the corset lady nodding and nudging her companion. "Don't you think so, dear?" The Salvation Army lady nodded silently, and peered nearsightedly at the lamp post. Marilla felt hot all over. "Thank you," she murmured.

"Yes, indeedy. Just like the Queen-Mother," came the faint echo as the corset lady and the Salvation Army lady disappeared down the street on their bicycles. Marilla watched them fade into the night and turned back to the bus stop. She longed for the bus to come, and looked at her watch. But the hands had already curled themselves up into a tight little bud for the night.

Suddenly one of the mice turned, and before she could stop him had swallowed the other one whole. She was horrified.

"Stop it!" she cried. "Stop, you beast!" And then, "Give it back . . . immediately!"

The mouse squatted, looking morosely at her, his sides bulging in all directions. Then he opened his mouth, and the inside mouse crawled out. They stared a moment at Marilla, then joined hands and ran laughing into the darkness. Marilla called after them. "Come back, come back!"

"Come back," said the echo. Marilla felt weak and leaned up against the lamp post. It leaned back. She whirled to find a tall, angular, black-cloaked man towering over her, and let out a squeak. He started back, surprised. His thick gray hair fell in tousled curls over the smooth forehead of his rugged, baby-pink face. He stood with great dignity looking at his bare feet. "Oh," gasped Marilla, "I thought you were a lamp post."

He grunted, and grinned at her strangely. As he opened his mouth, one of his teeth fell out and rattled on the sidewalk. He seemed completely oblivious to it.

"Pyorrhæa," Marilla thought. "Yes, pyorrhæa."

"Yes," echoed her mother. "If you aren't a good little girl and brush your teeth, they'll all fall out like Aunt Sophie's did."

Aunt Sophie grinned at her with a toothless grin, and disappeared.

Marilla nudged the stranger politely and said, "You dropped a tooth."

MARILLA

"Oh," gasped Marilla, "I thought you were a lamp post."

He grunted, and grinned at her strangely. As he opened his mouth, one of his teeth fell out and

"Oh," he replied with a wave of the hand, "That's just an imitation. I keep my real one here." He patted his vest pocket and caught Marilla staring at him with narrowed eyes.

"Your eyes are too small," he said with concern. "Here," he broke off one of his little fingers and held it out to her.

"Eat this," he said kindly. "You must be hungry." Marilla stared, fascinated, at the chalk-white finger before her and stammered, "What! You mean I should eat this?"

He shrugged his shoulders and broke off his middle finger, handing it to her in exchange for the little one.

"You shouldn't be so greedy," he said, sounding peeved. He turned away from her and quietly ate the finger she had just handed back to him.

Marilla felt ashamed for hurting his feelings. She put the finger to her mouth and nibbled at it, looking thoughtful. It was crunchy, like a carrot, and tasted just like licorice.

"Yes, doesn't it?" said the man, who had turned to her, beaming.

"Doesn't it what?" she asked guardedly.

"You know," he replied with a sly look.

Marilla felt guilty and blushed. He arched his eyebrows at her, laughed, and bit her on the arm.

"Stop it!" she said, drawing away from him.

He stopped, abashed.

"Well?" she said.

"Well," he replied.

"You stopped!" She felt strangely disappointed.

"You told me to," he replied, surprised.

"Well, I meant it," she added lamely. She turned and walked away from him, agitated. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" she said. He chuckled and moved towards her, his arms outstretched.

"Aha!" he said knowingly.

"Leave me alone, Tommy Watkins," she cried. "I'll tell my Daddy on you." With this she picked up the Bus Stop sign and hit him in the face with it. When it came away the words Bus Stop were printed across his forehead in bright, red satin letters. Marilla looked at him and laughed. He looked at her and didn't laugh. Then he rubbed the words off with his handkerchief.

She began to feel uneasy. "I wish the bus would come," she thought. When she turned back to the lamp post man again, she noticed him staring at her oddly, a spiteful grin on his face. He was growing a beard. She watched, awed as it swung leisurely down to his feet like a pendulum and then, started ambling in her direction.

"Don't you dare!" she whispered hoarsely.

He grinned and kept on growing the beard. Marilla snatched it by one end and tugged at it wrathfully until it suddenly came off with a loud barking. The thing writhed in her hands, screeching and spitting like a cat. She had to drop it, and watched it slide down the street chased by a big brown dog, which caught it and started swallowing it. The man sighed, and going over to the dog, he poked the whiskers down its throat with his cane until they were all tucked neatly inside, while the dog sat patiently. Then the man closed the dog's mouth, and nodded. The dog rose, bowed, and trotted into the darkness.

