

CORADDI FALL '67

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Linda Flowers
EDITOR

Susan Settlemyre
MANAGING EDITOR

Betsy Culbertson
BUSINESS MANAGER

LITERARY STAFF: Georgia Barnes, Chairman; Jay Burton; Mary Fond Daughtridge; Roberta Engleman; Margaret Hoffman; Helene Jacobson; Dee Jones; Patsy Meacham; Marie Nahikian; Pat O'Shea; Renay Soffer; Mary Sue Watson.

ART STAFF: Betty Cheek, Chairman; Mary Jean Hand; Judy Jarvis; Brenda Katz; Nancy Leichsenring; Dee Dee Peatross; Karen Smith.

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Susan Settlemyre

ENCOUNTER: PROTEUS

I saw the ocean at late age,
Past twenty years, already
Acclimated to harder cliffs
And valleys. I stood, feet clinging to
Grey sand, and watched, believing in
The promise each undulance made
Of being last, of spreading past feet
And sand and not withdrawing, of
Revealing and emptying. I have
The fault of seeking final things,
And knowing height and hills. I could
Not drift with changing depths. But now,
Having seen the waves, and images
Upon them, I am bound to answer
Shell-sibilance, and tag with tide.

ALCHEMY

Our year has melded into the bright, strong ring
Where end becomes beginning and a jewel
In the bezel of ocean froth. I trace
Our rhythms and unpatternings, the course
Beginning with my mountain waterfall,
Widening to winter's pool, running
Lemming-like, unwilling,
To your place, this unfamiliar surf.
Tears blend well with tide, and I am glad
They can be shed on this smooth, wet,
Transforming shore, to leave my mountain
Rivers clear, unsalted—ready,
As I am ready, to reshape our ring of days.



the 23 psalm, according to freud

My father image is my refuge,
and sex I'll want.
He coercest me to revert to my oral stage,
he injects fluid in me.
he lures me by my mother, for his fame's sake.
he pours vasoline upon my head.
my stomach runneth over.
surely goodness and comfort shall track me down,
all the days of my oral stage,
and I will revert to the womb, forever.

—Pat O'Shea

A CURE-ALL FOR MORTALITY

Margaret Hoffman

He was twice thirteen and waiting for midnight. It was a night of no beginning and no end when August mellowed on the stomping of ice cream venders and cedar chests stored in attics. It was a night of preserving ancient wines and labeling the new. Once, twice, in the rushing of clouds or the motionless twitching of shadows the moon stirred. Slowly, once, twice, ashes rose. Ashes from decades and centuries — truck drivers and gold diggers, grass turned to rock and rock to cities and cities to grass, a war at Amsterdam, prophets and thieves — swirled into the incense of twisted streets shadowed by fear in a handful of dust.

“Pray you sinners! Get down on your hands and knees and . . .”

Time for the mercenary angel. He hesitated in his mechanical pace, his eyes searching the old woman who, standing on the sidewalk, deviated from the ritual of exhibiting pamphlets to protest against the damned. *The Road To Salvation*, handed out every Friday night on the corner of Fifth and Main was enthusiastically avoided by bus riders who relieved the driver of his duties a block too soon or too late; and offered by a fortune teller of death, a vulture that picked mens' bones and grew fat on the sweat of souls. And she had been standing there since the beginning of time, shrouded in black and selling silver crosses for 35c.

“And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both men and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of heaven, and they were destroyed upon the earth. Only Noah remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark . . .”

Far away, he could see her, dangling the crosses and counting the money from the men who sensed a change in the wind, dangling and counting, dangling and counting, as she had done to him in a time not so different from this, but long ago. And afraid to meet so many staring faces he had accepted the cross and walked into the silence of darkness.

“And you that reject the Lord's mercy and follow the devil's path shall be burned in the everlasting pits of Hell and damnation. Confess . . .”

The wind swept away the stars.

He turned the corner.

Somewhere, he could hear the off-key whistling of “Yankee Doodle.” Under a streetlamp moths fluttered, then burned in lilac patches. He listened to the old woman's voice rise and fall, rise and fall, tinkling with the clockworks of mankind until she discovered the wire that was strung too tight or too loose, the intricate wheel that somehow was wound the wrong way and pricking, pricking, struck the alarm.

As he crossed the street broken glass scraped against gutters. Gazing over a frozen space of sky, he watched Mandanov perched on a rooftop. By day, Mandanov was the town handyman and drunk. By night, he twisted T.V. antennas. He knew Mandanov was not below average in intelligence. The local psychiatrist had established his I.Q. slightly above normal. It was just that Mandanov did not like T.V. antennas. He kept bending pieces of them down and the police kept locking him up. And since he did not exactly steal the antennas, he would be out of jail the next night bending them down again.

Mandanov worked nightly contorting the metal wire-taps, wrenching them into useless contraptions of fizzled steel. He remembered when the police department had ordered an investigation, calling in several witnesses to the nightly performances but they knew nothing whatsoever about any machination or T.V. antennas, as a matter of fact, and anyway it was a hot day and the investigation department was worried over the local robbery. The case was dropped and Mandanov labeled a lone conspirator.

Then, he had read where the press had interviewed Mandanov, hinting at the townspeople's complaints of missing their morning cooking program or the late, late, show and their irritability at the city council. Mandanov had only replied that he didn't like T.V.'s either. And s.

he took his nightly exercise on slate shingles one time and the cement floor of the jail the next.

