

# CORADDI

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# 5

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MANY DIFFERENT  
BRANDS AND  
COMPARED—IT'S  
CAMELS WITH ME!

I'VE TRIED  
OTHER BRANDS  
—NOTHING SUITS  
MY 'T-ZONE'  
LIKE A CAMEL!

CAMELS  
ARE THE  
'CHOICE OF  
EXPERIENCE'  
WITH ME!

CAMELS SUIT ME  
BETTER ALL WAYS.  
THEY TASTE SO GOOD  
—THEY SMOKE SO  
MILD AND COOL!

*Jerry Ambler*

RODEO  
BRONC-RIDING STAR

*Mrs. Dorothy Allan Newstead*

HOLDER OF NATIONAL  
WOMEN'S FISHING RECORDS

*Cecil Smith*

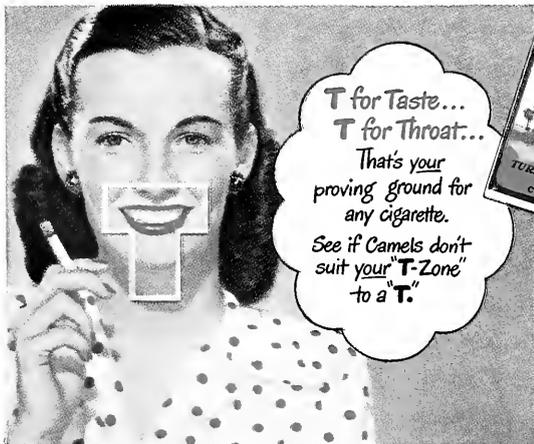
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STUDENT MAGAZINE of THE WOMAN'S COLLEGE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, GREENSBORO, N. C.

**Editor's Notes**

THE WRITING in this issue was selected, by a student-faculty committee of readers, for discussion at Woman's College's Fifth Arts Forum, March 11-13. A public discussion by the forum critics: Mr. John Crowe Ransom, Mr. Isaac Rosenfeld, and Mr. Randall Jarrell, will be held in the Alumnae House on the afternoon of March 11. Conferences for individual criticism of students' work are scheduled during the three days with the visiting critics, Mr. Ransom, Mr. Rosenfeld, Mr. Robert Lowell, and with the Woman's College resident writers, Mr. Jarrell and Mr. Peter Taylor.

THE COMMITTEE OF READERS: Kay Arrowood, Nancy Johnson, Nancy Siff Murphey, Marjean Perry, Rose Zimmerman Post, Winifred Rodgers, Ann Shuffler, Nina Smith, Margaret Spencer, Barbara Westmoreland; Professors Elizabeth Burroughs, Randall Jarrell, Jane Summerell, Peter Taylor, Marc Friedlaender, *chairman*.

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**NINA SMITH:****Antecedent**

It's getting cold again; the air has a gingeral taste to it. I noticed it when I took the dog for a walk over to the City Park this afternoon. The lake had a dull, almost-frozen look. That's deceptive, though. It never gets cold enough here to freeze the lake. Folks around here don't know what ice skates look like. My kids are almost grown, and they've never even seen any skating.

They've been racing around all afternoon in somebody's "hot-rod" jalopy. Their idea of fun, I suppose. Why, afternoons like this back home, when I was a kid, we would all have been rushing to the pond soon as school let out to see if there was any ice. And when the first thin shell of it showed around the edge of the cove, we would hold our breaths, and take the long-way-round home from school to measure it, until somebody's father said it was strong enough. Mr. Connally up at School said two and a half inches, but my father said that was because we weren't his kids, and that *he'd* tan us if we went out on any ice thinner than four, if he heard about it. But of course, generally as soon as the dare devils proved it would hold them up, we would all be out sliding, wetting the seats of our pants in the snow and slush.

My mother always knew when we'd been sliding, for it was she who hung up the wet clothes and put the patches in our pants. But she said only "Waste of good shoe leather," and "Mind you be careful," and never told Father anything about it. And that was unusual, because my mother seldom went against Father's wishes in anything. He used to kid her about women getting the vote, and say if they did, he didn't care how she voted—that she could even go Republican for all he had any right to say anything about it. She'd always become very distressed, taking him seriously when he told her that, and say, "I could never cancel your vote like that, Charles. It's not a woman's place."

My mother was the one we could usually get around the easiest, and days when we had stayed late at the pond, my brother Tot and I used to make up tales about how we'd been kept on at school to wash the boards, or something. I mind the time I came in with my pants ripped up the side, though. Tom Heddigood lent me his skates that afternoon, and I had felt blades under me for the first time. I was just getting so I could stand up on them, when I saw some of the men going home from the Mine, and I knew it was late. She made me carry in three extra buckets of coal that night, and turn the waffle iron during supper, to boot.

I wanted a pair of skates awfully bad that winter, I remember. I had picked out a beautiful pair in Seligman's window. I planned just how carefully I would clean them off and shine them and set them by the stove to dry when I had used them. But they cost sixty-five cents, and though I stopped frequently to admire the way their shine was reflected in the big plate-glass window, I didn't really see how I could ever own them. My father had been sick some in the fall, and had to lay off from the Mine for a couple of months. My mother had seven boarders, and she kept drummers in the spare room occasionally, and one way and another, we usually managed. But she was way into the night doing the baking, and up in the morning at four to pack lunch boxes and get breakfast, so I couldn't ask her for money for anything like skates. I worked in the barber shop on Saturdays and Sundays, but that money went for my school books. So it didn't look as though my prospects of getting the skates were going to improve much.

Something happened in January that kind of took my mind off skates, though. Mr. Connally, the teacher at the Troy Academy, decided to give *Hamlet* for the school play that year. Mr. Connally was young, and what my father called a "live wire," and he was a great one for Shakespeare. He had committed more poetry than any man I ever saw, or have seen since. And he taught it in a fine way, rolling the "r's," and bringing out the great rich lines in a warm and rounded voice. Most of the kids liked him, except that he made everybody commit the whole "Psalm of Life" before they graduated. But he and I got along fine, for I was a great one for committing, myself. My mother complained once that it seemed all I learned up at the Academy was poetry, and that I wasn't getting along any better in my ciphering, as she could see. But my father said, "That's all right, Mary. You leave the boy alone. Jack Connally is a fine teacher, and we're lucky to have him in a little town like Troy." My mother bridled at that, I remember. She'd been born in Troy, and had lived there all her life, and she thought Troy, with its nine-hundred population, was a pretty fine place. I don't suppose she was ever out of the State of Illinois except to go to St. Louis, twenty miles south, until my father died and she began to live around with us children.

Anyway, I was to be *Hamlet*, and my mother said from that day on, I walked around just like a pea fowl. I'd been in some of the plays before, you see, and Mr. Connally knew how I could commit lines. So he told me I was to take the part of *Hamlet*, and you think I wasn't proud? Especially since Fred Goernett, who was fifteen—a whole year older than I was—had confidently expected to play that part. Fred's father was President of the Troy Exchange Bank.

I set right to work to learn my lines, and whatever I was

doing, I was saying them over under my breath. I can remember my first line to this day, though it has been forty years. "A little more than kin, and less than kind." I suppose I didn't understand half the speeches I learned, but that didn't spoil the pleasure I got from rolling the high sounding words off my tongue in the midst of the chicken yard. I guess those chickens were exposed to more Shakespeare than most of the folks in Troy had ever heard in their lives.

Mother had a lot of chickens, and I can remember hearing my father brag to company that she could raise chickens like nobody he had ever seen before. "She only lost one out of the last setting of fifteen," he'd say. "And that's going some." They'd never heard of incubators in those days. You just put the eggs right under the hen, as God intended it. The way they raise chickens nowadays, their feet never touch ground from the time they're hatched to the time they're killed. My mother would be amazed at that, if she were living. She used to just turn the biddies out in the yard with her good little bantam to look after them, and they usually grew up strong and fat. Of course, sometimes a real heavy quick rain would drown several of the chicks. We'd go out and gather them up, and I can hear my father now, shouting from the upstairs window, "Put them in the oven, Mary! Put them in the oven!" And we always saved a couple that way. Funniest thing, you'd bring them in looking quite dead, with the bluish lids draped over their little eyes, and fifteen minutes in the warm oven would have them cheeping and scratching to get back out into the wet chicken yard. My mother would beam, and say, "See . . . See?" when she took them back to the brood, and my father would pat her shoulder. My mother was very proud of her chickens.

The chicken yard was the only place I could really cut loose with my Shakespeare. When I was working in the barber shop on Saturdays, the talk was usually too interesting for me to keep my mind on anything else, and besides, Jule caught me one day cursing the muddy-footed dog under the stove with "Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!" And I thought I'd never hear the last of that! Jule was the barber. Jule Peters. He and my father were friends, and as I think back, I can see him very plainly in his pin-striped shirt sleeves, and high celluloid collar, with his mustache glossy and brown. He always gave me five dollars at Christmas, and that's like twenty dollars, now. He taught me a lot about barbering, too. He used to let me shave him and most of the tramps that came in for free shaves. And before long, I was doing most of the shaving up at Dobermeir's Funeral Parlor.

My regular duties in the barber shop were pretty dull, for the most part. I carried in the coal, sharpened the razors on the big strop, washed the windows tenderly around the gold leaf words "Peter's Parlor of Tonsorial Arts," swept up the hair (to sell to the plasterer, my father used to kid me), reset the posts of the hitching rack in front when a wild horse would pull them out, tended the stove, and such things. But I loved it there. There was that about the little room with its two red plush barber chairs, long mirror, and big stove in the middle which gave me an excitement I had found no other place, except, somehow, between the covers of my little volume of *Hamlet*.

There was a shelf across the back of the shop lined with big China shaving mugs, each lettered with the name of its owner. "Albert Kleist," "Thomas Kinder," "Benj. Feldtmeir," "John Schoeck," "Geo. Boemaster," "Samuel Wasswinkle." To read down the row was to call the roll of Troy's most respected citizens, and it was my proud responsibility to keep the mugs shining and evenly in place. Under the shelf there was a bench where we kept the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, the week's *Troy Call*, and the *Police Gazette*. In the left hand corner of the mirror was the notice "Shave 10c, Haircut 25c," which I had written carefully with a big black crayon. There was a tall calendar by the door with the picture of a young lady in a rocker, her head just tilted up from the open book in her lap. Beneath

the picture, the motto "His Step," and "1907" were printed in curly black letters.

It's funny how I remember all these things, but I can see them just as clearly as though I stood by the big round stove this minute. I can see Jule skipping around in his white coat, waving the long straight razor like a baton to accentuate his words. "You mark what I say, now! If we're not careful the Methodists will take over this town!—If the Catholics don't do it first." I can hear John Deimling's big laugh, and see his red face as it disappeared under the white lather. It was rumored that the Deimling brothers drank blood, but when I asked Jule about it, he snorted and said "Likely something stronger than blood, to give them all that coloring!"

And once a week the shop rang with the gaiety of the Burke boys from the blacksmith's shop. They talked of nothing but the Saturday night dance sets, and the harpist who was coming up from St. Louis to play. Jule would pretend to have a very hard time keeping them still in the chair, and once Jim, the youngest, jumped up and executed the Schottisch right in the middle of the floor with the big circular cloth around his neck, and the lather still dotting his face.

Oh, those were wonderful times. I've seen few as good, since. Saturday mornings we opened the shop at five, for the train to St. Louis left at 6:28, and the old codgers from the farms wanted their shave before they went into the City. There was an old fellow whom everybody called George Washington—just why has escaped me over the years—a hand from one of the surrounding farms, who used to come in about once a month and spend a few hours in the shop with us on Saturday morning. He claimed to be an Englishman, and he was a good-natured old fellow, always wanting to hear all the news of the town. He'd work out on the farm until they paid him, and then come into town and stay drunk until his money ran out. He always had a bunch of kids trailing after him, for when he was sober, "Gimme a nickel, George," always got satisfactory results. And when he was drunk, the boys had only to yell "Ole Queen Vic is crazy!" to be treated to the most lengthy and elaborate string of curses in town. My father was pretty strong for Temperance, I remember, but he was fine to old George, and used to help him find a bed, or a warm place to sleep in Boenestiel's livery stable, when he was in town.