About this time the bus chugged by. Marilla called and waved frantically at it. The bus driver grinned at her, waved back, and drove on.

Marilla was distressed. She turned to find the man standing behind her. He had shrunk two feet and grown heavier. She was afraid of him. She walked nervously away from him, pulling out a cigarette. He walked away from him with her.

"Stop following me!" she said, annoyed. She couldn't find her cigarette lighter and had to ask him for a light.

He smiled knowingly and whispered, "I don't smoke."

She noticed he had little fingers growing from his other fingers like the buds on a hydra, and felt cold.

"I must go!" she said fearfully throwing her cigarette down.

"Ah, but stay," he whispered gently, handing her his real tooth.

Marilla felt flattered, but wouldn't take it. He pressed it upon her.

"Oh, but I can't," she primly replied. Her feet hurt. "My mother told me never to take things from a stranger," she continued.

He looked interested.

"Besides," she said, "You're so much older than I am." She took off her shoes.

"I am?" He looked surprised. "How old am I?"

She hesitated. "I'm still quite young. I needn't worry."

"I don't mind." He stretched his arms wide to her.

She looked at the tooth which lay glinting in his outstretched palm. "It is beautiful." She wavered, and took it. "But," she paused, "I suppose it is all right. I know you." She smiled coyly at him, tucking the tooth into the side of her jaw.

"Do you?" he replied, pleased, arching his brows and grinned slyly at her. His voice flowed like water over her senses. He moved slowly towards her. She felt warm, turned her back on him and said, "I wish the bus would come."

A window above her flew open and the bus driver and the brown dog leaned out.

"The bus can't come ma'am. It's sick," the bus

(Continued on Page 28)

WATER AND STONE

*by Julian Earle
Griffin*

I would go out
Where the stones sleep
And the water knows no waves
To drink the light
From springs of quartz.
The child of thirst
Swims home to a shell
To sound the source of a sea-deep journey.

I do not ask
That the stones stir,
Nor for the water to speak;
But I would have
Eyes blessed to see
Still rapids locked in a pebble run free
Through rivers that rise
In sunlit stone.

Pebbles do not speak,
But weight of word wells in them.

Stilled in the sun
Of rock and rill,
Water looks up at a hill
And drinks the peak with a soundless eye.

One swallow
Holds the hollow
Like a stone,
Caught in a throat that cannot cry.

The canal had been there all the time, but Ernest had never really discovered it till that summer. He had always known the segment of the canal that flowed for two blocks through the High School Park because he lived right across the street from the park, but it had not occurred to him to explore either extremity. He knew, of course, that the canal came from somewhere and went somewhere else, but he never thought about it very much. Ernest was an incurious child; he accepted his two-block stretch of canal as a pleasant adjunct to his environment, but no more considered investigating its origin or ultimate destination than he would have thought of digging holes in his back yard to see what was beneath it. As far as Ernest was concerned, the canal began somewhere in the box culvert under Fourth Avenue and ended behind the gas station on Sixth. He crossed it on the wooden bridge in the park every day that he went to school in the winter, and in the summer he climbed down the banks to impede the slight stream with dams of sand, and that was enough.

It was not much of a canal in spite of its name. Years ago when piney woods and gum swamps covered the land that is now the town, the canal was what is called a branch; a small, intermittent stream emptying into a large creek. As the town grew up and the gums and pines gave way to streets and lots, the canal remained because it provided natural drainage for almost the whole town. It wound from north to south, following the low ground, and when a heavy summer downpour drenched the streets the canal rushed brimful for an hour or two, then subsided to its normal trickle. In the thinly settled north end of town the canal was still a branch meandering between sloped banks beneath a canopy of arched trees. As it entered the High School Park through the big box culvert it was chartered and disciplined by vertical walls built of blocks of old concrete paving. These walls were rustic enough to give the sight stream in its sandy bed the appearance of a deliberate landscaping device, and the ladies of the garden club, who planted the park with azaleas and japonicas, often commented on the charmingly sylvan effect that the canal provided. The ladies frequently had to telephone Mr. Jordan, the street commissioner, after rainstorms when the canal reverted to its natural function as a drainage ditch and left its course littered with beer cans, melted cardboard cartons, and other debris that had been gathered and discarded by the rainwash, and Mr. Jordan was usually very prompt in sending out some of the boys from the jail to clean up the mess. South of the park the canal grew deep and stagnant with the excretions of gas stations and laundries, and it moved sluggishly to the edge of town where it took on the thick outpourings of the paper mill and carried the stinking mass into Cow Creek, fouling the water and killing the fish.