After eyeing Mandanov with partial puzzlement, he crossed the block. The wind rustled. He stepped another ten paces, glanced at the trees that lined the sidewalk, hurried up a flight of stairs, and turning a brass door-knob, walked into the museum.

The museum—a wonderous place. Begin with the corners. Dust. The makeup of mankind. The thread that weaves ages into history and history into the future. The dressing that stuffs a Thanksgiving turkey and a lifes' headaches. Scatter it and it becomes a weak travesty of existence, build it up and it becomes an empire. Next, savor the antique relishes; old varnishes, somewhere the scent of lavender, the spice of frames cut fresh a hundred years ago. And breathing very softly, very slowly . . .

"Looking for something"? The janitor interrupted his rhythmic sweeping to glance sideways.

"What? Oh." Here was a storage chest of dreams. Touching it he felt the thousand thumbprints of time. And touching, touching, on the night after he took a cross he had felt the scrolls and the rose pottery until his fingerprints had, too, become those of time. On that night walking out of the museum he had never left. Tonight he had come back, looking for what? Maybe his own shadow. Where would he look? Under Egyptian tombs or Blakes' poems or American Indians? And would it be there in all that history waiting for him?

The janitor pushed back a graying hair from his forehead. "You know a museum's the windshield wiper of time. Stare into its window and you can conjure up other heros and villains of the past. But the events, actions, cultures — only hollow bowls like the pottery they are. Scarecrow straws of the wind. No souls.

"Take this museum. What's it here for? A little knowledge or maybe to show our civilization outrates all the others? No, it's a salve for the present, the ointment that rubs the sore of humanity and makes the bittersweetness of life a little sweeter for the other freaks and accidents of time. It's all that mankind saves to call himself creation—a cure-all for mortality. Smell its old cultures, sniff its old scents, but don't, don't become part of it."

Sweep the dust over. Sweep the dust over. He watched the janitor brushing the ashes into a corner. Maybe the old man had always known, had watched him on the cold October nights when the dried husks of leaves had rattled his mind to memories, or the eleven o'clocks of Decembers when snowflakes had fallen to dreams; and knowing had gone on sweeping the dust into the cobwebs and corners of the museum.

Silently, he went to the door, opened it, closed it, and walked out into the night.

He did not notice that he was in an older section of the town until he half-tripped over the cobblestones and it was not until a block later that he heard the music. The music was similar to that of a harpsicord and yet, it was different from anything he had ever heard. Maybe its strangeness hovered in its indistinct melody. Somehow, the instrument was separating the whole bizarre material of a human life, its loneliness, hopes, miseries, expectations; separating it, feeling it, striking its chords, and sighing, sighing, spun out a string of endless incantations, haunting tunes in a thin wail of strangeness. He stood in the lamplight, listening for fifteen minutes.

There was a faint scent of licorice in the air.

Music played the night.

He was about to turn back when a sudden gust of wind shifted a scrap of paper into the lamplight.

PICCADILLY CURIO SHOP
Dealers in First-Hand Antiques
Specializing
In Creating and Repairing Copies
1730 Piccadilly Lane
Open: 10 A.M.-12 P.M.

Maybe it was the way the advertisement was printed in flourishing curled letters or maybe it was its sudden appearance, but after a moment's hesitation he stuffed it into his pocket, turned the corner, and walked another two blocks.

At first glance the curio shop resembled any other curio shop. When he opened the door a small silver bell shivered above his head. The room was cluttered in Japanese lanterns and pillows embroidered in lions' heads. It smelled of licorice.

"Were you looking for something"? A man from behind the counter gazed at him with interest.

Looking for something? Yes, he was looking for something. Half his life he had been looking for something. Hunting museums, writing, waiting . . .

"Maybe, antiques. We carry them first-hand, you know."

"Yes, I know." He withdrew the advertisement from his pocket. "I found it, in the street."

"Ah, yes." The man nodded. "Sometimes they turn up in the oddest places."

“Perhaps . . .” The man stooped down and retrieved a small box from a glass covered case beneath the counter. “Perhaps, you would care for this.”

When the lid was lifted, he saw it contained a large silver dagger.

He laughed. “The dagger that stabbed Becket, no doubt?”

The man winked. “No, Caesar. It was the first to strike. Would you . . .?”

“No, I don’t think so. That wasn’t what I had in mind.”

“A wise decision. Perhaps this.” The man took out a sheet of music. “Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2. Liszt. Or maybe even this.” A paint brush appeared. “Michael-angelo’s?”

Seeming almost brand new, the paint brush, polished and smooth, could have been a fraud except that it was a type not made for at least two hundred years. The man was *not* offering antiques. No, there was something else. He was offering other glories, other sufferings—other lives. A chance to be someone else!

Outside, weathervanes turned and faced the east.

And quietly, very swiftly the harpsicord altered its tune.

“The music — it’s different.” He quit examining the brush.

“What? Yes, the music.” The man pointed towards the end of the room.

Peculiar that he had not noticed the machine before. It was fantastic—a sideshow of flesh and blood cranked on the bolts of civilizations’ dawns and sunsets, a kaleidoscope of hope and despair — a miracle — a miracle of rare device. Seven feet of wood and gold ceiling whispering its voice through pretzel streets, over deserted lots, down sewers, whispering of wild plums in fields and frosted Septembers, playing something very old. The tune, he remembered, yet did not know at all.

The machine was erected before him, not a harpsicord but a miniature stage, of tiny wooden figurines, crashing symbols, kicking drums, and dancing to the mechanical meter of the music. The box was not unlike the ones which displayed clockwork figures at carnivals a hundred years ago.