But my father was fine to everybody, it seems to me now. He was forever going out to somebody's farm to help put their binder together, and there wasn't much he couldn't do. Carpentry, bricklaying—and I've even seen him shoe our mare, when he thought Jim Burke wasn't being gentle enough with her.

My father came in for his weekly shave on Sunday mornings, and those moments, my father long and quiet in the chair with Jule talking over him, and me wringing the hot towels out, were my favorite times. It was like when I took his supper out to him at the Mine if he was working late, and I'd sit and watch him work the lift a while before he'd come over to me and muss the back of my hair with his hand, and talk to me with all the men standing around. Only it was different in the shop, somehow. I'd lift his big, gleaming mug from the shelf, and Jule would say "Thank you, sir," like he did to the extra barber who came in to help him sometimes, and Father would wink at me.

I remember the Sunday my father told me about the Methodists as if it were yesterday, though that morning started off no different from others. He had come in a little later than usual, for he had been called to a special meeting of the School Board that morning. I was getting in coal when he came, and pegging away at my lines. "Yet I, a dull and muddymettled rascal, peak like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause—" My father had helped me the night before with some of the hard words, and I was especially anxious about that speech. He asked for me as soon as he came in, and Jule called me. I was glad, because I hated to miss any part of my father's shave.

But he didn't climb up into the chair right away. He walked over to the bench and began thumbing through the *Call*. That

was funny, for he'd been on the last page when I had interrupted him for help last night. I reached up on the shelf for his shaving mug, but he put the paper down suddenly and took the mug out of my hands. He stood there a minute smiling at me, and I remember thinking how big his shoulders looked in his Sunday coat. It was all very queer.

"Aaron," he said, "how are you coming on the Shakespeare?"

Out of the corner of my eye I saw Jule waiting over by the chair. I wondered why my father didn't let him get started.

"I have five hundred and three lines. I counted them last night. I'm up to 'The play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of—'"

My father laughed and interrupted me. "You like it, don't you?"

I looked from my father to Jule, and back again. "Yes, sir." I think I didn't know what was expected of me in that surprising conversation, nor quite how to hold up my end of it.

"It has already meant a lot to you, hasn't it? That's why what I'm going to tell you won't be very important." My father looked at Jule and said in a loud voice, "Are you ready for me?" As though Jule hadn't been standing there for the last five minutes. Jule nodded. My father turned back to me.

"This morning, the school board—well, the folks have decided that Mr. Connally should not give *Hamlet*." He stood looking down at me, turning the thick mug in his big hands. I said nothing.

"Do you understand, Aaron?"

I said, "No, sir."

"Mr. Goernett and the people over at the Methodist Church don't think that play acting is good for the children, or for the people to see."

"Yes, sir."

He walked over to the barber chair and sat down. I fastened the cloth around his neck with clumsy fingers and then I stood by the chair wondering what it was I always did next. Jule turned from the basin with the foamy mug, but when he lifted the brush, my father caught his hand and said, "You know Fred Goernett is Deacon at the Methodist Church. And head of the School Board." He was looking straight ahead of him into the mirror. "I had only one vote, Aaron."

"Yes, sir." I remembered suddenly that I must get the towels. The water on the stove began to boil, and the short harsh scrapes of Jule's razor and the bubbling of the water were the only sounds in the shop.

That was the last thing that was ever said about the matter between my father and me, but I heard him telling Mother about it after church. That night, we had katuffel klase and marble cake for supper, and I knew it was special, for me.

After school the next afternoon, I went rather half-heartedly with the rest of the boys to the pond. I helped to build an ice slide with some of the other kids who didn't have skates, but we kept getting into the skaters' way, and I wasn't resigned to sliding, really. Not at all. In a little while, I heard someone calling "Aaron!" from the other side of the pond, and I recognized my father standing there in his work clothes. I started over to him at a run, thinking Jimminy! it must be awful late! The long rays of the sun stretched across the scarred surface of the ice, and something glinted in my father's hand. When I stood before him, I looked from the gleaming, pointed skates in his hand to his grease-smearred face. He smiled and held out the skates.

"I thought you'd be here, son. I used to be quite a skater, myself. Put them on, and let's see you try."

I couldn't do any figure eights, but I could stay up most of the time, and for a half-hour there was nothing in the world for me but the grey evening-face of the pond, and my father standing there, watching me.

I got to be quite a skater by thaw time, that year. Oh, there'll never be any other days like those days! All blue and gold, with the sun lying on the snow-covered hill behind the pond like diamonds. We used to build a fire up near the dam, and Martha Jarvis and Elsie Boemaster or some of the other girls would sit up there and watch us. Once my mother stopped by the pond on her way home from the "I Will" Club, and I could hear her clapping her hands from the high seat of the cutter when I performed a few shaky rolls for her.

The only other thing I remember about that winter was that Jack Connally announced that he would not accept reappointment to the Troy Academy. My father shrugged his big shoulders and said "They don't know what they're losing." The next year he went up to Moline to teach, and everybody said it was a much smaller school. The new teacher was a wonder at figures, and he was always shaking his head at the state our arithmetic was in. So I was glad when Jule got me a place in the barber shop at Rushville. My father told me to take a week to decide, but I didn't need that long. I had only one more year at the Academy, anyway.

It was my first job in a city barber shop, and my mother was very proud of me when I came home for Christmas. I think I must have missed being at home, but there was so much to do in Rushville, and the folks wrote often. Mother would write all about her chickens, and the ice cream parlor that was going up where Kleist's Harness Shop had been. My father wrote me once that he'd send me the money for a trip over to Moline to see Mr. Connally, but I remember I never got around to going.

## LLOYD C. PARKS:

### Arabesque

Doubt plummets the uncertain performer down  
To a puppet fate in rebounds on the ambiguous net.  
In envy he twists to see a gymnast his bar out-hoist,  
And round the issue tumble an awkward clown.  
Pierrot finds favour through a churlish bound,  
Though born to the grace of a modest pirouette.  
Sisyphus-like the gymnast labours his weight  
To prove the lovely illusion by arching round.

Amazed at the sudden paradox he dove  
Down on the sea of the wide chortling crowd,  
But through the false surface to bedrock crowd.

Broken, the will wriggles, too crippled to strive  
For its grace, mime or design the high void  
With the sure frame left swaying empty above.

### Mozart's Lake

Let us go for a sail on Mozart's lake  
Over the waves curling rococo-wise;  
In land parties explore grottes of arpeggios,  
Cascades of cadenzas' roar as they break.

Hear oracles tell in the cavernous well  
Of pain strained with sweetness, sweet in the blend;  
In the little night an organ-grinder on the strand  
Grinding azure notes that mocking gently swell.

Stroll down alleys of gods and goddesses  
(Le Notre's plastic symbols of song and harmony)  
To a tinkling fountain. Here agree on unity  
And balance, composer and author of gardens.

The noble art that orders conflict through form,  
Whose strict aloofness allows no disillusion; -  
A sea, that knowing, creates a classic storm,  
By optimistic bias assured of resolution.

## CHARLES PRESLAR, Jr. Of Red and the World

Wilson was awakened by a small gust of wind that fanned him abruptly. He rubbed his eyes, glanced at his watch, and bounded onto the floor. Thirty minutes lay between him and his first class; he had missed breakfast. Damn such a start, he muttered to himself. And on Monday morning, too.

As he was lacing his left shoe-string, his eyes shifted dreamily toward the room's single window. They were arrested by an extremely bright slash of sunshine that bulged inward. What a nice day, he thought, maybe my late start won't ruin everything for me after all. He hummed as he finished dressing.

The door slammed harshly behind him and Wilson was sure that Mrs. Lewis would know that it was he who broke the morning's silence. She had said that he seemed always to slam doors, whether he was late or not.

He walked down the path and reached for the gate. It appeared unusually white in the sunlight. Could it be that my watch has stopped, he queried; but it is so bright for seventy-five.

Once on the pavement he assumed a brisk walk which told everyone that he was almost late for class. A piercing bang came to him from directly ahead, at the next corner, and his body jerked ahead of its movement. A pistol shot, he mused; now that's the first time I've heard a gun about here.

Presently a figure nonchalantly walked toward him with a gun in his hand. What! He was startled and stopped completely over one of the cracks in the sidewalk. That's Mr. Barshel—Police Barshel! But no, it can't be Mr. Barshel, for he has on a long brown robe. A brown robe! Gee, could it be? He's forgotten to dress this morning! Wilson had never known Mr. Barshel to be absent-minded before.

The policeman came to Wilson and it was Mr. Barshel. "Good morning." He looked shy and embarrassed, as if he wanted to speak of something confidential to Wilson, but hesitated.

They talked about the morning and then Wilson asked about the shot he had heard. "Mr. Jones—I had to shoot him," Mr. Barshel said. "Caught him eating those maple leaves again—and I'd told him so many times that all the property beyond his walk belongs to the city."

Before Wilson could open his mouth, Mr. Barshel spoke again. "My boy," he began stroking Wilson's forehead, "are you completely dressed this morning? You know, I'm sure, that what you're wearing isn't exactly proper. And where is that beautiful yellow sash that's so popular with the college men these days?"

Wilson was rude, for he didn't even say goodbye as he turned quickly and started to run from the policeman. Ye gads! Mr. Barshel has lost his mind! I'd take the poor man down to the doctor's office, myself—but there's that class.

Wilson didn't even look at the dead man that lay on the walk with maple leaves stuffed in his mouth.

He ran into the classroom, gaping for breath, but so glad that he had not passed anyone enroute who might have seen his frightened face. He was the last to take his seat, and when he looked about him he could only scream: No! No! No! He felt himself grow weak. Maggie Johnston with oak leaves, some of them swiveled as oak leaves will, only scantily covering her wholesome body! John King sitting on top of his desk with three green balls affixed to each ear and with a bucket on his head; he had on no clothes! And all the others appeared crazy like Mary and John; stark crazy!

Suddenly he snickered—right out loud. He knew that he could only be dreaming. Funny thing, he reassuringly told himself, I can always figure out when I'm dreaming. I simply have to tell myself about it, and then I know it's a fact. I'll try to wake up now.

The crowd laughed and laughed as Wilson pinched himself and emitted a tremendous "Oh!" For a moment he felt silly, but then decided that he didn't care because everybody would

now disappear and he would get up and get ready to go to school. But the pinching really did hurt, and he didn't seem to be waking up, and the crowd didn't disappear.

Dr. Harte walked into the room. Wilson screamed again: Oh my God! He continued as if in a daze. Dr. Harte in a bathing suit with no back to it! Maybe I should laugh; no, I won't laugh; everyone is starting to open his books.

The class was over and Wilson now felt compelled to touch the bodies about him. John, of course, wouldn't mind; he was one of his best friends. They walked out together and John looked at him oddly, and then spoke as if he were ashamed to let people see that he was talking to Wilson. "Penny wants to see you. She said to meet her down at Gray's barber shop. She seemed awfully excited. Maybe—yes, maybe—I understand now why she was so excited."

He started to leave Wilson, his bucket balanced so perfectly on his head, and then he turned back. At this moment Wilson noticed his body; it had always seemed peculiarly shaped, and now it looked actually funny without clothes to conceal the rumples of fat. "Did you sleep well last night, Wilson?" John whispered. "Somehow you don't seem quite up to par."

Wilson was shocked but soon forgot when he thought about Penny waiting for him. Penny. Thank God! After I pretend to walk down to meet her I'm sure I'll wake up. Even if I'm still dreaming, I'll wake up when I see Penny.

But, to his discomfort, he felt no signs of waking as he neared the Gray barber shop. And he didn't even think of how strange it was that Penny would designate such a meeting place, because as he walked down the three blocks, he saw, he knew, the worst part of his dream—people, only as dreams can make them queer.

He drew back momentarily when he first glimpsed Penny—this was too much, even for a dream to get away with! How can I face Penny tomorrow, he wondered, after I've pictured her like this in a dream?

But then, Penny looked at him oddly, too.

She didn't even let him speak first, but instead, drew him inside and pounced him down in a barber chair. One of her pink balloons burst as she climbed up into his lap and sat hard on his knees. The balloons didn't help much, though, anyway, Wilson decided—pink is so easy to see through.