Ernest was introduced to the canal by his friend Carl. He was sitting on the front porch one hot morning looking at the cartoons in *The Saturday*

THE CANAL

by H. H. Lansford

Evening Post when Carl came up across the yard. He had a gallon syrup bucket in each hand and he stopped outside the screen door and shouted "C'mon Ernie, let's go down to the canal."

Ernest put his magazine down, opened the screen door, and sat down on the front steps beside Carl.

"What for?" he asked.

"To catch minners and crawdads. I saw Howie yesterday and he had a whole bucket full of minners he caught down there, and you can sell 'em for fish-bait. You get a penny apiece for top minners and two cents for shiners."

"You mean he caught a whole bucket full of minners by himself down there in the park?"

Carl was scornful. "Naw, dopey, not in the park. You got to start there and go all the way out by the sawmill."

"I don't know. I never been out there."

"Aw c'mon, don't start actin' like a sissy. I would of got Joe B. but I knew he's too big a sissy. That's why I came over after you."

"Okay, I'll go. What's it like out there? Do I need to carry my shoes?"

"Naw, you don't see me carryin' any shoes, do you? We'll be wadin' in the water all the time anyway."

They padded off toward the park, each with a shiny molasses bucket in his right hand.

That was the beginning. Through the whole month of July, every day that it didn't rain, the two boys went to the canal. The enterprise was not commercial;

although they sold a few minnows to fishermen of the neighborhood the joy was in the catching rather than the selling. They kept the minnows in an old concrete goldfish pool in Carl's back yard and they sunk a galvanized washtub in the ground beside the pool for the crawfish. They quickly learned all the pools and shallows of the canal and welcomed the new challenge that was provided when a heavy rain-storm dredged the channel and altered the configuration of the streambed. The biggest challenge lay in the pools that were scoured out by the discharge of the storm sewers. At every point where a culvert emptied into the canal the rushing downpour of many cloudbursts had scooped out a deep pool, and it was to these pools that the denizens of the canal fled from their pursuers, flashing and skittering through the shallows to vanish into the murk. At first Carl and Ernest had ventured gingerly into the edges of the pools. One day, though, Ernest looked down to see the dark water clouded by a still darker stain spiraling up from the place, where a broken bottle had slashed his toe, and a little later Carl waded out of a pool and found a leech the size of a dime glued to his ankle. They pried the leech off with a pocket knife and the cut toe healed in a few days, but after that they grudgingly accepted the escape of the creatures that took sanctuary in the pools. They would work upstream together, scooping the minnows from their refuges beneath rocks and sticks and plucking crawfish out with thumb and forefinger well behind the waving claws. When they reached a pool they detoured along the bank then climbed back down past the deep water.

Then one day Carl had an idea.

"Look, there's always a whole bunch of these miners that run right ahead of us all the way up to these deep spots. Why don't you start working up from one pool and I'll work back down from the next one and we'll trap 'em in the middle."

Ernest didn't really like the idea very much, since he enjoyed the camaraderie of the chase as much as the bagging of the quarry, but he gave in to the logic of the scheme. Sure enough, they did trap a lot of minnows in the shallows between them and had to start carrying three syrup cans, one for crawfish and two for minnows, in order to accommodate their catch. They followed the system for a few days, but it soon became obvious that there were still quite a few minnows that got by them and fled to the pools. Ernest accepted this philosophically, but Carl brooded over it until he began to curse every pool.

"Scutters", he would exclaim, "Yellow scutters. Scared to stay out here where we are. Got to run to your mangy ol' pools every time we come along."

Ernest laughed at his fury, but while they hunted the shallows Carl thought about the pools and tried to figure what he could do about them. One morning he showed up with a dip net made of a pajama leg tied shut at one end and suspended from a loop of coat hanger wire nailed to a broom handle. When

they came to a pool he would probe through it with the net, scooping up mud, old beer cans, broken bottles, and usually a few minnows and crawfish.

"I reckon that'll show 'em," he said with satisfaction.

But after a few days more it was apparent that this system also fell short of perfection. The glass and metal tore the net and bruised the fish, and most of the minnows caught in the net soon died from their rough treatment. Carl fretted for a while, then brought out another invention. It was a five-foot square of wire screen with a loop of clothesline tied to the corners at each end. His plan was to lay this improvised seine flat in the pool with the rope handles on the bank, then to splash noisily toward the pool from both upstream and down, driving the quarry into the pool to be scooped up by a sudden lift of the screen.

The success of this device was immediately apparent. Actually, the catch was about the same as before, but the new method was much faster. They started just above the park, walking along the bank to the first pool and gently placing the square screen in its depths. Carl walked up the canal and Ernest downstream, then they splashed noisily back, probing with sticks to rout the prey from its small refuges and driving it ahead by their commotion. They swiftly and methodically stepped out of the water, one on each bank, and raised the net. The surface of the screen was covered with flopping, twitching minnows, and they quickly set the seine on the sand and began to scoop the little fish into the buckets. Carl was ecstatic, and Ernest, who had lacked enthusiasm for this unsporting, mechanical method was shaken from his skepticism by the obvious success.