The machine was intricate — design within design, system within system. After several minutes he noticed something that had not captured his attention before. It was located to the left of the center — a figurine shrouded in peeling black paint, an old woman — a carrion fowl

breeding in fear and selling silver crosses for 35c. And humming under his breath he became aware of the tune. Slowly, very slowly, the machine was dissecting his summers, his winters, his storms, and playing back slowly, very slowly, his life. If he chose an antique would he too find in a sudden laugh, an unexpected frown, his paint peeling on that twirling clockwork of figures?

“Would you be interested in this?” The man was speaking again.

“No, no, I don’t think so.” And smiling inside himself, he opened the door, heard the shivering of the silver bell, closed it, and walked out.

He did not notice it until he had walked a block, and half-tripped over the cobblestones, but under a pale wafer of the moon he could see a faint outline of his shadow following his heels. On a church steeple, a clock hurled down the hour twelve times. In the lamplight he picked a persimmon leaf, felt its skeleton, and tapping a tune in his footsteps went to find something *he* could believe in doing — something in the form of a T.V. antenna.



Summer Employment

SUSAN SETTLEMYRE

My office is hidden where
Even right ones, lacking proper charms,
Can never find the way.
Three narrow roads, writhing far
Into countryside like explorer worms,
Straggle, pine-margined, among
Tarpaper shacks that play
At being stores, houses pink-painted
And unpainted, with Christmas lights strung
At night around the rims.
The use of certain arcane spells
Will bring those right ones past a bend
To the school, deserted, renovated,
Reinhabited, to Help the Poor
Whose homes
And church surround
It. Our sterile idealism fools
Only us. The inhabitants are sure
Of folly—theirs as well as ours.
The preacher knows, our Local Aide, whose desk time
Can be counted in half-hours,
Whose old teeth gleam,
Gold-bordered like expensive books.
He knows, trapped by swivel chairs,
Intimidated by
Inarticulate memoranda
From which he unceasing seeks
Escape. Beside his tiny fears
Stalk northern-voiced boys,
Come South to offer aid.
Stalk in and talk. Stalk out.
And I sit, chained beyond mobility.
Helping no one by my facility
To add
Ionic payrolls, configured rows
Of ought and naught.
I study my brief, constant windowscene—
The chickenwire mud schoolyard
And spiky woods behind, morning fog
Like smoky mirrors, light-casting, rain
(Silver, sudden storms that drag
The sky and then disperse each afternoon,
Clear as a last-spoken word).
So, I watch sky before I trace
Home the unbridled roads
So hidden even the right one
(No more than one) without charms and guides
Can never find the ways.