He was glad that no one was around the barber shop because Penny began crying hard and, too, began stroking his forehead; working, he surmised, mainly toward his ears. "Wilson," she sobbed, "what's wrong with you? Those clothes! The way you're acting! Everything about you is wrong. Can't you remember, darling, things like they were yesterday? Remember last night—you must remember last night—when we rode on our cows to Jake's 'bring your own drinks' stand? I even let you touch my ears three times. And, you must remember!" She almost smiled as she added: "And I was so proud of you—the way those four seashells fitted."

This was too much for Wilson and he felt himself grow faint. As he began to lapse he knew that he was doing a good thing. Surely soon he would wake up and he could get ready to go to school.

Things were beginning to grow bright again. A smudge of sunshine had enveloped him. He could hear a whisper; it was Penny; he knew her voice. It said: "But it couldn't come about in such a hurry, could it? Only last night . . ."

Then he knew that the faint hadn't awakened him. His mind began to swirl. Somebody said, he thought, that dreams don't last but about two minutes. This is a terribly long two minutes.

He was wide awake when Penny and four men came toward him. Penny was crying even harder. The four men were dressed in black tunics with yellow sashes about them. He heard a pop, and knew that it was another of Penny's pink balloons as she brushed, ahead of the men, too close to the barber chair.

A man with three large gold apples hanging from his long hair said aside to Penny: "Mr. Barshel told us before—but we thought, of course, that it was just a passing thing."

Penny evidently had been fussing with the men because she looked as though she didn't like them. She frowned as she insisted: "Anyway, we're going to take him back to his room—maybe it'll leave him then."



The trip was over and Wilson was glad because he had felt sorry for the twenty black geese that had pulled the tin sled all the way down to Twenty-first street. The bed felt good beneath him too. He had returned to his starting place. He felt confident that it would soon be waking time.

Everybody had left mysteriously when he had kept insisting that everybody was out of their minds. Even Penny had seemed almost glad to go when he said something to her about wearing pink balloons.

Anyhow, it would not be long now — the two minutes must be about over. It's true, he repeated to himself, time seems awfully long when you're dreaming.

His thoughts were interrupted by a timid knock on the door. The door brushed open and Mrs. Lewis came in. The sight was overwhelming—for Mrs. Lewis was such a dignified person in real life. Purple lace, strewn haphazardly, only partially succeeded in concealing her huge body.

She was crying, too. Wilson had never seen Mrs. Lewis cry before. She muttered something and kept a far distance from his bed.

## NATALIE PETERSON:

### 'This Road I Know'

At four minutes before five o'clock on Friday afternoon, the fourteenth of January, the busy revolving door of the New England Union Insurance Company released Mr. Thomas Blanchard, accountant, into the icy twilight. Just as he had expected, there had been a sudden turn to colder weather. He stopped in the middle of the sidewalk to button his top coat button and turn up his slightly worn but still presentable collar. Then he set out briskly along the sidewalk edged with piles of dirty snow. The newsboy on the corner saw him coming and had his paper ready for him. He had his pennies ready for the newsboy. The transaction was completed without a word, and Mr. Blanchard stepped to the curb feeling satisfaction at being known and understood. The mood was immediately spoiled, however, by the traffic light which turned red just as he was about to cross. When it was green again he crossed the street and descended the black steps into the subway. The crowd was somewhat heavier than usual today. On account of the drop in the temperature, of course. Mr. Blanchard didn't have to wait with the throng at the change booth, however, as he had his dime for the turnstile already in his overcoat pocket. He got to the track precisely as his train came in. Such punctuality was particularly gratifying today because of the traffic light delay. The train door slid open and tired, hurried passengers struggled out. Mr. Blanchard watched without seeing them; then when the way was clear he stepped in, walked to the last strap and grasped it firmly with his left hand. In his right he held his newspaper and read contentedly without looking up until his stop was reached. One station earlier tonight because this was Friday. Mr. Blanchard had to stop at the garage and see to his car before his Saturday drive.

The garage smelled pleasantly of grease and gasoline. Mr. Blanchard breathed deeply. The strong odor always aroused his excitement. He hurried to the back corner where his fifteen-year-old Plymouth stood in a row of other cars. He ran his hand tenderly over the hood. She looked all right. She looked fine. Thomas Blanchard's face was shining with only half sup-

pressed pleasure as he began the ritual. First he procured a rag from the glove box, especially kept there for these occasions. Then he lifted the hood and began to check the motor methodically, step by step. When he had finished this process, he wiped his hands carefully on the rag, and leaving the hood up, climbed in behind the wheel. With an expert and loving touch he started the motor. He sat for a moment, proud and satisfied, listening to the steady rhythm. Then he climbed out again, leaving the motor idling, and hurried around to watch its performance. It was darned good for an old car. Just showed what care and know-how would do for an engine. He'd seen motors no older than that one that were good for nothing but scrap.

She walked over to the window when a lot of quacking noise came from below. Soon afterward she left the room. Noises came from downstairs right after Mrs. Lewis had gone. Wilson heard a familiar voice; he soon guessed that it was officer Barshel. Then he recognized Dr. Martin's voice. The others did not ring clear in his mind.

The stairs creaked and the voices drew nearer. Wilson thought hard about this and suddenly a thought dawned on him. People say, he laughed, that when all the people in your dream collect, then it's over. Well, it's about time for this foolish thing to come to an end. Maybe this is the grand finale.

The people stopped right outside his door. They began talking, again, in whispers, but Wilson could make out what they said. Mr. Barshel emphasized: "I knew it was bad this morning. I could tell right when I saw the poor boy." Dr. Martin then answered: "Too bad. Yes, it's too bad. Such a nice boy, too. The fastest I ever saw it work on a person."

The door swung wide and the troupe entered. Mrs. Lewis ran to the other side of the room and hid her face in her purple lace, pulling it up from a place that should not have been shown. The same four men in black were with the doctor and the policeman and they came straight toward Wilson with determined eyes.

In a split second, cotton and bright, shiny orange tape was all about him and he realized that he could not move. All the men then circled his bed and they picked him up. None spoke. Wilson screamed as they carried him away.

But Mr. Blanchard didn't permit himself the luxury of standing and watching it for long. He shut off the ignition, checked the oil and water, put his rag away, and as he reluctantly left the garage, told one of the men with extreme casualness that he would be by to pick it up in the morning.

He walked three blocks, past a row of little stores, two grocers, a shoemaker and a second hand book shop. He had looked at them one time, knew what they were, and now there was no need to look again. It was a source of satisfaction for him to know that they were there, unchanging. It was beginning to snow. Little hardy flakes that didn't melt when they hit the sidewalk. Mr. Blanchard's overcoat was too thin. He crossed the street at the corner by the subway entrance, walked along past a row of identical doorways approached by a row of front steps with iron railings, all alike. Mr. Blanchard didn't have to count. He turned at the fifth railing, climbed the steps and pushed open the front door, which stuck, although not so badly as in summer. As he closed it behind him, Mrs. O'Neill appeared at the dining room doorway.

"Good evening, Mr. Blanchard," she said. "Here's your mail."

"Good evening, Mrs. O'Neill. How are you?"

"Same as ever. Supper'll be on in five minutes."

He could smell the onions cooking as he climbed the ancient solid stairs to his square room, glad to be home. He laid the mail, a mechanics magazine and a drugstore advertisement, on the peeling top of his bedside table, washed his hands in the bathroom, being careful to get all the grease from under the

nails, and went on down to dinner. Mrs. O'Neill stood at one end of the table serving, her shirtsleeved husband slouching at her right, her sullen son at her left; the other two boarders stared blankly across the table at one another. No one paid any attention to Mr. Blanchard as he took his place. Mrs. O'Neill went on talking without interruption.

"It won't snow for long, the radio said, maybe not even till tomorrow, it said, but it's going to be a heavy one. Bad driving, they said. It's started already; I noticed when Mr. Blanchard came in it was snowing. Brought a little dampness in on his shoes. . . . There's more gravy in the kitchen when you're ready. . . . But even if it stops by morning it'll be bad driving anyway. Especially out in the country where they got no plows going around. You're not thinking of going out in it tomorrow, Mr. Blanchard?"

The challenged one looked up from his plate. "Oh, yes, certainly. They'll have the plows out."

After her one question, Mrs. O'Neill took the conversation back and didn't give it up again. The rest of the company ate their meal in silence.

In the morning, Mr. Blanchard woke as always to the harsh rattle of his alarm clock at seven-thirty. He got up immediately and went to the window. A little drift of snow had sifted in to the inside sill. Standing to one side to avoid the direct draft, he swiped the snow out hastily and banged the window down. Then he washed and put on his driving clothes. He took his brown business suit which had hung all night before the window to air, and hung it in the back of the closet. Then he slid the brand new crinkling roadmap on which he had marked his day's excursion, into his breast pocket, counted his money twice and went down to breakfast.

Mrs. O'Neill still disapproved. She didn't believe that about plows in the country. Exasperated by her stubbornness in not believing him, Mr. Blanchard left a little of his breakfast on his plate just so he could get out sooner.

When he got gas at the garage they warned him about the snow too. Mr. Blanchard was annoyed. The attendants there knew that he could handle a car pretty fairly. He was so irritated, in fact, that he pulled away from the garage almost recklessly, just to show them.

Mr. Blanchard's annoyance had melted away, however, by the time he had reached the outskirts of the city. The even tempo of the motor soothed him and he began to calculate just how far the gas he had would take him on the route he had planned during the week. The roads weren't bad at all. No one but a simpleton would get stuck in that little snow. They must have started plowing in the night. Mr. Blanchard spent a wonderful day testing his speed and his brakes on empty stretches of road, stopping in little towns, for no reason except to get a chance to park in seemingly impossible spaces, stopping in places where the snow was a little deeper just to prove to himself that he could start with no trouble whatsoever.

Toward evening, just as the light was giving way to dark, and it had begun to snow again, Mr. Blanchard had started on the last homeward lap, completing the almost perfect circle that he had started that morning. He was a little later than he had planned to be, but he knew of a shortcut that would still get him home in plenty of time for supper. It was a side road about a mile long that led to the turnpike where he could drive much faster.

Mr. Blanchard noticed when he got there that the plows hadn't been over that road at least since morning, and the tire tracks from the last car were several inches deep. That was all right. It would be good practice. Besides, someone had gone through before him. After signalling to the car behind him, Mr. Blanchard turned off onto the dim little road. The snow was somewhat deeper than he had judged, but nothing to worry about, really. It was all a matter of keeping control. Before long he saw lights shining on the orange roof of a Howard Johnson's restaurant on the highway not far ahead, and already proud of himself, he speeded up a little. He was barely fifty yards from the turnpike when he saw that the road was

blocked, and he just managed to pull over to the side and stop in time. A car was stuck sideways across the narrow way. The driver was racing the engine with a vengeance; the wheels spun wildly and sent white showers spraying into the air. The roar of the motor and the whirr of rubber against the slippery ground were like a fingernail scraped along a blackboard to Mr. Blanchard's ear. He switched off his own ignition and leaped out of the car to go stop the outrage. The driver, a big bulky man in a heavy overcoat, climbed out of his car at the same time. He stood in the snow and stared helplessly at the black hollows under the wheels. Mr. Blanchard was annoyed at being forced to stop and at the man's ineffectual attempts to get out of the way. He didn't want to lend his assistance, but he could see no other solution, as he had no desire to back his car for a mile in the snow. He felt nervous walking up to this perfect stranger.

"I seem to be here for good!" the man said with a broad smile as Mr. Blanchard approached him.

"You've got yourself pretty well dug in," Mr. Blanchard said, feeling better as he saw the man's round, good-humored face. "I'm not so sure I can help you out," he added doubtfully. He wouldn't have been worried if it had been his car, but this was something new. How could he be sure?

"I'll try, though," he said and went to the back of his car to get two old chains that he kept there. The round-faced man in his bear-like coat stood humbly by and watched the expert place the chains with the utmost care under the back wheels, step into the car and slowly, easily, pull out of the ruts. Mr. Blanchard then drove the car with apparent calm to the turnpike and parked it near the Howard Johnson place at the end of the little road, got out and walked back to where its owner stood amazed beside his car. The man came to meet Mr. Blanchard, slapped him on the back and cried, "I never saw anything like it! By golly, if it hadn't been for you I'd have been here till the cows come home! Brother! How you can handle a car! What's your name, anyway? I'm Charlie Chase, in the chemicals business."

"Thomas Blanchard is my name. Pleased to meet you." Mr. Chase's noisy appreciation had taken him by surprise, and, not knowing what to say, he busied himself putting the chains away while Charlie Chase went on raving.