They worked upstream much more quickly than they ever had before, and soon reached the last pool by the sawmill. It was deeper and cloudier than any of the others and Carl had always expressed the belief that there were big fish in this pool, not just little old minnows. They set the screen carefully in the center of the pool and separated in opposite directions. Soon they were back, splashing and flailing. They grasped the ropes and Carl held up his crossed fingers.

"We're gonna pull somethin' big out this time. I just bet you we are."

They lifted together and the net rose heavily. As it surfaced Ernest saw that it contained a tremendous number of squirming minnows. At first he thought that they had scooped up a snag or a rotten stick with the minnows. Then the stick writhed and drew back a pointed head and a thick, ugly body squirmed across the screen. Ernest stood motionless in amazement, holding the rope with both hands. The snake struck with swift fury at the nearest motion, one of the flopping minnows, then drew its heavy body back into an ominous S, weaving its head in frustration and indecision as it searched for the enemy who had thrust it from the dark pool into the hot bright sunlight.

Carl suddenly flung his rope from him.

"Get out, Ernie, it's a moccasin!" he cried, and tripped as he scrambled up the bank, kicking over the minnow buckets in his haste.

The screen splashed softly and the minnows darted in all directions as it sank from beneath them. The snake floated motionless for a moment, a heavy, dirty brown shape in the surface of the green water, then angled off upstream toward the overhanging brush, oscillating smoothly through the water, thick body just beneath the surface and sharp head periscoped up, starting quickly from side to side.

Ernest felt his hands begin to shake with heavy tremors. The rope dropped from his fingers and the screen sank completely from sight. He climbed slowly up the bank, feeling his knees loosen as he climbed, and lay down on a mat of honeysuckle vines, feeling the way he sometimes did when he was in the hot sun too long. He thought he was about to vomit, then it passed and he lay still, sick and weak. Carl shouted to him from the other bank, his voice high with panic.

"Ernie! Hey Ernie! What's the matter, did he bite you, Ernie?"

Ernest lay still for a few seconds longer, then rolled over and sat up.

"I'm o . . ." He had to stop and swallow. "I'm okay."

Carl's voice began to settle back toward normal. "Boy oh boy, you sure had me scared. I thought that ol' moccasin had bit you."

"I'm okay." It sounded silly to say that again, but he couldn't think of anything else.

They walked back along the opposite banks until they reached the bridge where the sawmill road crossed and Ernest went over to Carl's side. Neither of them said anything about the buckets and the screen that they had left behind. They walked along in silence for a while, then Carl spoke.

"You know, if we came back out here with my .22 rifle, I bet we could kill that ol' snake. Or maybe we could even catch him. With a forked stick and some wire. There's some men do that all the time and never get bit."

He was still talking when they reached Ernest's house, and Ernest was still silent. As Ernest turned to go up the steps Carl said eagerly, "I'll come over here with my .22 first thing in the morning and we'll go back out there. Okay?"

Ernest went up the steps without looking back.

Carl shouted again. "Hey, I said I'll be over in the morning with my .22 and we'll go shoot that snake. You want to go or don't you?"

Ernest opened the door and went inside.

"Okay, I'll be over about eight o'clock." And Carl strode off down the street.

The next morning Ernest got up very early. He drank a glass of milk made two cheese sandwiches which he put in a paper sack, and got on his bicycle. At eight o'clock he was a mile and a half out of town, riding along the dusty shoulder of a gravel road in the hot sun.



THE AZALEAS

by
Miki Odessa Southern

THE two sisters walked down the gravel drive circling the church graveyard and cut diagonally across the grass to the cement curbing which marked off the family plot. In the center of the plot were two mounds and a wide granite stone with MACDONALD carved on it in Roman script; ivy leaves intertwined among the letters and dropped down the sides to form two rectangles inside which were inscribed ERASTUS DAVID, 1841-1934, on the left, and LOVELLA JANE, 1850-1914, on the right. In one corner of the plot, a smaller stone topped with a miniature lamb bore the words: *Infant daughter of E. D. and L. J. MacDonald. Budded on earth to bloom in heaven.* Two tall stone urns flanked the central monument, and there was a wrought iron pot on the smaller grave.

Jane set down her hoe and rake, and raising the corner of her apron, wiped her face with it. "I'm glad Pete come along when he did. I was getting mighty hot walking up that road."