Karen Endres

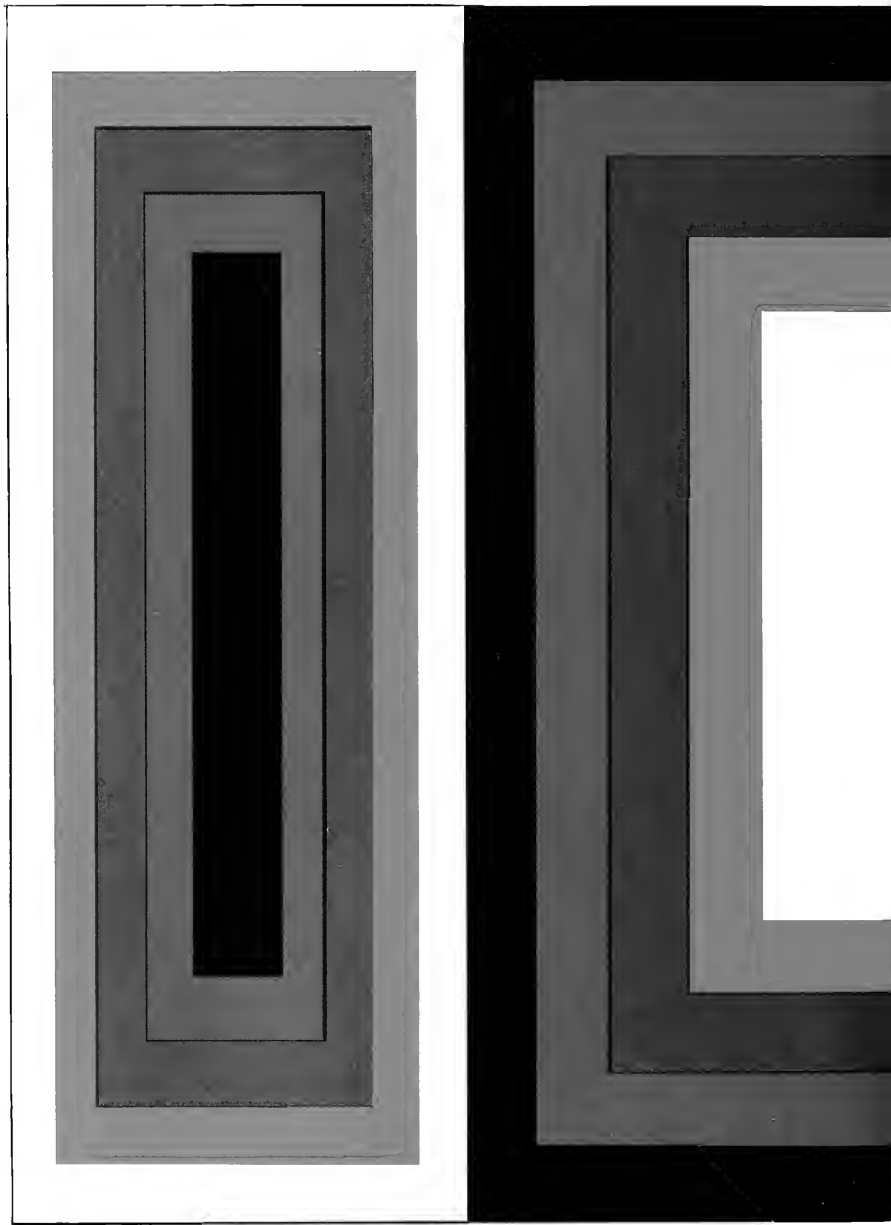
TWO STAGE WORLDS

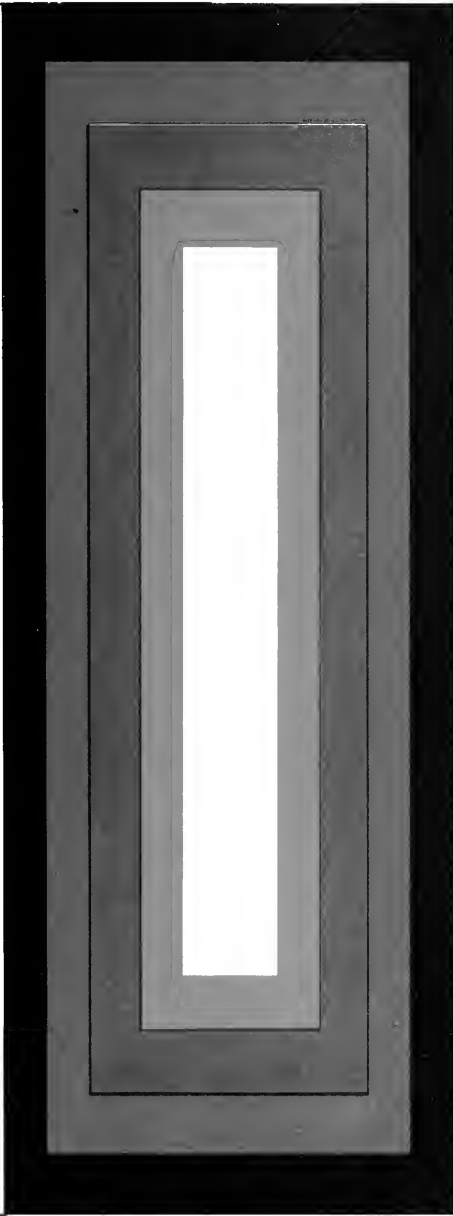
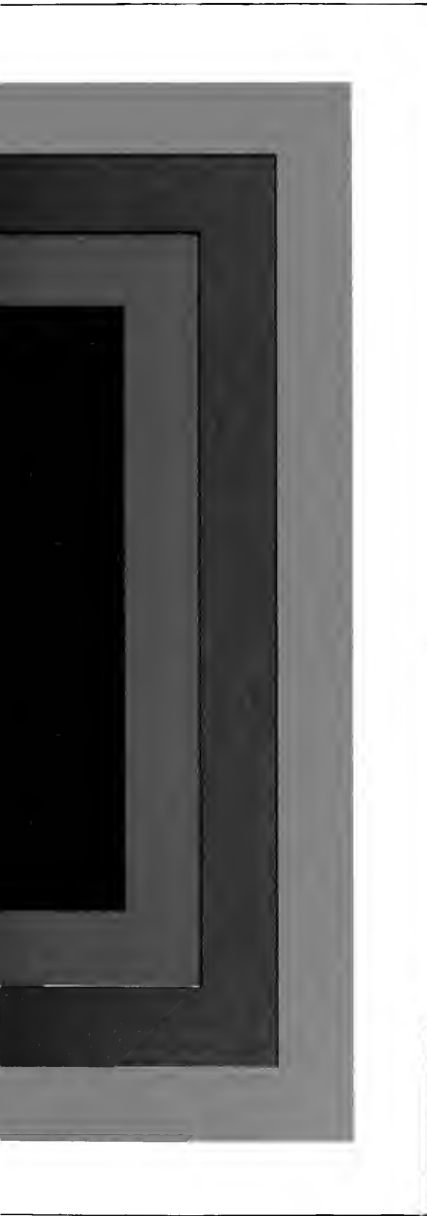
If what you ask is puppet play: a dance
which dangles light in motion Eve-prescribed
to tempt me to a role of plucked romance
by rote actors in gold costumes, described
in their harsh footlight-tarnished terms as Fun's
measured curtain acts, moneyed shows of grace;
then find another stage — with painted suns
for scenery. Go dance with its masked face.

The sun-graced stage on which I play is cracked
with earthly apple trees: in ripeness rise
their fruits. The gingham dress in which I act
is floured for I am baking apple pies.
If you like apples more than tasteless trance
then ask again. I solemnly will dance.

POETS AND RESURRECTION

How can they say in song
the joyful earth breeds oaks
from graves and wheat from wrong
weeding, and flesh that soaks
in death can rise and girth
itself in clean spiced shrouds?
Words have no cause for mirth
when ignorance beclouds
the smell of deadened souls
with frankincense and myrrh.
Soft herbs hide earth worms' tolls
of green body, now blur
of rank rot. Why, pray,
don't poets say decay?