"You know your stuff all right, Blanchard! By God! Ever worked as a mechanic?"

Mr. Blanchard replied, embarrassed but pleased, that he hadn't. "Where'd you learn that, then? Never saw anything like it. Be damned if I could ever have gotten out of there. Where'd you pick that stuff up?"

"Oh, just here and there. I like that sort of thing. And I've had this little car of mine a few years. I work around with her. I know pretty much how she ticks."

"Pretty much! I'll say you do! Say, how about going up here on the highway and getting a cup of coffee after all that, what do you say?"

"Oh, no, sorry, Mr. Chase. I'd be late home to supper. Thanks, but I'd better go."

"Now, listen here, I won't have any of that! No sir. Not after the service you've done me. Least I can do is get you a cup of coffee. You can drive your car up to where you left mine. Come on, now let's go." Mr. Blanchard, who was beginning to feel at ease under the friendly barrage, finally agreed and was swept into his car, which he drove up the road to the Howard Johnson's.

Mr. Chase ordered coffee and krullers, and while they were eating them he told Mr. Blanchard about his business.

"Yes, sir, they've almost made a traveling salesman out of me again," he said and laughed heartily. "I've been on the road for six months now and it looks as if it would go on for years. First they send me to Canada to soft soap some stubborn bozo, then it's down to Mississippi, over to Colorado to inspect a plant, back to Ohio, and then I'm on my way down south again. I feel like a truck driver."

In his amazement Mr. Blanchard forgot the feeling of strange-

ness at sitting here with a man he didn't know. "Don't you like a job like that? Driving that beautiful car around all the time?"

"Oh, sure, I like seeing the country, but I'm no mechanic, and I've never had a breakdown once that wasn't five miles from the nearest garage. It gets on my nerves, too. Driving along days at a time with nobody to talk to but the waitresses where I stop to eat." Charlie Chase laughed again, but stopped suddenly as he got an idea. "Say, Blanchard, how about that! How would you like a job traveling with me? Be my driver! I'm on my way to Mexico now. That's a long way. I could use somebody who understands that bus of mine. What do you say?"

Mr. Blanchard, who had been almost relaxed and was enjoying the conversation, was quite taken aback, and he burned his mouth on his coffee. "Oh, no. Impossible," he said, "I have a steady job."

"Well, tell me what you're getting paid and I'll give you ten bucks more a month plus expenses. Company pays that. With you along they'll save money on car repairs, so it'll be worth it. We'll have a great time. Ever been to Mexico?"

"No. No. Thank you very much, Mr. Chase, but I have a good steady job . . . I've had it for six years now," Mr. Blanchard said with pride.

"Worried that I can't make good my word about the salary, aren't you? Well, tell you what . . ."

Mr. Blanchard was embarrassed and tried to explain himself, but Mr. Chase wouldn't let him get a word in.

"You just call up the Boston branch of Amalgamated Chemicals and ask them about me. . . . Matter of fact, I'm going to the home office in New York before I start south. I'll get the official OK from them there so you won't have a thing to worry about. Long as I'm on the road you'll have a job and get a chance to see the continent at the same time. You never know what's going to happen next on those trips."

Mr. Blanchard wiped his mouth nervously with his napkin. "It's very nice of you, Mr. Chase, but I'm not interested, really. I'm afraid I have to get going back to the city now, if you'll excuse me."

"Now wait a minute, Blanchard. I'm not going to let you go without giving you a chance to think it over. Suppose I come back here after I leave New York and pick you up then. Give me your address anyway and I'll write you what the deal is from New York." He had his pen out and wouldn't let Mr. Blanchard go until he had his address squarely lettered in a little black book.

Thomas Blanchard drove home faster than usual. The rhythmic sound of the motor didn't help him to relax. He didn't even hear it. Back in the city, he parked his car in the garage and locked it automatically. Slowly he walked the three blocks. When he came to the row of little shops they were all still open, and involuntarily he turned to look in the lighted windows. In front of the book store he stopped and stood staring at the heaps of books, dusty and disorderly behind the glass. Then with sudden determination he turned and went in the door. He found himself in a little musty, dampish room lined with a confusion of bookshelves. There seemed to be no order. The little thin-faced storekeeper came shuffling out of a back room, pushing his glasses back on his forehead, holding his finger in a battered book.

"What can I do for you?" he asked, as if he were sure there were nothing.

"I'm looking for—have you a book with maps in it?" Mr. Blanchard asked.

"An atlas? Of the world?"

Mr. Blanchard hesitated for a minute, then nodded quickly. The little shopkeeper went to one of the shelves, dug around and pulled out a big flat volume and handed it reluctantly to the prospective customer.

Mr. Blanchard turned the volume over slowly, then holding it propped against his chest tried to look through it. This method turned out to be singularly inefficient, so he looked around and found a bare spot on the table. He rested the book there and looked up Mexico. He found it on page 128, a big yellow diagram crossed by wiggling lines for rivers and humpy ones for mountains. Mr. Blanchard had never seen many mountains, although he had heard there were some very big ones in New Hampshire and Vermont. He had always intended to save up his money for gas and drive up there some week end. Looking at the map, seeing the unpronounceable names of places, Mr. Blanchard imagined driving Mr. Chase's new car along one of the wiggling rivers, and suddenly he was caught by a strange exciting feeling, more exciting even than the one he always had when he smelled the grease and oil of the garage. He let the feeling take complete possession of him, and became dizzy with it.

Then, just as suddenly, it was as if he had peered over the edge of a precipice. He realized that the shopkeeper was standing there, watching him intently. Hastily he handed the book back to him, thanked him for his trouble, and almost ran out of the store.

Mr. Blanchard didn't sleep at all well that night, but he made himself stay in bed till nine, his usual Sunday rising hour. He had his Sunday breakfast and went back to his room, took his mechanics magazine and settled down in the wicker rocking chair by the window. Next to his driving, this Sunday reading was almost his favorite pastime. He would read the articles and all the advertisements with great interest, underlining and marking little notes here and there in the margins. Then when he had finished it, he would make a note of the important items in that issue on the front and put it away on top of the chronologically stacked pile on his closet shelf.

Today, however, something was wrong. His eyes kept wandering from the diagrams and illustrations to the busy street with its parade of cars and trucks and buses. After an hour the restlessness persisted in spite of everything, and Mr. Blanchard put away his magazine and set off to take a brisk walk around the neighborhood. The narrow little back streets were all comfortably familiar and it always made him feel securely at home to walk along them. But before long Mr. Blanchard found himself standing in front of the second hand bookshop, staring at the piles of dusty books. The disorder was fearful.

On Monday evening at a quarter past five Mr. Blanchard walked briskly up the grimy steps of the subway exit with his newspaper under his arm, across the street, and past the four stairways to his own sturdy iron railing. The light in the parlor shone warmly to him through the yellowish curtains. The front door stuck a little, but not much. As he pushed it shut behind him, Mrs. O'Neill came to the dining room doorway and said, "Good evening, Mr. Blanchard. Here's the mail. One's a special delivery. Just came a half hour ago." She watched him hopefully as she handed him the envelope.

"Good evening, Mrs. O'Neill." He didn't even look at it. "How are you?"

"Well as might be. Dinner won't be on for ten, fifteen minutes," she said irritably, because of her disappointment.

"Smells good," he said. The whole house smelled warm and familiar. He started to go up to his room, sliding his hand along the bannister. Old as it was, there was nothing shaky about that bannister. It was solid and safe.

At the top, under the hall light, he paused to read the return address on the letter. Charles L. Chase was typed blackly in the corner under the company address.

Mr. Blanchard proceeded to his room and without stopping to switch on the light, hurried to where he knew the wastebasket stood by the bureau, crumpled the letter hard in his fist and threw it from him into the basket. After a minute he washed his hands in the bathroom and went on down to dinner.

R. D. LOOMIS:

## The Won and Ownly

AWKWARDWARYNESS COMES AS HE ENTERS. The readingroom, contrasting the halldark, appears glaringly exposed and naked with light, and selfconscientiously he tries to picture himself as others seem him but unsatsvaguery results. (Me's and You's inhabit but only Me's view.) Slowly now, yonder-pondering, hesitdowning.

... whos here where shall i sit how many girls are there ...

He wanders these questions and is parsheally answered by a prettygirl's opositat. The loud chairscraping of adjustment embarrasses him, not because it disturbs others, but because ittracks attention hisward. He sits, fundamentally, down and reelexes, knowing the choice was worldviewed as being non-charlarbitrary.

... goodlord look at them stare you can always tell who is really here to study from who isnt by seeing who glances up at noises andsoforth and the windowgazers too but look whos talking she noticed thats good. ...

Losslucktantly and with careessairless, he unpens his book, ought for the moment being stronger than want.

... now lets see where was i page 4 6 15 whoops 12 11 yes 11 boy ole thomas more at best a bore and what line uh *There I had the occasion to no The ships that they use uhuh The shipman very expert and cunning, both in the sea and in the weather.* wait a minute what *The shipman very expert and cunning, both in the now* what the hell kind of a sentence is that my god if they want us to read stuff like this they at least ought to pick out—

Activity in girlform. Thermovements. And this is quite enough than More motovation to delay this and turn to that. Spyeeying chickenlike he obserherves.

... she moved I wonder why restless maybe or uncomfortable but probably not shes like a cat always just right no matter how she didnt stop reading though whatever it is some kind of history i guess freshman at that umman oh man but shes pretty probably lots of boyfriends back home and here too for that matter ohso beautifullyful and clean too so very clean she must smell nice. ...

Pageturning, an unconsheous movement. Dark Revenge the color of her nails, and Sentimental Sue the color of her heart; and inbetween the resulting woemansland of incongruities, the logical chaos, and the eturnal efemeral.

... red claws for protection or used to be but nice hands an artists hands durer couldnt have done them too young sure and graceful coollooking hands i wonder why shes alone she certainly isnt always or even mostly so but then she does seem aloof reserved almost untouchable and yet so touchable my god yes so touch touch touchable mostly that reserved type is just dying to really let go must be afraid or something they all like it just a bunch of love letters yes thats it they love love letters and say it both ways. ...

Discovered looking, he turns flurriedly away and wonderhers (terribly afraid) lest bluntness wrong what tactfulness could make right. But her blinkblank gaze passes, a vacant search-light.

... i wonder if she notices me at all as i do her even a little bit she must feel me sitting here and thinking about her mental telepathy maybe but probably not what could i say what excuse to interrupt ask the time uhuh theres a clock on the wall (like a ball) perhaps borrow a piece of paper nope she can see i have some. ...

Humor from a longoneandead body but still verymuchalive mind grinnis her face, and he, sireveying her, crunchlenches his fist.

... ohhh i wish i were over there and not here ummm very close there her little even teeth biting gently i wonder if she opens her lips when she but hells bells ive got to get this studying done. ...

But his skirtzophrenia accepts no substitutes and insists on the real thing as advertised. All good intent vanishes as she throws her arms back, stretching her blouse sightight, and his eyes caught by the comemotion return to her, homing. Now her own observation makes his imposible, but what's there is known and memory acts an able performance. This easily done, moreover, for it's his usually of thought, the themesong of a Caesaromeo balled into one: I came, I saw, I conquered.

... damn this table the lights the people she thinks shes safe and i guess she is theyll whistle at you if theyre passing by safe in a car gives em a thrill just a bunch of teasers all of em but ile get to know this one somehow by god i will i wonder what her name is that D M on her pin could mean anything dot dolly doris. ...

He drums his feelingers loudly on the table, thereby trying to attract attention and express his frustration at the same time. Both attempts meet with partial success as she looks up. Now he does not turn away but stares back openly. She aways hurriedly from his eyesighing, not back to her book but this time at the windows, through the windows, through the passing people, through the buildings, and straight to crossing parallels. Braveher now, the quarry on the run, he appraises her merselessly. Ideas flash like a just-switched incandescent lamp.

... how would she look with that lipstick off biteble she probably sleeps with her wrist curled under her chin like a kitten and how would she look when she first gets up in the morning with that now painfully neat hair all mussed and with the look of dreams and love still in her eyes ummmm hearing her say close to you i love you i love you i love you with soft low personal voice and her warm breath after a cigarette caressing like a spring breeze through burning leaves yes high on a windy hill together and then ide quote about how we had such brave strong things to say but suddenly you cried or however it goes and she would think it was wonderful. ...