"We both gettin' too old to be doing all that walking in hot weather," Lottie said, sitting down on the curbing. "Pete always has been good about picking us up; we ought to have asked him to bring us up here in the first place."

"Well, I hated to ask him. He's a good boy, and he'd do anything in the world you asked him to do. He just lets people walk on him."

"He's got enough common sense for ten men, though; and I believe he thinks a lot of his sister, too. He's took good care of her since their mother died."

"Well, it's only right." Jane picked up the hoe. "Pascal certainly stuck by their mother while she was sick and Pete was off in the war. I reckon Pete thinks the least he can do now is to make a living for himself and Pascal. I like that girl; she's a good girl."

"Yes." Lottie looked up at the sun. "It's getting hotter. If this place didn't need cleaning off so bad, I wouldn't be here. I'd be back home in the shade somewhere."

"It ain't that hot weather yet." Jane pointed to her sister's long-sleeved dress. "That's the trouble: wool clothes here at the last of March. Anyway, I shouldn't think you'd complain about cleaning off the cemetery. I've seen Papa up here, in the blazin' sun, many-a-day, digging weeds off Uncle Bud's and Gran'pap's graves. Papa always kept his people's graves lookin' good. And never said a word about it, even if none of the rest of the boys helped. Here we are, don't even keep up Papa and Mama's very well, much less the others."

Lottie touched one of the jonquils in the border around the plot. "I think we do pretty well to keep up what we do, much less worrying about what we don't keep up."

"I hate to think we're letting Papa down, and I certainly would hate to think somebody was going to let my grave grow up." Jane walked over to the urns and looked inside one of them. "Sometimes I worry about them cans."

"Now, Jane, don't be silly. Who'd ever steal old rusty tin cans from flower pots in a graveyard?"

Jane began chopping weeds, sprouting at random around the plot. "Well, I worry still. 'Tho' I know Papa was right about keeping it around the house. No telling who could come in on us, and nothing there but the shotgun."

"I feel like it's the safest place we got." Lottie had untied her apron and was unbuttoning the pocket on her dress. "You and Papa raised so much disturbance about the banks." She withdrew a sheaf of bills from her pocket and buttoned it back.

"Papa was always afraid of 'em. You don't ever know about 'em."

Lottie retied the apron and walked over to the left-hand urn. Sitting on the edge of the monument, she pulled out an oversized tin can and lifted the jagged cut end. Inside, neatly folded sheafs of bills were pressed together tightly. She added the bills she had removed from her pocket and replaced the can, upside down.

Jane stopped chopping and leaned over her hoe. "You know, if I can get that Butler woman to take some of our pillowcases to work with her to sell to them women she knows in the factory, we ought to be able to put away a right good bit this spring."

"Well, no sense in countin' on it, 'cause I've heard tell it's agin the law to peddle inside the factory."

Jane sighed. "That's too bad, because I was just thinking, I'd rather have azaleas in the corners here, instead of on top of our mounds, like we planned."

"You not changing your mind again." Lottie was hurt. "After we worked it out all that long time?"

"Maybe we could have azaleas both places."

Lottie shook her head. "Four more azaleas would mean four Easters we wouldn't be able to have flowers on our graves."

Jane straightened up. "Why can't we leave word that for four Easters we would have azaleas and then they could take them out of the pots and plant them in the corners?"

Her sister considered the suggestion. "I wonder if it'd cost extra for the work."

Tapping her hoe against the cement, Jane muttered: "A trifling thing like re-planting azaleas? Why, anybody could do it in fifteen minutes. Even that sorry janitor at the church."

"Well," Lottie picked up the bucket she had brought. "We'll think about it; we can't be all the time changing that will around. It was hard enough writing it the first time." She looked for the shovel. "I'm going across the road and get some fine gravel from the State Highway rockpile to go next to the curbing."

"Yes, and they're going to have you up for stealing the State's rock."

"Hummmmpft. I pay taxes same as anybody else, and I don't have a car to run on the roads, so I might as well use my part of the rock some other way." Lottie trudged off majestically with the bucket, her cotton hose sagging slightly over her highcut black lace shoes.

Jane returned to the wild onions, slicing the stalks just above the ground, filling the air with their sharp smell as she severed them. The jonquils in the row just outside of the curbing were in varying stages of bloom, some past bloom, dying with their edges curling brown and dry. Jane cut carefully between them, digging with the point of the hoe to get out the little weedroots.

"Law, Jane, you sure are working hard."

Jane looked up at the woman who had walked up to the big tombstone and was now standing there, pursing her lips, her sunbonnet shading her face to dark hues, her arms crossed over her starched print dress as if to keep in the warmth.