Nancy

Leichsenring

THE GARDEN

Roberta Engleman

Beyond the window there was a garden. Ananias could see it from his bed, and he thought a great deal about it, because he had a great deal of time to think. Usually he thought about how it was really not a garden anymore, at least the last few summers. At least since he took to declining. That was what Dora called it. The garden was declining too. It was always grown up in ragweed and morning-glory in the summer. Last year Dora, being unmarried and having time for such things, had had a circle picnic there in the spring. By summer there had been two stubborn watermelons. Dora had not paid much attention to them until two little boys had made off with them. Then she had run out screaming and whooping and flopping her apron at them. That was funny! Ananias lay in his bed and laughed.

This spring there had been no circle picnic, and there would be no watermelons—just ragweeds, and he felt he was getting too weak to sit up for long at a time to watch the garden anyway. Ananias winced. There was consolation that he would be spared the sight of the ragweed, but he missed the morning-glories. They were rather nice, as weeds go. Wondering if they were there yet, Ananias raised up on his elbows. He had just gotten up when Dora's steps started coming down the hall. Dora walked like nobody else—the whole house jiggled. Ananias flopped back down to play possum.

"Pa, are you asleep?" she called outside the door. He did not answer, so she bumped the door open with her ample hip and minced precariously across the room with a basin of soapy water.

Ananias peeked at her and turned his head away. "I just had a bath," he said with his eyes shut.

Dora kept coming. He repeated himself patiently. He might never have said a word. Lately it was always like that. Ananias was beginning to burrow down under the cover. When her steps went by him and the vibrations began to come from the far side of the room, he peered cautiously out.

When he saw what she was going to do he shrieked, "Don't!"

Dora looked around. She had just balanced the basin on the window sill and was about to take a swipe at the dirty glass. "Well Pa! Why not?"

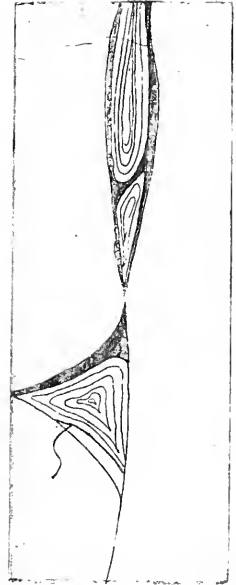
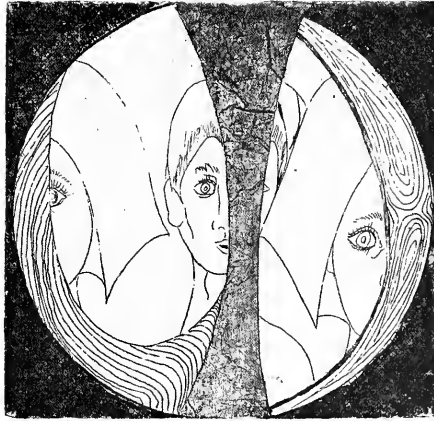
Ananias rolled over on his back and contemplated the ceiling. "I like the fingerprints. They're Bobby's." Bobby was his little grandson, and he saw the child too infrequently.

Dora shook her head. "Bobby's the filthiest little child. His mother can put up with it in her house, but I—"

"Dora—" Ananias, without meaning to, had fallen back on pleading. Dora shrugged. She looked at the old man in his bed, at the dirty window, and at the soapy water, each lingeringly. "But if I don't wash the window you can't see the garden," she said triumphantly. She wrung out her rag in the water, and Ananias sighed.

When she was gone, it was at least true that he could see the garden better, but that was not much comfort. This spring it looked worse than ever. Halfway across it was a toolshed. Ananias ached just to think about the equipment rusting there. On the other side of the shed was Maxwell's house. Maxwell was his good friend, but Dora didn't know it. When Dora and Maxwell's wife Claire (Why or how he had married such a young woman was beyond Ananias' comprehension. When Maxwell got something on his mind, though . . .) went to circle on Tuesday, Maxwell sneaked across the garden and brought magazines and cigars. Then the two of them smoked and discussed the varied endowments of the magazine women, or Maxwell discussed his World War I adventures. Each time, Ananias noticed, they were braver, funnier, and sadder.

He cranked his neck up a little. This being Tuesday, maybe Claire would go to circle today. She had missed last week because of having a cold. He could not quite see, but he thought presently that he heard Maxwell's door slam. When his own house began to vibrate, he re-



joined. Bless circles! Dora stuck her head in the door. "I'm going to circle, Pa. Call me at Jane's if you need me."

He nodded. The vibrations started again, and the front door slammed. He could hear Dora and Claire talking. Presently he could see Maxwell stick his long skinny neck out his own back door. Maxwell looked in all directions and scuttled from his house to the tool shed, where he repeated the neck-craning process. The morning-glories were mines, and the neighbors were Germans in Maxwell's old age. He made a last heroic sprint and presently flung open Ananias' door, breathing heavily. Ananias' face fell.

His neighbor dropped into a chair. "What's the matter?"

"What happened to the magazines?"

"Nothing."

Ananias wished he wouldn't gasp so much. "Claire threw them away," he accused.

"She did not."

Ananias knew better. That had happened twice before, and to the cigars as well. Dora had said so. Not that Dora knew he was getting any. But there was no point in pressing the issue. "Well—" he said abruptly, "how are you these days?"

Maxwell grinned and nodded. "Real fit."

The trick was now to keep him from talking about what he had done in World War I. But it was a trick Ananias didn't know. When there were no magazines to keep his brain full and no cigars to keep his mouth full, that was always it, and today was no different. Ananias liked Maxwell, it was not just the things he brought. He really did like the funny old man. Sometimes, scrawny as he was, Maxwell would help him out of bed and let Ananias lean on him for brief walks. But if there was one thing that was getting old, it was Maxwell's war experiences.