The nudging wind rocks the bushrushes that front the window, and their leaves cut shadows from the sun that dance and fleck like the spherical scene in a paperweight making snow when turned upsidedown.

... brownian movement like ether for my tonsils and the false snowflake in citizen kane really his youth makes me dizzy maybe i could mention it but how. ...

Both look at the swirlwhirling and then, by chance, at each other; and this sunthing provides a sameness between them, a formal introduction. Silence of silences, broken at last by a noisy clamor of children rollerbawling in the street. Return. A quick trip (neither party hardly remembering he'd been away).

... should have said pretty isnt it or something anything but then that might have spoiled it all by returning us to separate her and me but anyway i should have at least. ...

She, watchwatching, methodically gathers her books into a neat pile and her looks into an unassailable composure, and, with an air of youmaylookifyouwantbutidontcare, starts side-stepping along the aisle. He wideyes goodlordlly. Prettygirl bobbs on.

... hey now wait a minute no no no you cant just leave like that oh damn do something what. ...

He collects and follows, not directly, of course, but glancing now and again to be sure of her general direction, speed, *et cetera*.

... what the hell am i doing this for its stupid you cant just walk up and say ime me who are you especially with a girl like this. ...

The girl explores the darkened hall with expectant sight and then, fluttering, sidels up to another boy who props the wall. They meet, prettygirl and prop, and cling together like two wet leaves. Both smile, she wrinklenose he kissblow, and turn to walk away, amo in amo.

... well thats a goddamn hell of a thing whos that guy and how does he rate got there fustus with the mostus thats all feel like ive been stood up its always like this. though. ...

The hitherto wonderfilledful day becomes doomgloomy. The

bird's song is chatter and the gentle rushtle of leaves recalls rats in a wall.

... might as well go back and study oh hell i can just see myself studying now why do these things always happen to me why couldnt i have known her first met her before but thats it i guess more women than men around anyway.

Footfalls coming outcrunch those going and he twists by reflex

## BETSY LARRIMORE:

### A Story

The waves reached up and slapped against my arms and chest, and someone running by splashed stinging spray into my face and tears came to my eyes. Each wave came with greater fury than the last, and as each wave hit and broke about my body I could not hold back shrieks of fear. I was afraid of the ever-moving wall that came toward me and wanted to turn and run away from it. I would have run, too, if it hadn't been for Pa. He held my hand so tightly in his that I couldn't have run away if I had tried. We walked out until the water was up around my shoulders and I was sure that I'd drown with the next step. I looked up at Pa. He was so tall that the waves came only to his knees. He must have known how I felt, for he grinned down at me and lifted me up and put me on his shoulders. We went out into the deep water. I wasn't afraid any more and I remember how surprised I was to realize that. And I remember how different the beach looked from where we were. Before, it had always seemed a never-ending stretch of human bodies; now a new world lay before me. The beach was not an endless stretch of people any more. It was only a very small place when compared to the length of shore that reached as far as one could see on either side.

I don't remember much about Pa except in little scenes like that, all the scenes separate and no one scene connected with another. Sometimes all I remember is just a little piece of a scene, and why I was in a certain place, or what I did there is completely forgotten. Pa worked at the shipyard and one day he took me down there where they make the ships. He told me all about the ships and about the countries they would go to. I think that was the first time I ever thought of there being land on the other side of the ocean. For a long time after that I stared eagerly out over the ocean in hopes that I might catch a glimpse of the land on the other side. I remember riding on a roller coaster between Ma and Pa one time, and Ma's screaming as we went down a steep hill. I remember how they held on to each other so tightly that I almost smothered between them. I remember waiting on the steps every night for Pa to come home from work. He would lift me up on his shoulders and carry me up the porch steps. I remember the candy he sometimes brought in his pocket as a surprise for me, and how it came out smelling like the cigarettes he always kept there.

Scenes with Pa in them stopped when I was six or seven, I guess. I don't remember much about it except that one day the lady who lived next door called Ma and said that someone wanted her on the phone. When Ma came back the lady was with her and they both cried a lot. I remember that I cried too, without even knowing what for. "Pa's gone away," Ma said to me later, and even then I didn't understand. I spent the next week in an aunt's house. I remember waking up in the middle of night and wondering where I was, and where Pa was.

Ma didn't cry and mourn a lot like some women I've seen. In a way it was like Pa was still there. His bedroom shoes were still under the bed, his ties were on a rack on the closet door, two pipes, which he never smoked, were on a stand on the dresser, and a picture of Ma and Pa on their honeymoon was on the mantel. Things weren't much different except that Ma took in more sewing customers. She had sewed now and then when folks had

so not to miss. Newgirl. Eyes widen with sucked breath.

... hey now where did she come from how beautiful legs hair walk everything and yes ownable i wonder who she is and if ...

The newgirl passes, and, moonlike, into orbit he swings. Her dress sways with hypnotic rhythm and her bobby-socks flickicker in the sun like two white moths.

asked her to, but now she made a job of it. There was a sign over our door that said "Scamstress—Dressmaking and Alterations." Ma didn't talk much about Pa except in a very casual way. Once when we went by a meat counter she stopped and looked in at the cuts. "Your Pa was fond of lamb chops," she said. Once when we passed a little cafe she said, "Your Pa and I used to come here often." And when we passed a little white church one day she said, "Your Pa and I were married there." We went into the church and just sat awhile, not saying anything. We went to the church several times after that. Once in a while we went on Sunday morning.

I went to school the year after Pa left us, and except for that things went on about the same. Our money kept getting lower and lower and we kept skimping and trying to save. Afternoons when school was out I minded the baby next door. The little bit I made helped out, but still the money in the vase behind Pa's picture kept dwindling down.

I didn't get to spend much time at home with going to school and minding the baby, and I'm still not sure how Ma met Mr. McLarity. I came in from minding the baby one evening, and he was sitting in the parlor talking to Ma. He left as soon as I came in, and Ma said that he ran a store and was just passing by and brought some groceries she had ordered. He dropped by often after that, and sometimes he brought me candy from the store. Sometimes he came and ate supper with us. His wife had died two years before, and he lived at a boarding house where the food was terrible. Ma must have felt sorry for him because she had him over for supper pretty often. He must have liked her cooking too, for he always ate a lot. I don't guess that mattered much though, because even though our money was awfully low, Ma managed to have real good meals without taking hardly any money out of the vase. I guess I should have expected something from it all, but I was too young then. One day Ma asked me how I liked Mr. McLarity, and I said I thought he was a very nice man. Then Ma asked me how I would like Mr. McLarity for a father. I guess I was too stunned to answer right away and Ma went right on saying that he was a good man and was in a good business and that he went to church every Sunday. I said again that he was a very nice man and that I liked him all right. That made Ma happy and she hugged me real tight. They were married a week later and Mr. McLarity moved in with us. I guess they wanted to start out like a newly married couple because they got some new furniture and had the rooms painted. Everything was moved around differently and rooms were changed. Pa's picture and ties were taken down. Mr. McLarity hung a big calendar with a picture of the White House on it on the closet door. The calendar was an old one from several years back but he liked it for the picture. He had seen the White House once.

Things came better after Ma married Mr. McLarity. Ma and I didn't have to skimp and save and figure any more. Mr. McLarity was a good man. Every night he brought three chops for supper the next night. He never kept Ma waiting for him at supper either—he was always there at exactly seven o'clock. And Mr. McLarity did go to church every Sunday; we all went to church every Sunday. Mr. McLarity always dropped a nickel and a dime in the collection plate. I know because I could tell by the way they sounded when they dropped. I got to where I waited for that sound every Sunday morning. We always sat so that I went in first, then Ma, and then Mr. McLarity. The plate always went to him first and when I heard his coins drop,

I knew that in a second Ma would reach in front of me and hand the plate to the next person, being very careful not to drop the envelopes and paper money off.

Things kept getting better for us then. Mr. McLarity didn't like for Ma to sew so much because it wasn't good for her eyes, so Ma stopped sewing. He said he'd like for Ma to help him in the store, so she went down afternoons. Ma said she liked to work there because she met so many nice people — Ma always did like people. She must have done real good work too, because pretty soon Mr. McLarity laid off the boy who worked for him.

Things went on about the same for two years, I guess. Mr. McLarity and Ma working in the store, me going to school and helping in the store afternoons and Saturdays, going to the church together on Sundays and going to the show together every two weeks. Mr. McLarity thought most shows were vulgar, so we had to pick carefully when we went.

Things changed suddenly a month ago. Mr. McLarity had a heart attack and died two days afterward. Ma took things pretty well; the only time I saw her cry was during the funeral service in the little white church. She didn't say anything as we rode back to the house. I was afraid she'd break down when we got home, but she didn't. She stayed in the house most of the time and didn't go out anywhere. She got a man to look

after the store, but she didn't go down to see if things were all right. I dropped by after school some afternoons to see how things were.

Yesterday was Wednesday, the day I was supposed to have taken a big test in world history; but I didn't take the test though—I didn't even go to school. Tuesday night I was sitting in the parlor studying for the test and Ma called down to me from upstairs:

"Tina, how'd you like to go for a walk down on the beach today? It's spring, and you'd never know it closed up inside the house. We could take some sandwiches along and spend the day."

I was so excited that I ran upstairs and burst into Ma's room. She was standing at the open window and a soft breeze pushed the curtains out into the room. She just kept standing like I wasn't there. I knew she was thinking, so I didn't say anything. I looked about the room. I hadn't been in it in a long time. The calendar was gone from the closet door and a rack filled with ties was in its place. A pipe stand was on the dresser, and Pa's picture was on the mantel. I looked back to Ma. She was smiling. The breeze blew in and filled the room; it carried the smell of ocean with it.

## NANCY SIFF MURPHEY:

### Blackboard Mornings

This is the way we learned the time,  
Watching the river clinging to unreason  
Outlined in patterns of synthetic stars  
Whiter than the original, and farther—  
Farther from what they told us cities were:  
Men grown together for companionship.

We learned from blackboard mornings chalked with fear  
In dirty tracks of snowplows on the snow  
The geometric lies of skeletal steel  
Whose formulas in converse had been true.  
We taught each other painfully, we two,  
Sad children huddled on a narrow bench.  
In the next room the teacher lay  
Weeks dead across the desk,  
Slain by the logic of another who,  
Admired for scholarship, thanked for our progress,  
Won the prize for peace and died  
Surprisingly, at a faculty tea  
Of indigestion and an overdose of wine.

We read the rhymes of evening, but each time  
The rhythms were wrong, the words were never pretty,  
Beautiful, but hard to understand.  
We gave up spelling at an early age  
And wrote in pictures we had seen somewhere:  
The rag-doll faces in the late cafes,  
The frightened voices of the elder lost  
Splintered in pieces at our bleeding feet,  
The fingernails and sweated sexlessness  
Of one-week lovers in the college street.  
We learned that Stay Surrender and Forger  
Were silver-slipping fish in brownish pools  
That drag you down in seaweed of regret.

Each day's assignment done,  
We stretched and smiled,  
Read in our bodies still undisciplined  
Fantastic absolutes of antique love;  
And in the unlettered pages at the back  
We drew exquisite pictures of fine hands  
Skilled to the art of laughter, smoothed and white,  
Spinning the slow web through illiterate night  
Of long belief and old unlessoned hope.

### Winter

Snow handles the park curiously  
And lets it drop  
Deep in a forgotten drawer  
Path tossed with pond and rock  
And carousel under white ravelling.

A squirrel rummages  
In a corner  
For nuts mislaid. All is forgotten  
Or waylaid and out of place.  
Not even the drunk is dreaming  
On his accustomed bench  
Of rooms where people lose  
Only the coins they toss  
And open up a door  
For a good reason,  
And do not creep  
Through the keyhole  
Or turn away.

Off in a field,  
Tumbled over and over,  
A young tree bows and rattles  
Softly to itself.  
When the sun comes  
It stipples the crusty floor  
With a fall of glittering needles,  
Crackles louder and taps  
Branch-tips together.

A twig snaps.  
The squirrel goes on rummaging  
And no one listens.