"No, I'm not working too hard, Evelyn; there's really not a whole lot to do."

Evelyn sat down on one of the urns.

"I told Henry, Saturday, we ought to come out

here and burn off our plot, but he said the janitor'd do it, so I let it go at that."

Jane shook her head and struck at a thistle.

"That janitor's too shiftless to mow the grass once a month, much less burn off anything. We were telling Pete Mitchell coming on up here—he stopped to pick us up—that the only way to keep a grave looking decent was to do it yourself."

"Pete Mitchell brought you up here?"

"Yes." Jane put down the hoe and began raking together the debris she had created. "He picked us up coming up the road. And we were telling him how Papa always took care of the family graves. Papa used to say . . ."

"What'd Pete say about their moving off to Ohio?"

"Ohio? Who's moving off to Ohio?"

"Pete and Pascal."

"Why, Pete never said a word about it."

"Well, they're going. Pete's giving up his job in two weeks. And Pascal's been getting rid of all her Ma's potted plant and seedlings. I think they're even trying to sell the old homeplace, though I doubt they have many buyers for that old house."

"Sell the Mitchell place? Why, what in the world is Pete thinkin' about? That ain't been out of the family for lord-knows-how-long."

Evelyn broke a twig off the hedge clump growing just outside the plot, and began to pick her teeth. "I reckon he needs the money to move. They've got some relatives on their mother's side that live up about Chicago, and Pete thinks he can get a job up there. Prob'ly Pascal aims to work, too."

"Well, I hope they know what they're doing. Pascal's never hardly been out of the state in her life, and now just to go trailing off like that . . ."

Evelyn took the twig from her mouth and looked at it closely. "You know, I don't think Pascal's been too happy since Little George got married."

Laying down the rake, Jane stooped over to gather up the heap of onion tops and weeds, which she piled in her apron. "I knew Pascal's not been very healthy-looking lately, but I didn't know what was the cause of it. I thought maybe nursing her mother . . ."

"Oh, that is part of it, I reckon," Evelyn agreed, chewing her homemade toothpick again. "But Little George had a lot to do with it, too. And Miss Minie."

"Miss Minie?"

"She kept edging Little George on. Little George knew Pascal wouldn't marry him so long as her Ma was alive, and she had to take care of the Old Lady so close. But Little George wou'd've waited if Miss Minie hadn't forever kept after him to get out and go mix around in town. Miss Minie ain't never forgot she used to be a town-girl before she married, and Little George's pa brought her out here to Clinton to live."

"Miss Minie never mixed with people in town so much."

"Not while her husband lived; he didn't stand for a lot of that foolishness. But what did Miss Minie do

after he died? Just as soon as Little George was old enough to start courtin' she rounded up all her old friends with girls about his age, and set 'em on him. Pascal was left out from the first, as far as Miss Minnie was plannin'."

"What was Pascal left out of?" Lottie came up to the plot, bucket, rocks and shovel in one hand and a pail of water in the other. "What did Miss Minnie do to Pascal?"

"Evelyn was telling me Pete and Pascal are moving out to Ohio." Jane explained to her sister, as she shifted the weeds deeper into her apron. "And Evelyn thinks its partly because Little George married that girl from town instead of Pascal."

Evelyn took out her toothpick and shook it at Lottie, who had set the pail of water down and was now scattering the rock around the edges of the graves. "It certainly is, Lottie. Pascal and Little George went together up until he went to war and then on some, after that. And they wou'd've gotten married, if Pascal's mother hadn't been so bad-off-sick when he come back home."

"Oh, they wa'n't engaged, was they?" Lottie smoothed the gravel over with her shovel. "Just going together."

"Well, maybe not engaged, but things were pretty well understood. I mean, everybody knowed they wanted to get married." Evelyn threw away the twig she had been chewing and broke off another one. "But Pascal decided to take care of her mother, and Miss Minnie finally persuaded George to quit walking."

"I think it's a shame," Jane murmured.

"I think it's a lowdown-shame-and-disgrace!" Evelyn drew her sweater firmly together across her flat, concave bosom. "I hope Miss Minnie'll be satisfied good, when Pete and Pascal move."

Picking up the pail of water again, Lottie walked across the plot. "I'm going to water Uncle Bud's grave," she said quietly. "That gardenia is 'bout dried up."

"I gotta go fix Henry's dinner." Evelyn got up from the urn. "He comes home to eat now, since his ulcers've been so bad."

"That's too bad." Jane nodded her head sympathetically. "There's so many people havin' 'em these days; you used to never hear tell of it. But it's because the people are living so fast; on the go all the time. It didn't used to be like that. I can remember Papa always saying: 'Never hurry nor worry, and you'll live longer.' And you know, I sure do believe that."