"—two of them. No, three. And just me on the other side of just a little old hedge with no gun. Well, what would you do?"

Ananias shook his head.

"I'll tell you what I did. I—"

Ananias' eyes wandered out the clean window. "Dora washed the window today."

"Damned if she didn't. Well, then I crept around—"
"Maxwell—"

Maxwell stopped impatiently. Ananias raised himself up on one elbow with less effort than he had expected. "Let me tell you what I did during the war."

"You weren't in the war," Maxwell said with authority.

"Yes I was. I was a farmer. And I'll bet you ate what I grew."

"Well sure! Everybody had his part—no matter how unimportant!" Maxwell exclaimed in perfect innocence.

"Maxwell, do you know something. I could still grow a garden. We could, I mean."

Maxwell shrugged. "I was in the infantry," he said. Ananias knew he wished that he could get back to the story of the Germans and the scrawny hedge.

"No, listen," said Ananias. "I've got fifteen dollars Dora doesn't know about. I could get Smith with his tractor over here to plow it for five. And then we could get seeds with what's left over."

"Why?" asked Maxwell.

"Because," said Ananias patiently. "Because we could make money. We could get Smith to sell the stuff we grow. He used to do that for me for years."

"What would we grow?"

"Vegetables."

"Flowers too?"

"No, just beans and—"

"Why not?"

"Why not what?"

"Why not flowers!" Maxwell exploded.

"What good are flowers!" Ananias exploded back.

"For looks, that's what. In France there were these girls who came around with baskets of flowers. They made loads of money—"

"Not from flowers."

Maxwell, hurt at having his logic called into question, retaliated, "How are you going to plant a garden? I'll bet you haven't even been out of bed in three days."

Ananias lay still for a moment. Maxwell was such an ass. Ananias reached over to the bedtable, levered himself up, and put his feet on the floor. He pushed himself up, walked four times around the room (albeit shakily on the last lap) and sat back on the bed.

Maxwell was impressed. "I'll do it on one condition," he said.

"What's that?"

"We have to grow some flowers. Begonias."

Ananias leaned back and sighed. "Begonias it is," he said.

Plans proceeded slowly. Maxwell almost gave everything away more than once. He bought seed catalogues and nearly left them where Claire could see them, and when he was talking to Smith on the phone he nearly got the time wrong. It had to be Tuesday at 3:30, and they could just pray the girls went to circle.

Ananias fretted about all this, but Maxwell thrived on intrigue. Ananias had had to let him handle the de-

tails. He had all he could do just getting up and getting his strength back. Maxwell would be surprised how strong he was getting. The biggest trouble they had was over the seeds. Maxwell, in addition to begonias, wanted sunflowers and snapdragons. He was adamant, and since he was doing the buying there was nothing Ananias could do. As it finally stood there were begonias, snapdragons, and sunflowers for Maxwell, and beans, beets, and tomatoes for Ananias.

The day of the plowing Ananias was feverish. Maxwell sat in his back yard and glanced furtively this way and that over the top of a newspaper. If Dora were home—Ananias felt his heart pound. If Dora were home, she would have a fit. She might say he was getting out of his mind with old age. She might even send him to a rest home. Why didn't Maxwell go in the house! He looked like a fool!

Dora and Claire were late leaving. Smith came lumbering down the road on his tractor before they were out of sight. They actually waved to him. Ananias closed his eyes in fright, and Maxwell buried his head in the newspaper, which quivered with mirth. But the moment passed; the women did not look back, and Smith turned into the garden. Maxwell abandoned his paper and went scampering over. Ananias walked slowly outside. He felt in his pocket for the key to the tool shed.

After Smith plowed the field, Maxwell, who had chipped into Ananias' fund with \$7.50 of his own and thus become treasurer, paid him. The two men waited until Smith was out of sight, and then Maxwell, bouncing on his toes like a little boy, clamored for the key. Ananias was struck suddenly with the importance of the occasion, but Ananias managed to turn it. He and Maxwell pulled the door open. Inside everything was covered with cobwebs. Dora went in once a year in the spring and dusted, but she had not yet made it this year. So Maxwell and Ananias were obliged to clean out the shed before they could start. When that was done, Ananias was left to stand guard while Maxwell went for the seed, which he had hidden under his bed.

Ananias leaned on a hoe and looked around. Smith was a careful worker. He had not cut corners, and he had harrowed the soil carefully. Ananias poked experimentally at a large clod. It was moist and crumbled. He grinned. While he was gingerly breaking up another clod, Maxwell came back lugging a big sack.

"What's that!" he exclaimed, pop-eyed.

"Snapdragon seeds."

"Where are my half-runner beans? That I ordered?"

"They're in the house too. I want to plant these first."

"Maxwell! I told you—"

Maxwell's eyes bugged all of a sudden, and he dropped the sack hastily. Ananias looked over his shoulder and saw Claire and Dora coming back.

"Take cover!" Maxwell whispered loudly, and he nearly fell over the top of Ananias trying to get inside the shed.

"But Maxw—" Ananias protested as Maxwell dragged him inside. "It's plowed. They'll see—"

"Shh!" Maxwell made him get down on his knees. Ananias felt foolish. He could hear first Claire's voice shouting for Maxwell and then Dora screaming for him from the other porch. Tired of Maxwell's dramatics, he started to protest how silly all this was. When he got a good look at Maxwell, though, he was startled to see that his friend was actually frightened. He was pale, and he gripped the window sill so hard that his fingernails were white. Ananias shook his head and got up. He walked outside, using his hoe to lean on. Maxwell got up enough nerve to follow. He was flourishing a pick.