## Cloisters: 1946

### I

More than the bells were loiterers  
In that uneasy night bristling with stars  
And lightfoot shadows hiding in the leaves.  
A few moths rubbed the darkness  
And the unmarried moon  
Taunted them in the eaves.  
More than the cloistered walls  
Let moonlight slide into the river.  
I, too, was cloistered  
And a wall to more than moonlight  
But the wide bridge swung  
And hung like a salmon panting upward,  
Then it fell. One restless bell  
Bumped at the darkness and the wind  
Flapped in the trees.

### II

This is a gifted town  
Whose riverside delight is swallowing its tail.  
The harbor burns on a thinning edge  
And drops reflections as a Christmas tree  
Drops needles in a pail.  
We heard a transport coasting with the clock  
And saw the green-white signals shear  
Unhurriedly through the dark.

"And if we wait a year  
Will it be better? If I stay  
To ease the general conscience  
And survive the cleansing of my whims  
(That were not whims when other wonders settled  
On the face of things), if I am fleeced  
Of all my sins (that only you have pardoned  
And increased while we have talked)  
Will it be easy in a year or so?

"I wish there was a way to tell you  
How it seemed watching the absent snow,  
Or what I dreamed watching it  
Pile thistledown and pack it tight  
All night over the dead.  
They bulked so little  
That the roads were clear by morning  
Before we ever found them, and I wish  
I could explain how white and queer  
The little bone was that I carried  
From the garden,  
Then later threw away.

"I think I could be satisfied  
Beside you in the bed,  
And you might love me still, as women may,  
But would I make much of a figure  
On a bench, turning my paper  
While the morning went  
And squinting at the sun  
Through thick-boned hands?"

A spotted moth intruded  
For a moment and beat his small  
Distracted wing against your cheek,  
And hid the scar some heaped plates  
Left you falling, when you were small  
And fell down stairs and up them  
Carrying things. Moths fall  
And children, never very far,  
But old men fall beyond the farthest year.  
Is it unnatural that no one will care?

Was anybody there?  
Was anybody there in the darkness?  
Only the moon drifting below the tower,  
Then hesitating. Under a square cloud  
She beat a quick retreat  
Into the cloister yard.

When will you go?  
You're sure you want to, I see that.  
Only I'd like to know  
How will I answer or explain?  
What will I say?

"Oh, say that I forgot something I wanted.  
Or tell them something easier than that.  
What difference does it make?  
You understand."

How slow the river moved like a deep bell  
That starts to ring in the beginning  
Of a dream, and never rings out loud until you wake  
Suddenly, and it is daybreak. And you seem  
To hear it for the first time  
When it goes.

Of course I do.

"Well, then, let them believe  
What pleases them, as long as you believe me.  
There were some few things  
That I wanted to explain, or say at least,  
Perhaps remind you, or suggest but . . .  
You know best."

### III

The clock on the far shore  
Remembered where we were  
And a low star listed a little  
Like the boats we saw below us.  
Still we stayed, watching the ferris wheel  
Turn like a roasting spit, watching the harbor  
Burn in branches.

He may die. Others have done it.  
I will cry and cry and never stop forever.

"Don't stand there looking  
At the river as if it were a ghost  
You'd like to kill if it would die.  
There are no ghosts to punish any more.  
Only the living terrify.  
Come here. It's cold in the night air."

I felt a drowsiness begin  
To push along my arms and moonlight  
Slipping from my hands down the wet grass.  
We saw the ferry pass for the last time  
That night and heard the bell once, then no more.  
The light went out above us in the tower.

"We may come back again."

Tonight we ride on a blacked-out train  
Far from the harbor and the tenuous shore.  
I am awake. The bell rang long ago.  
The married moon was never beautiful before.

## EDWIN WATKINS:

### The 13th Labor

Then Hercules stood free, bowed to the world  
He loved, that staggered in his arms. A day  
That sped the drunks and drivers of the world  
In our rat-race for love, shook him with light,  
Plagued him with Vision, and he bore our weight  
Each time we stumbled in our muddled way;  
And shook to know this blindness in the infant world.

And he stood more aghast to know that light  
Could strike such blindness in the opened eye  
Before its God. Before him, clad in light,  
The monster stood, and beckoned him to know;  
And his eye failed. There love, the thin shadow  
That saves us from much wisdom, fell: a high  
Martyrdom, when our God's love is the fool of light.

We, drunken, cried with boasting, "We will know!  
For God is Love," and naked in the streets  
We ran, tearing our flesh with whips. I know  
One burning man, who turned him from the world  
And asked to stand in light; his body gnarled  
Splendid with suffering, weak with love he beats  
The mists, calling, "Father, I burn, and Thou art much to know."

### Horace Book I, Ode IV, Slightly Reconstructed

Now the sweet trick of the Spring wind has cracked the winter's  
edge;

Dry sails are spread to be old Aeol's lyre;  
The ram clamors shut in his fold, the farmer quits his fire,  
And the hoar frost has left the springing hedge.

Now the Ripe Lady leads the dancing under the swelling moon  
Where Nymph has met with Grace in agile band  
To urge the earth with a light beat; and red-hot Vulcan's fanned  
The Cyclops fire for thunderbolts too soon.

Sprung is the myrtle to green now our frosty heads that shine  
Oiled for the buds that stirring earth has borne;  
Bring to the wood for the Great Fawn the kid, or lamb unshorn:  
The God will feast! Hark! hear the God break wind.

Pasty old Death with the same kick storms at the humbler doors  
And those that close on kings. You're blessed with life  
That's a high hope, O Sestius, but short before the knife.  
Fabulous Shades, the night, and Pluto's moors.

Press silent down as the sure-flung net to gather your final  
breath:

Then dicing cups and the wine cup are one  
With the old marvel of girls in bloom, for whom the sweating  
sun  
Burns less than lads who will not learn from Death.

## JOAN ANGEVINE:

### The Apple Tree

Inevitably came the spring, and Mr. Thompson,  
Born to the earth and tired of winter's lull,  
Went out to the green-brown plot behind the woodshed  
And struck his heel down hard in the crusted earth  
To see if it were soft enough for planting.  
"Another week or so," he thought. "Last year's  
Potatoes kept us stocked all winter long,  
With plenty left for marketin' in town."  
He turned and, walking back across the field,  
Passed underneath the apple tree that grew  
Quite near the fence. "Yes, sir," he thought, "another  
Week or so," and glanced up at the sun.

Mrs. Thompson got up earlier now  
And, lighting the kerosene lamp above the stove,  
Walked quietly about the shadowed kitchen,  
Stirring oatmeal and waiting for the coffee  
To be done. "There's washing after this,"  
She thought. "So little time for other things.  
It's three years since the tulips went to seed."  
She went to the window and stood there looking out,  
And as the dawn grew brighter, softly smiled.  
"Ben," she said, as she heard his steps behind her,  
"The apple tree down by the field's in bloom."  
"Is it?" he answered, and then sat down to eat.

May slipped into June and days grew longer.  
Mr. Thompson, in blue overalls,  
Went down to the furrowed field each scented morning  
And worked until the sun burned hot and bright.  
Meticulously he weeded long straight rows  
Of beans, and sprayed the small tomato plants  
With care. Nor did he overlook the beet.  
Then, one noon, as he sat down to rest  
Beneath the full-leaved branches of the apple  
Tree, he noticed that its shade extended  
Circle-wise around onto the field.  
He noticed too the plants were smaller there.

He rose and walked up slowly toward the house,  
Slamming the door behind him as he came in.  
"Look, Ben," his wife called to him smilingly,  
"These pansies on the table—aren't they nice?"  
"Um-hum," he said, then later, "Where'd they come from?"  
"Mrs. Elder brought them to me when  
She came this mornin'. Guess she knows  
We don't have room for flowers anymore."  
She turned and looked a long time out the window.  
"You know," she said, "that apple tree's real pretty,  
The way its branches grow and everything."  
"Too bad," he said, "the fruit's not good for eating."

One late afternoon in mid-July,  
As Mr. Thompson read his almanac,  
He glanced down toward the field and saw the shadow  
Of the tree stretch broad across the corn.  
He thought a while, then started for the woodshed.  
Mrs. Thompson heard the noise and hurried  
To the porch. She started to call out,  
Then stopped and watched in awful fascination,  
As the tree fell to the ground, its branches cracking.  
One moment she was still and then she put  
Her head into her hands and softly cried.  
Mr. Thompson put away the saw.

## EVELYN DeWITT:

### Over the Bridge

I never have liked New York. Especially in the spring. There's life in the air then; you're got to see things growing. But you don't see anything turn green in the city. Perhaps that's where I belong now, things haven't been growing for me since Emily's death. It's all still the same, like the kids playing in the streets, shooting gimmies and matching tickets. We used to get a stick from off of an old packing box and smooth it down to use for a bat. We'd make a little money shining shoes, and after we'd pay for the brushes and polish there'd be enough left for a couple of balls. It wasn't much fun playing baseball in the street, though. You'd have to run off every time a car came.

I watched the kids carefully as I drove through the narrow streets to my mother's. The last time I'd been there was in September. It was April now, and I turned off St. Nicholas Avenue and drove down the Henry Hudson Parkway by the river. The ice was just about all gone, and the big red ferries were out again cutting the water and leaving waves of soapy foam behind in a big V. The grass in the parks along the Drive was getting long and needed its first cutting, but there weren't many people who got down to the Drive to see it.

It was so different in Riverdale. Just a few miles away acres of apple trees were beginning to blossom. The long, straight rows were everywhere, and pink buds were forming on all the branches. Another three weeks and the apple blossoms will be out. There's a spot right off 59 that's our favorite. I used to kid Emily about the pink and white petals being like her skin. The blossoms smell so fresh and sweet. We keep all the windows in the sunporch open till the night air makes it too cold. But the fragrance is in the house by then, and there's an outdoors smell all night long.

Ellen loves the spring. Thank God I was able to keep her from growing up in the city. She goes for walks all the time, down among the rows of apple trees and sometimes in the woods behind our house. She came in the other day with her cheeks rosy and the tip of her nose red. "Daddy, can you feel it?" she said. "It catches on my eyelashes and pulls them open. And everywhere I go I've got to sniff. And Daddy," she jumped up and down, "have you seen the bird's nest in the tree out front? There's tiny birds in it that can't even fly!"

I used to love to walk too. There wasn't much to sniff on the city streets except the smell of cars, but it was good to feel the muscles in your thighs tighten and that hungry feeling creep into your stomach. I remember one walk I took. I didn't notice how my thighs or stomach felt then, I was too sick in my heart. It was right after I'd graduated from college, and I had an appointment for a job interview in an accountant's office. There were a few of my classmates there, and they began kidding about leaving since Herb was here. None of them did, of course, but I was pretty sure I'd get the job. I always got the best marks in class even if I did have to work for that electrician after school. We all stood around feeling nervous and trying not to show it until the man came out. I remember he was big and fat and had a cigar in his mouth. He lined us up and began pointing. "You and you and you and you and you—get out!" I was one of them.

I left the office and began walking slowly. I didn't know where I was going and all I could think of was why, why? Before I knew it I was down in the wholesale fur section, and the men were wheeling their little trucks around piled high with skins. They weren't sewn together yet, just stacks of wild mink and beaver and muskrat. They weaved in and out of the crowd so fast; they knew where they were going. I watched them for a minute or two, then turned around and walked rapidly back to the accounting office.

It was almost five when I got there, and I leaned against a lamppost waiting to see who got the job. It didn't take long; pretty soon Harry Bailey came walking out with a briefcase

under his arm. He had been the slowest one in the class. "Harry!" I called out to him.

"Herb, what are you doing here? Kinda sorry I took your job away, old man. But business is business, you know."

"Harry, look," I took hold of his sleeve. "I don't care that you got the job. I can get another. But I want to know why he picked you and kicked me out. You've got to tell me, Harry."

"It's a funny thing, Herb. But this is the God's honest truth. He wanted someone with a stiff collar."

I looked at him. Then I began to laugh. I turned away and ran down the street laughing. I reached the entrance to the "L" and took the steps three at a time. It was rush hour, and we were packed in the car like matches in a box. I could smell the sweat of all the working men, and the garlic and the chewing gum and the bad breath. But I just leaned against a pole and laughed. It wasn't a pretty laugh, I guess. Wonder what I'd be today if I'd got that accounting job. Maybe a big banker instead of a school teacher. I wonder if things would have changed . . .