"Certainly is a lot of truth in it." Evelyn retied her bonnet strings. "Well, you-all come to see us."

"Well, we don't get anywhere much now, but we'll try." Jane watched Evelyn thread her way between the tombstones, stopping now and then to break a dead flower off a stem or straighten an overturned vase.

Lottie came back with the empty pail. "Evelyn

sure does keep up with everything." She picked up the clippers and began to snip cautiously at the top of the hedge growth. They worked silently for a moment; the sun, now almost in the center of the sky, made the fresh gravel sparkle underneath their feet.

"That's too bad about Pascal and Pete, though, ain't it?" Lottie straightened up. "But I guess Evelyn's right, too, in a way, about what happened to Pascal and Little George: Pascal decided to stay on and take care of her mother."

With a gentle motion, Jane was digging the stray weeds around the baby's grave with the hoe. Now she knelt to pull up a stubborn thistle. "I reckon so; I guess that's what she did."

"That was a hard thing to do, too, you know it?" Lottie let the clippers fall to her side and wiped her face on the sleeve of her dress. "Making up her mind not to get married, to stay on."

"Hummmmpft." Jane was squinting at her thumb, trying to find the tiny briar which she had stuck in her finger in the process of pulling up the thistle.

"'Course, Pascal knew her mother was going to die sometime, and then she could marry Little George. But there was always the chance he wou'n't wait or that her mother wou'n't die for a long time." Lottie sat down on the turn and poked at the grass on her mother's grave with the clippers. "You just don't know when things like that happen, what's best, do you? You think how much you owe your folks, and it seems like that's the biggest thing in the world."

Jane struggled to her feet, sucking her thumb.

"You just don't know what to do." Lottie continued to mash flat the blades of grass she touched. "There are things you want to do, yourself, but then there's always the other things." She laid the clippers across her lap and took off her hat. Waving it back and forth, she fanned herself absently, her eyes wandering out across the graveyard over the stones: short and massive, tall and pointed, some few, flat, one, black marble. "I feel sorry for Pascal: I really do."

"It's pitiful." Jane slid her hand over her dress, then reached back down for the hoe.

"Yes; pitiful."

For a moment, both sisters—one leaning on a hoe, the other sitting on an urn—looked at the two mounds and the granite monument.

"You know, Lottie," Jane began thoughtfully.

"I've been thinking about Pascal . . . and us . . ."

Lottie looked up at her sister's dry, wrinkled face pinched now into a pensive frown.

"And I wondered," Jane went on after a moment, "do you suppose—since she's giving all her mother's flowers away—do you suppose Pascal'd give us two azaleas?"

Lottie laid her hat down on the clippers and pressed them hard against her knees. "I don't know, Jane," she said quietly. "She might."

IMPRISONED

The world hangs upside down, her eyes forget
To set it right. Time loops a hangman's knot;
The window frames abstractions grossly set
On canvas sky; dark grotesque shadows spot
The floor like blood. Green capsule by her bed
Requires its hour taking. Footsteps pass
Outside the door; she listens till the lead
Sounds disappear, while poisoning water glass
At fevered lips. Soon rumpled head droops down
On open book; the unread letters crawl
From off the page, climb down her clinging gown,
Stand mocking the prisoner from every wall.
But pampered back to well, the girl must face,

Though right side up, the larger prison case.

by Nancy McWhorter

MIRRORS

I see the sky in a drop of dew
Pendent from a jonquil petal
Close to the ground. For stars I refer
To the silver globe on its pedestal

Rooted to the lawn. The pond supplies
My knowledge of the sun—a softer view
Than the flames that scorched my sight, before
I learned to stoop and look below

To see into heaven. Half-blinded now,
I shape the rainbow's floating grace
Mirrored in a grain of quartz
Or shimmering on a flake of ice.

I cannot look up.
Eye-level stabs like retinal spears;
But then I cry, and I can see
The world reflected in a tear.

by Larry Rubin

C I R C L E

by Alma Graham

The thing is like a circle, curving back
Into a somewhere that has been before.

We walk it; we have always walked it so . . .
Pass into Now, and through it, and around—
To Now again—walk heavy in ourselves,
Bulking of parts that die but will not drop,
That coffin death piecemeal into our flesh.

We do not stop to listen or to wait,
For only silence is a new sound here,
Throbbing the high unchanging of our voice;
Waiting would loose the tightness of the line
And syncopate the rhythm of our feet.

And what is there to wait for or to hear?
We are the world, and we can only walk.

But suddenly, an awful something new
Stings up into our nostrils; thing not guessed,
Thing light and pungent, rushing, rushing in
Through a slight break—it must be fixed—in circle,
Scrapes on our throats in one quick aching gasp.