Dora, when she saw them, let go with a shriek. "Pa! Are you crazy? Claire, come around here and just look! Claire!"

Claire raced through the garden. "Maxwell! What do you think you're doing?"

Maxwell, temporarily back in the spirit of things, said, "Planting a garden. A *flower* garden."

"A what!"

Maxwell quailed.

Ananias looked back to Dora on the porch. She stood with her feet apart wavering back and forth. Ananias said to her, calmly, "Smith plowed the garden and we paid him. We're going to plant some beans and tomatoes."

"And snapdragons?" Maxwell suggested.

Ananias nodded. "And snapdragons."

"Get back in bed!"

Ananias took a firm grip on the hoe and turned his head deliberately from side to side. Claire ran to Dora and the two of them had a whispering conference. Presently Claire ran out after something. Ananias felt his legs quivering a little, but he remained propped on the hoe. He knew in his soul that he could outlast Dora. Presently Claire came back with the doctor, who took one look and burst out laughing. Claire was flabbergasted.

"Aren't you going to send them to bed?"

The doctor had no intention of it. Instead he took them both inside, listened to their hearts, and said they could work an hour a day if they were careful. Maxwell beamed, and Ananias glowed. It was understood, of course, that Maxwell was able to do much more than

Ananias. This was unfortunate, for Ananias loved the digging and hoeing, and Maxwell brimmed with grand designs for systems of irrigation, the scientific use of fertilizer, and crop rotation in the subsequent years. After they had finally managed to get everything planted, however, they got along well enough together. Maxwell had made a last-minute ploy to introduce petunias in the place of tomato plants, but Ananias had won. It took them a long time to get everything in the ground. Maxwell naturally had to do most of the stooping, and he muttered a great deal. Ananias suggested that he should go more slowly or give it up altogether if it were that painful. But Maxwell made it clear to all concerned (Claire being the most concerned of all) that he was working in the garden because he wanted to. Ananias wondered if he were not simply stubborn.

But Maxwell was faithful to the garden. As summer progressed and the garden began to flourish, his hour in the garden increased a few minutes at a time until he spent most of the morning there. Ananias' time increased too. His beets and beans did well and were a source of pride to him. The tomatoes were a problem, but there was still hope. As he tended them patiently he sometimes watched Maxwell out of the corner of his eye. Maxwell fumed over the color of the snapdragons, and he went into a rage when his sunflowers drooped and refused to turn their heads to the sun. Ananias shook his head. He was convinced that Maxwell hated the garden and wished he had never gotten involved in it.

Ananias was proved wrong. One night in August there was a huge storm. Ananias sat in his bed and watched the successive sheets of rain scurry across Maxwell's roof. He could not quite make out anything in the garden, but he feared for his tomatoes. He shut his eyes and lay back in his bed. In a moment or so, however, he heard someone pounding on the door. Dora opened it, and the next thing Ananias knew, Maxwell was standing in his door shivering and dripping. He was in a panic about his flowers, and he grabbed Ananias by the arm, begging him to come and help cover them up.

"Why?" Ananias said, handing him a towel. "We can't. We'll catch our deaths."

Maxwell ignored the towel and kept pulling on his arm. "What about the flowers!"

"Maxwell!" Ananias shook his arm free. "Sit down!"

Maxwell obeyed. "They're ruined," he said dejectedly. "All ruined by now."

Ananias never had any doubt afterwards that Maxwell cared for the garden.

The garden survived the rain. The sunflowers were a little bewildered for a day or so, but on the whole everything was reasonably well off—better, in fact, than Max-

well, who had a miserable cold. Whenever people stopped by to see how the garden was doing, he would show them his snapdragons and, sniffing, explain everything he had done. Ananias' tomatoes turned admirably, and he was preoccupied with them and reveling in the fact that Dora let him alone more. He went out and came in when he pleased. One day she asked him how many quarts of tomatoes she could plan on canning, and the next morning he went out to make an estimate.

Maxwell was not there. He was usually the first one out in the morning. Ananias bent down and began to count the tomatoes. He had gotten to ten when the phone rang in his house. Dora answered it. He waited a moment and went on counting.

"Pa! Come in the house!" Dora used her old peremptory tone, and Ananias ducked his head. "—twenty-eight, twenty-nine, thirty," he said softly to himself.

"Pa!"

He shut his eyes.

An ambulance pulled up to Maxwell's house. Ananias stopped counting. In ten minutes two men rolled a stretcher out. He could not see Maxwell, only a sheet. Claire followed droopily. She did not get into the wagon. When it was gone, she turned around and looked at the garden. Ananias turned his head from her. Claire's door did not shut until after a lingering silence. Ananias knew that she was staring at him and that he was supposed to feel guilty for the garden that had caused Maxwell to die, but he did not feel it. Dora was still staring at him out the window. She opened her mouth and raised her hand to motion him in, but he looked at her so fiercely that her hand fell and she moved out of his sight. He looked back around to his tomatoes, realizing that he had lost count. The snapdragons waved stiffly in a little wind that passed by.