Ellen was riding beside me that April day. The sunlight splashed on my windshield, and I had to put my visor down. She left hers up though, and the sun caught in her hair and made it shine like red-gold. She looked so much like Emily. In a few years she'll look exactly as Emily did when I first met her. That was quite a summer. I had two weeks off and went up to one of those strictly kosher hotels in the mountains called Epstein's Pine Villa. It was mostly an old lady's home, but I didn't know that until too late. And by that time I had met Emily. She had come up to stay with her mother. But she didn't have to spend too much time with the old lady, just help her down in the morning and into the dining room for meals. She and I were placed at the same table in the dining room, and I tried for days afterwards to remember what I'd eaten that first meal. But all I could remember was lifting my eyes just high enough to see the shine of her hair, then dropping them again before she caught me.

The old ladies there were a bunch of match-makers, and they were always trying to get us to say something serious. On Saturday nights the busboys would fold up all the tables in the dining room and line them against the wall, then put all the chairs in front of them so that the old folks could watch the dancers. They had a four-piece band up front near the kitchen doors, and they were awful. The trumpet player always missed the high notes, and the violinist never kept up with the drummer and piano player. But Emily and I would close our eyes and dance and pretend we didn't notice. "All alone, by the telephone, waiting for a ring, a ting, a ling"—then we'd see the old women whispering again and we'd dance over to the door and sneak out.

We'd walk on over to the pool and take off our shoes. Then we'd sit down on the concrete edge and dip our toes in and out of the water until we got used to the cold enough to stick our feet in up to the ankles. We'd splash our feet about trying to drown the stars that were reflected in the water. It felt good having my arm around her, but we couldn't stay very long. As soon as we saw the lights go out in the dining room we'd get up and walk back, feeling the wet grass tickle the spots between our toes. Right before we got to the main house we'd stop and put our shoes back on.

I got my first appointment that fall, so we were married. I couldn't afford anything but a one and a half room flat in Brooklyn. The kitchen was no more than a closet, and Emily could turn on the stove with one hand and wash a dish with the other at the same time. But it was only two blocks from my school, and when I came home for lunch I'd gulp down my food so I'd have a half hour to spend with Emily. We were crazy in love. We had two studio couches at opposite ends of the living room that doubled for beds, but we never failed to push them together before we went to sleep.

At least a few of the dreams we made down at the pool came true. I got a raise and a transfer to a school in the Bronx when

Ellen was three. We rented a four-room apartment there and saved all we could for that house in the country. And two years ago we finally made it. It was five rooms and fitted our family perfectly. I think we picked it mainly because it was right in the midst of the apple section of lower New York. It was autumn when we first saw the place, and the apples had been picked. But a lot of them were lying on the ground, and the heavy sweetness of rotting apples hung in the air like the smell of rain before a storm. It was a hungry smell, and Ellen kept calling, "There's apples everywhere, Mommy. Smell'm."

We spent a whole day in Wanamaker's picking out some new pieces of furniture and some knickknacks for the hanging shelf. There was my natural pine desk with the knots showing and a frilly dressing table for Emily. We bought two wedgewood lamps and a little blue vase that would go well with our yellow pitcher on the shelf. And there was a terra cotta donkey with baskets of vegetables strapped to his sides. And a tiny china piano.

Emily has been dead for eight months now. Ellen and I are alone in the house except for the maid. She comes in every day and leaves after washing the supper dishes, just as she always did. We're not sad in the house. It's as if Emily were still with us and we'd better mind our step or we'll get scolded for not drinking a three o'clock glass of milk or for knocking the pipe ashes onto the rug. But I don't think it's good for Ellen to be alone so much. That was why we were riding in New York that day in April. I wanted to talk my mother into coming to live with us. Pappa always thought he was the head of the family, but it was Mamma who kept us kids in line.

One night I came home late from a date and tiptoed into the house carrying my shoes. I was just turning the hand of the grandfather clock back two hours when Mamma walked out.

"What time is it, Herbert?"

"Two o'clock, Mamma."

"Go to bed."

I never heard another word about it, but I was so scared for the rest of the week that it was much worse than any punishment.

We cut off the Parkway and drove down the East side. There haven't been many changes since the Dutch have gone, even the cobblestone streets are still there. Mamma lives in one of those squashed-in three-story tenements on the third floor. We parked the car and pushed our way through the children bouncing balls against the stoop. We stepped into the dimly lit hall and pressed ourselves against the wall to let a man go by. Then up the steep, winding steps. They were hard to take, and we stopped on the landing between the second and third flights in front of the outside bathroom to catch our breath. There was no light on the third floor, and we felt our way along the wall to the door at the end. I raised my hand and knocked.

The door opened a crack. "Who's there?"

"It's Herbert, Mamma. And Ellen."

She opened the door wide. "*Kinder*, come in."

We stepped into the tiny kitchen, lit only by two candles standing on the enamel table in dulled silver candlesticks. A burner was lit on the stove, so Mamma wouldn't have to turn on the gas on *Shabbos*.

Ellen had thrown her arms around her, and I stepped into the living room and pulled the cord dangling from the ceiling to turn on the light. Mamma was older than I remembered. Her hair was all white, and she was bent over so that she was shorter than Ellen.

"Bubby," Ellen cried, "I'm bigger'n you are. Haven't I grown?"

"Yes, *Kleina*, you're bigger than the *Bubba*. Soon you'll be as big as your father."

"I wear a size five shoe now, Bubby. Have you any peanuts?"

"You remember? Yes, *Kleina*, they are on the table." She turned to me. "And how do you feel, Herbert'l?"

"Fine, Mamma, fine. How have you been?"

She held up her hands and smiled. "Like an old woman. Ellen has grown a lot. She is almost a *kallab-moid*, *kein ein borab*." Her knuckles knocked against the wooden table.

I looked around the room. It was smaller than our first apartment and pieces of furniture were piled one on top of the other. There was the old grandfather clock in the corner, and one table was upside down on top of another. Only the couch and the matching chair were clear. The light was so dim you could barely see how faded they were, but you could feel where the stuffing had come through.

"Sit down, Herbert'l," she lowered herself into the chair. Ellen came running into the room.

"Do you still sleep in that little room without the window, Bubby?"

"What does an *alteh* need with a window? I am fine, *Kleina*."

"Mamma, it's terrible for you to live here. Aren't you lonely?"

There was a far-away look in the old woman's eyes. "No, son, it is not lonesome. Pappa and I spent many happy years here. That was your *Zaada*, Ellen. You see the church outside the window? Whenever it is warm enough I open up the windows and listen to the music. The Father and I are good friends. I sit on the stoop in the summer and wait for him to stop by and talk. And in the winter he comes up and has tea with me once a week. It is not lonesome."

"Isn't there anyone else?"

Mamma smiled. "Mrs. Levy across the hall comes in every day to tell me where she doesn't feel good. And Mrs. O'Reilly down stairs has nine children that I help take care of. There is much to do."

"But how do you get around, Mamma? Those stairs are terrible."

"I don't get around much, Herbert'l. The stores on the corner I do my shopping in, and on Saturdays I go to the synagogue."

"I don't know how you make it, those stairs get *me* out of breath."

"*Mein kind*, you do not know what hardship is. This is not bad. I have friends, I have food, I have my synagogue. It is not like Poland. When you were very little we went back, but we did not stay long. Your father and I were very happy here. This land has been good to us."

"Mamma, why don't you come home with me? Ellen needs someone to watch over her."

"Oh, do, Bubby. I promise I won't put any snakes in your bed if you come."

"*Pashiveh*, you are making fun of your old *bubba*. No snakes. And no to you too, Herbert'l. The old have no place with the young. You would have to get *milchbig* and *fleisbig* dishes, and pots and pans. It would be too much for your new wife."

"But I'm not going to marry again, Mamma. Emily meant too much to me."

"You are wrong, my son. It is right that you should remarry and have a friend, and a mother for Ellen. I am of another world. It is better that I stay here. Don't look so sad, *Kleina*. Here, where your *Zaada* and I were so happy is where I want to be when I go to him."

Ellen began to cry. "Don't talk about dying, Bubby."

"I will stop. It is time we had some food, *ha kinder*? I have some *matzoh* left over from *Pesach* and some *gefiltet* fish." She took tiny, hurried steps into the kitchen.

"No, Mamma, we're meeting Murray down town. We promised to eat with him."

"But you must have something."

"Bubby," Ellen asked, "have you any chicken fat to put on the *matzoh*, with some salt?"

Mamma laughed. "Yes, *Kleina*, I have some *schmaltz*. Come, I'll spread it on for you and give it to you with a glass of tea. Will you have some too, Herbert?"

I nodded, and she went to the old-fashioned ice box and took out a jar of chicken fat. We ate in silence, and I watched the candles cast black, raggedy shadows on the opposite wall.

"We've got to go now, Mamma." I helped Ellen into her coat. "*Zei gezunt.*"

"*Zigznt, Bubby,*" said Ellen.

"*Zei gezunt, kinder lebben.*"

The street lights flicked on as we stepped out of the house. We drove down the street, past old Carlos selling roasted peanuts and salted bagels on the corner. We used to run after him when we were little shouting, "Carlos, shmarlos, a shmagel a bagel, a nickel a *shtickel.*" We drove past Mr. Hyman's vegetarian restaurant where we would get hot green peppers stuffed with rice and gravy and *shtongels* with butter on our birthdays. There was Mr. Feinberg in front of his candy store. We never could decide whether to buy nigger babies or pretzels for our penny. And Kaplan's delicatessen when we wanted salami and potato *knishes*. Then we were back on the highway.

I drove along, not thinking much about where I was going.

## NATHAN L. EVANS, Jr.:

### Rain in the Afternoon

I was still a small boy when my mother died; so small, in fact, that I didn't understand that death was the end of something. I stood beside her bed, and she looked at me for a little while, saying nothing. A solitary tear trickled across her cheek. In a hoarse whisper she said to Father: "Take care of John. Take care of John and raise him good." It wasn't all she said, for they talked for a long time, that man and that woman, but I remember nothing more. I guess what I remember is all that really mattered.

It was raining hard on the day we were to have buried her. And it was cold. I heard them say it was much too cold for November. One even said that there was a curse upon the land; and then the talking stopped for a little while. But the rain continued, steadily, and finally they said that the funeral would have to be tomorrow. Some of the people left our house then and got into their wagons and drove off in the rain. Some of the wagons sat in our yard all night long, however, and their teams were stabled in our barn.

A lamp burned all night in the room where my mother was, and people sat before the fire and talked. I lay awake for a long time and listened to them. At first their talk was low and the words came slowly, but after a while they began to tell stories and their voices became the voices of normal people.

The rain was still falling next day, driving across the yard in long sheets or pattering slowly but steadily upon the roof. The wagons in the yard gleamed with a coating of ice, and the chill crept into the house in spite of the roaring flames in the fireplace. Everyone stayed close to the fire all morning, but they were all becoming restless. Talk came jerkily or not at all. About noon some of the men went out and rigged the canvas top on our wagon, and later in the afternoon they put my mother in the wagon, too. Then there was a great to-do about bundling up in coats and warming by the fire, after which all the men and I went out to the covered wagon and started for the burying ground.

I watched the wet, slick backs of the horses as they plodded along. The wagon wheels broke through the thin film of ice and sank into the mud so that the men had to get out and walk in the rain when we came to the big hill. It was terribly cold, even down in the straw of the wagon box.

When we got to the burying ground, everyone got out of the wagon and went to look at the muddy grave. I was left alone in the wagon with my mother. But she was in the big box, and it was closed. I wondered if she were cold too. I looked

My mind was on old times, I guess. And I was thinking, too, about Irving's maiden sister. She was a fine woman, and always kept me laughing when I was around her. I visited her apartment once, and it was spotless. Mamma would think she was a real *baaleh bustab*. Maybe she would make a good mother for Ellen.

"Daddy, look!" Ellen cried. "There's the bridge."

The George Washington bridge was straight ahead. A double arc of lights hung like stars in the air. The cars crawling along were no bigger than ants.

"Oh-oh, Daddy," she murmured. "Look how they step up, up, up. It's like a stairway to fairyland."

"That's where we're going, Honey. That's the bridge that takes us home."