What? But it's gone—the crazy tingling air,
Gone back into the crack, back past the crack.
Now we must rush to keep the Tuesday curve.
We cannot think of it . . . Oh horrid hint!
Can there be elsewhere? Is there someplace else?

Around again—our heavy, dying limbs
Will carry us around but never out—
Around through years, wondering for a wind
And aching in an unbendable circle.

Something is rushing at us—the sharp air
Flows into us, goes deep into our chests,
Pushing them up and out; they strain, then fall,
Then lighten; and within us something beats;
And something loosens—all the old, dead parts
Roll out into the air and are dissolved.

Perhaps—we hesitate . . . then run . . . then reach
The curve of circle . . . stop . . . touch it with hands,
Finger the break, and with a shouldered prayer
Edge into someplace wider, place of wind . . .

And yet—yet the wind passes as before.
We stay within, holding another circle.

MARILLA

(Continued from Page 18)

driver said with a worried look, and drew his head back in the window.

"Oh, dear, what am I going to do?" she asked tiredly. "Here I am. A poor, defenseless school teacher, bereft of my faithful family, stranded in the middle of the night on a dark street, with a strange man, and nobody to help me. Oh, what will my principal, Mr. Barnhill, think? George C. Barnhill." She sighed.

The dog coughed politely, and vanished back into the room, closing the window behind him.

The man grabbed her tightly in his arms and kissed her passionately on the nose.

She was breathless.

"Stop it!"

"Why?" He looked at her amazed.

"Mr. Barnhill wouldn't like it," she replied.

"He wouldn't?" he asked, his eyes wide.

"No! It's wicked!" she retorted.

"Yes, isn't it?" He wiggled his eyes at her seductively.

She pushed him away and looked at him with suspicion. "Do you mean to marry me, John Cubby?"

"No," he slowly replied, embarrassed. Then added quickly, "But I'll be good to you."

"The very idea!"

"I thought it was a good one," he added lamely. Then he bent over and nibbled at her ear, laughing.

"Why, Mr. Barnhill!" she gasped, delighted. Then she grinned slyly at him, and threw her arms around him. He felt surprisingly soft, and vaguely familiar. He whispered something into her ear, and as she bit him on the neck, two of her teeth fell out, and danced down the sidewalk into the darkness, hand in hand, like two blissful grasshoppers.

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CARRY ME HOME

(Continued from Page 14)

the men alone. But come on now. Let's go cat. We got a lot to talk about."

The woman got up and left the others who began to talk again. She did not look at her but stood still, trying to press down with her foot the grass that pushed up through the gravel.

"How is you been, Essie? You been all right?"

The woman was beside her now; out of the corner of her eye she could see her face. They began walking, and suddenly she felt Ester Ruth's arm around her shoulders, big and soft and warm, like something that covered her all over. She looked at her quickly, then smiled. Her body relaxed. It was good to be home.

STIRB UND WERDE

(Continued from Page 6)

having to, do I? Not to you; not with words.

Yesterday, when I went to another dormitory to look up a friend of last year, I was met with the words, only the made words, "She has blown her head off, didn't you know?" No, there are lots of things I don't know.

Thomas Mann is dead now, too.

So is Wallace Stevens.

So is Tim. I have just finished writing a letter saying I no longer love him. And that is not the complete and utter self-sacrifice it seems, because I am not sure now I ever loved *him* at all. I am, and always have been, in love with the image of "someone who speaks my strange language"; it is this image alone that I worship and love and devote my life to in words. But it is starting to crumble, because I can see through it now, through my own weakness, my own pitiful devotion to self.

I have been making an ass of myself all week over a teacher I met last week who speaks this same language. I have been corrupting the thoughts of two underclassmen who think I have an in with the Muse: I've been telling them they are not crazy when they want to devote their lives to words; and they have believed me. I have made the teacher run in the other direction when he sees me; and I have made the two students run to me with patterns and symbols they think I have power to understand. And I cannot decide who it is I love most; but I love all of them with a kind of high fever that frightens me.

Life *does* follow a strange pattern. I have yet to meet a feeling soul that is not sick unto death, or already dead too young with a hole in her head. Where is the "becoming" in that, Miss Kreuzer? Where is the growth and ripening in a mind sick with the temptation, the elusion, of sound? I am ready to die for the becoming—Where is the guarantee, I will find it? YOU must know, if anyone does.

When I open the door to Flämmchen, Billie and Tophie will be there again, and the smell of spices in the kitchen, and the sound of music in every room. These things are not easy to look back on; not when we're away from them. But they are everything in the world to look forward to.

Aren't they?

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