The funeral was unusual. There were no flowers except snapdragons and begonias and even a tall holder of sunflowers. All this had been Maxwell's last wishes, and everyone was shocked and upset except Ananias. The minister ignored the vases and dwelt on Maxwell's war glories. But Maxwell had not died of war wounds, as the vases said. It was sunflowers that wouldn't stand up straight. They had made him forget the war and worried him to death. Ananias understood all this as well as anyone, and he puzzled over it while the minister droned. The garden had made him live, but in the midst of its benevolence to him it had paused to worry his friend into reality—Ananias smiled at this—but, he also realized with the briefest twinge of conscience, past reality and into death. Ananias was surprised at his thoughts. It was the sunflowers, he amended himself simply. I should never have let him plant the sunflowers.

FROM MADRID

—*Mary Sue Watson*

You looked down
Though shorter, condescending.

Napoleon, your hand
Shoved under corduroy.
Cordova's leather grasps your waist,
A silver buckle, a Corsican's taste.

Madrid you conquered on the third of May.

I fancy a former belt, a younger you;
Holsters and cap pistols, you swaggered at six.
No, better a brave, a renegade
With rubber-tipped arrows.

But I had no Indian ways,
Couldn't feel the under dog,
Lost in smoke signals.

Your black eyes pierced,
With barbs no longer softened;
Survey your sacked city.

Madrid you conquered on the third of May.



THE LAST SUPPER

Dorothy Morrison

It had to be done. One does not choose to live or die; one only lives and does what has to be done. Rodrigo did not say the words, but his feet and arms and chest ached them silently. He walked down the gulley, looking only where to step. He did not think of avoiding thought; his mind rested—weak as the passive desert, strong with the motion of his living. Rosalia would not know this nor care to know; Manuel forgave him by dying.

Rodrigo had not looked as he had done it, for he had not cared. He knew it was not enough food; its small strength could not change matters. After so much death, however, one is full with its sadness and turns from hope without noticing. But there was still Rosalia, and his joy of her did not need hope. Climbing up the shallow side of the gulley, Rodrigo stepped on a stray bone of one of the horses . . . and remembered.

After the first week he had taken the horses to the gulley to shoot them. He had killed them together. From the gulley the smell of the rotting flesh did not reach them too strongly. He had thought the buzzards would pick the horses and leave him and his wife and child alone, but there had been no buzzards.

The week of the horses had been good: Rodrigo had been strong enough to walk back to the encampment in half a day. One barrel of water was all the Indians had left of the water wagon. He had not stayed there long. There might have been more of value, but the stink of death and the upward faces had driven him to live his own tragedy. He had taken only the water and returned to Rosalia and Manuel. Rodrigo had run further into the desert after the first strike; the Indians had been wise enough to let him go.

Soon they could no longer eat the decaying horse meat; there had been nothing more except cactus and a little water. Rosalia had then moved only to nurse Manuel. When her milk had stopped, she had kept still to make the baby sleep. The night before this day, when Rodrigo took Manuel from her, Rosalia had not moved; but the love in her eyes had made journeys.

Rodrigo caught sight of the shelter rock. The father did not hurt for his child—it was the only thing to do. Manuel was one more day's life to them now. This joy was a little stronger than his sadness: there was no need for shame.

He approached the bed and, with dusty, brave eyes, he looked down on sleeping Rosalia.

"Asleep her face grieves and is tired," he thought. "Only when she does not know I see." He slowly dropped to the ground beside her. "She will be too happy with the meat to ask." He thought this false, hoping sentence, realizing that he lied.

He put his hand on her head. She did not wake entirely; she was very weak and smiled faintly with her eyes. He put a piece of the meat between her lips. The taste was pleasant and almost wet. She took it into her mouth and after a while, chewed. They ate the rest together and went to sleep with their hunger.

The great rose sun poured its color three times on the ends of the desert. When dead they needed no eyes for love.



3/10

1944 - 1945

John H. ...

DUCKS

Linda Flowers

It has been a year or more since
I last saw half-wild ducks
On frozen northern ponds
Circling and cold, my beige car easing
Slowly past (Here in November
The cold has not yet settled
Though ice lingers in water-buckets half-full.).

I take my hunting cap and
Camouflage jacket and wander all day in the
Snow-swept woods, across the ends of
Corn-fields (counting the telephone poles
To distance me), until shadows fill
The sky like heavy rain
Through empty winter trees.



CONTRIBUTORS

Art

KAREN CASEY, whose work has appeared previously in CORADDI, is a senior art major from Falls Church, Virginia.

MARY JEAN HAND, a senior art major, is from Yorktown Heights, New York. Her work has appeared previously in CORADDI.

NANCY LEICHSENRING is a sophomore art major from Oak Ridge, Tennessee. This is her first contribution to CORADDI.

CHRIS MOODY, a freshman art major from Charlotte, North Carolina, has a contribution in this fall's RED CLAY READER IV.

DEE DEE PEATROSS, from New Smyrna Beach, Florida, is a junior art major whose work has appeared previously in CORADDI.

BARBEE SATTERFIELD, a first year graduate student here, has contributed frequently to CORADDI.

Literary

ROBERTA ENGLEMAN is a senior English major from Asheville, North Carolina. Her work has appeared previously in CORADDI.

LINDA FLOWERS is a senior English major from Faison, North Carolina.

MARGARET HOFFMAN is a freshman from Danville, Virginia.

DOROTHY MORRISON is a junior from Richmond, Virginia.

SUSAN SETTLEMYRE, from Morganton, North Carolina, is a senior English major. Her work has appeared previously in CORADDI.

PAT O'SHEA is a freshman English major.

MARY SUE WATSON is a senior from Bethel, North Carolina. This is her first publication in CORADDI.