"Let's hurry, Daddy. Let's hurry on up there."

out the front of the wagon, and through the steam rising from the wet team I could see all the men standing stock still, and all of them were looking at my father. He stood a little apart, at one end of the open grave, his eyes fixed gloomily upon the pit. Finally I heard him say, "We can't put her in that; not in all that water."

One of the men walked around to the back of the wagon. He took out two buckets and carried them back to the side of the grave and set them down in the mud; then he stepped back and all the men looked at one another. My father still stood at the end of the grave, saying nothing, doing nothing. Finally one of the men shrugged his shoulders, and slipped gingerly over the rim of the grave. I heard a splash when his boots hit the water. Another man followed him, and then they began to bail out the water. Splash. Splash. Splash. The yellow water would curl over the rim of the grave and fall upon the ground. The rain had almost stopped, and the only sound was that steady splash, splash, and the jingling of the traces as the horses pawed at the muddy ground.

After a while the splashing stopped, and then all the men came around behind the wagon. They removed the tail-gate and four of them climbed into the wagon and moved the box to the back where they could get hold of it. I followed them, and when they jumped down to the ground, my father saw me and lifted me down too. But he didn't let go of my hand.

I watched the big box lowered into the ground. I remember how muddy the ropes got that they had under the box, and how muddy the men's hands became as they handled the ropes, but none of them seemed to notice the mud any more. I looked up at my father. His face looked strange, drawn, and blue, and cold; and his eyes were warm and cold at once, and somewhat sad. That was all. He took off his big black hat as the box reached the bottom of the pit. All the men stopped and looked at him again. There seemed to be something they wanted to do; something they didn't quite know how to do. Father nodded his head, and watched while the first few shovels of mud were thrown onto the box. The mud was red and sticky and didn't want to let go of the shovels, and it made a funny splashing sound as it hit the hollow box.

I became tired of watching them and climbed back into the wagon. I lay down on the straw and tried to forget how cold I was. I felt terribly alone, terribly small; yet I don't remember that I cried. I just lay in the straw and listened to the steady thumping sound of the red mud.

# MARJEAN PERRY:

## Tale of Hope

### I. Dream of Morning

The sky, not anything but gray,  
Leans on the colorless and placid  
Gray of the pines, leans  
On the pulpy earth at pre-dawn.  
One . . . Two . . . Three . . . Four . . .  
Time enters by a swinging door  
To wake us in the dull suspension.  
Time is a burly cock and swaggering.  
Dawn is his Pertelote — most strange  
And ingenuous a fowl is she  
To lay her packaged egg and cluck.  
And batailled as it were a castel wal  
He shook his coomb, redder than the fyn coral.

Waters of light drain in upon themselves,  
The leveled waters float in dim remembrance  
Along the footwalks of the waking brain.  
This is the dream of the quickening  
This is the dream:  
I see, small before my eye, a figure  
And I see him strutting  
A strange illusory jig and tapping  
With his deliberate boots the beat of the dance;  
I see, the people in a circle  
When the mists are lying on the ground,  
Sharply, as in a madman's vision,  
The stencilled ring of heads and arms  
That eunuch-like are hollow  
Of the subtleties of men;  
I say, with speech not my own—  
What do you hear?  
And it is whispered—  
We hear the sound  
We hear the sound outside  
Of the wind in the trees.  
With a rush they are children again,  
They kick up their heels and flee  
After him, after him. He taps  
Once with a deliberate boot and is gone.

Morning is the packaged egg,  
And Dawn cackles sleepily with the repetition.

This is the turning point for time.  
Once, when men were children at a beach,  
It was the fashion to care for the sky  
And to regard it as their pretty Sybil  
And to listen for the sea in shells.  
And now, they gather the glittering ice  
From the winter limbs  
And they treasure it in their way  
Until it melts in their palms.  
They whistle through their teeth  
And ask which way  
Is east of the sun and west of the moon.

. . . Five . . . Six . . . Seven  
The dark trees bid  
Goodbye from somewhere in the night and night  
Is little in the sun.

My tale is of a cok, as ye may heere,  
And he rides  
Deep in myth and mystery,  
And what is it that I see beneath his beady eye?

A desire to peck the golden corns  
And to spend his days with seven wives,  
Never to venture beyond the boarded fence.  
Pertelote rolls her egg,  
Does it to a turn.

His byl was blak, and as the jeet it shoon;  
Lyc assure were his legges and his toon.  
And the red fox whistles from between the pines.

### II. The Marvelous Fowl

After the vision has recalled itself  
After the slight rebellion has been quelled  
What next?  
The earth is as familiar and flat  
As the bed with its covers and sheets  
Tucked squarely in at the corners.  
I let in the winter air, and  
In the yard I can see my hen  
Shaking the damp from her feathers. I regard  
The rest of the world  
Sparkling somewhat beneath a cold sun.

This is the reality  
This is the point at which  
I turn away from the mirror and its imagination  
And go down the stairs to receive  
Something; I am not sure exactly what.  
Perhaps a letter—  
Edged in black in order to remind me  
That my favorite aunt died six months ago.  
Or perhaps it is only to open  
The front door and gaze at my front yard  
And make quite sure  
That the snow looks as walked-upon as it did  
Yesterday.

It seems that Time is round and hard as a pellet.  
The day moves stiffly through the hours  
Of my work, unshiftable and as stuck as glue.  
But I am a red fox trembling in an ague  
Or wilderness of consternation.  
I can still remember that the midnight wailed  
A queer disconsolate tune, compelling  
Me to walk for hours in the north sea's  
Terrible gray light.  
My tail drags in the dust of my wonder.  
It is autumn and my background shows  
A wealth of auburn leaves, leaves only  
The spell for my mind to make.  
Shots thunder from the baying of the hounds.  
My ears are pointed and the tympanums bulge,  
Nervously, as I go into a brisk trot.

The wind blows loud and free  
And starts the red haired fox behind its clump.  
The red-eyed leaves fly up dry as an autumn breeze.

Tomorrow and tomorrow I will think of other things  
But today I have had time to reconsider.  
I shall walk out and recount  
My blessings and my faults.  
The fount is the arch blue sky

Bent above the children in the snow.  
They shovel snowballs at each other  
And I am getting in their way.

The Indian Summer is misplaced, sitting in the snow.  
A cold cricket chants a song  
Of the old autumn and its promised land.  
I stroll into the slanted sunset, and  
Find a surprising egg nestled in the roots of a tree.  
I touch it with my boot's toe.  
It splits  
And lets out a marvelous fowl.  
She winks into my eye and squawks  
In another language of a familiar tone.

### III. Night and the Conclusion

Evening, and the sky opens beautifully  
In my sight. The dusky rose has but a short life.  
It is soft and painted strangely  
With the colors of the falling sun. I strip  
It of its hundred petals and turn them  
In my hand. The core is hard and green,  
Is sticky to the touch.  
The bloom is ruined in my palm, and yet—somehow,  
It does not matter. There is a shower  
Of the careless parts and I let them go.

Between this moment and the minute after  
Comes the reckoning. But the moment moves  
Until the after minute is long passed and gone.  
The night owl and the fox,  
The people wrapped in the night lights of imagination,  
The baby wrapped in swaddling clothes,  
A doe-eyed dog, a cat, an Indian elephant  
All run helter skelter along this point in time.  
It does not matter  
That they ask each other what is there.  
Behind them Time is a running flame.  
The dark trees fall amid the smoke and ashes  
Leaving the ingrained threaded roots  
To stand and hold in the old old dust.  
Time and the river meet and diverge  
And I am running along the river bank  
Nosing the wet green rushes that are there.

I have walked far today.  
The sun has gone and the moon has come  
Casting strange lights on the familiar ground.  
I am identified with the night.

The flexible and inflexible quality of time  
Is to be marvelled at.  
It seems so simple and yet is not.  
It fits over me like a thin glass dome.  
It is the fountain of my youth and age.  
I ride it or it rides me and we never stop  
Until I must drop from under,  
Losing my lucky caul perhaps.  
There is a blue sky coming with the dawn.  
And I am identified with Time.

The circle is completing itself, the marvelous circle,  
And Time is mine if I will take it.  
Dawn reaches back through the night  
So that I may grasp it with my hand.  
I am remade and give a shout of living joy  
That echoes and re-echoes in my brain.  
This is the end and the beginning of my day.

I meet again the marvelous fowl that ushered in  
Hope. Once she was primeval and restrained  
In a shell, and so was I. But now  
We meet like old friends reunited.

Phantoms swim before my eyes  
And I am dizzy, almost fall  
But I steady to receive  
The fox that runs to meet me  
Whining in the last hours of the night.

### Season of the Blue-Plane Star

Back of the window the children stare and stare.  
Round-eyed children stare into the dark,  
Fathom the frosted light that piles to the sky,  
Paces from the stiff-necked trees. They look  
Straight to the slipping cold moon.  
The moon looks back.  
Stars slide, cold, from side to side  
Flicking the children's eyes  
Till in their mind's eye they can hear  
The touch of a hoof by a chimney pot  
And there  
Is Santa slipping down  
(One hand) floating down the stair-  
Stepped iciness of air. He soon descends  
By pointed pine spike ends. The pine tails bend  
Beneath an icy crust.

(Patron saint, dwarfed dour saint, mocking saint  
Santa swings in the space where he was pinned.  
He wears a white metal beard at his chin.  
He sinned: He made the children laugh.)

They look up at him and admire  
And twist him on his wire until it cracks,  
They've swung him to and fro,  
Let the cat die, they say,  
And he falls down with a shattering bound.  
In time the children will forget all things  
For time allows the children to run freely past  
Everything, everything.  
The toy on the ground wears a terrible grin.  
What can the children say? What can they say?  
They say: We want to be free as the wind.)

The children stand in the window still.  
Their flicking eyes have seen a blue-plane star  
Cold in the east, cold in the eastern rays rise,  
Cold in the sinking blue-heat star.  
Why do they stand so long to see  
The stars receding into the rising sun?  
The earth swings down and away from the sun.  
Children and saint together say,  
Let the cat die.

## GUY DAVENPORT:

### Lucullus Has Accomplished Much

The afternoon rain was falling on the long and blackened fields of South Carolina and on the tracks of the Blue Ridge Railroad and on the tinroof of the Caxton Printing Company, and Matthew who had chewed on the insides of his cheeks until they hurt wished that it would all go away in a great and slightly glorious movement that would take away the rain and the afternoon and the thoughts in his head and the entire day. The yapping little handpresses had been going all afternoon. Sam Caxton had been griping all afternoon. Any little thing could come along and Sam would set up a gripe about it that would treat with wizard thoroughness all the ramifications of the particular gripe under consideration. Sam had griped about the deadline of the Wilson and McFalland Textile bluesheets, about the way the ink was sticking to the rollers on such a rainy afternoon (the moisture in the air loosened the tightness of the ink), about Matthew and the way he had out of amazing stupidity mashed a line of type with a fierce and deliberate sense of obliteration.

Sam was a poet, no he was a rhetorician with a booming voice and a fierce shock of red hair and an even fiercer dash of a red beard. Matthew had been looking in a dictionary one day when he found out that it was a furze of a beard. He went to Sam in proud exultation (he had been walking the morning streets and had seen white mist rising from hor horsemanure on the pavement and had seen the black trees on the Court House lawn against the clean pink of the aloof sky and he had been saying things to himself and he had anticipated telling Sam the new word that described his beard) and told him the word.

— Sam, old fellow, Sam child, he had said, Ah, Sam of the multiple press and Sam of the leering lip, I have found the word that describes with exactness beyond recall that spurt of red hair you call a beard.

Sam was drawing on a cigaret and looking at a galleyproof of *The Fiscal Report of the First Baptist Church of Hampton*. He exhaled heavily and guessed at the word with grave condescension.

— Rubesnesque? he said.

— Shucks no, Matty said. Not in a hundred years would you guess it. Its exactness rings of Zola, its descriptive power is amazingly striking in its vast simplicity.

— Cut out the crap, Sam said, and bring me the twenty-three form to put these pages into. D. H. Lawrencian?

— Nah, Matty said.

— Burning bush? Sam said. Tumbling weed? Jet of flame? Mephistopholic? Satanic? Satyrlike? Van Dyke? Edwardian?

— You could guess a thousand years, nay, millenia, and you still couldn't get it?

— Furze? Sam said.

Matthew was silent as the toms. Now how the holy and glorious hell could he have known a thing like that, how the rigorous hell could he have penetrated the magnificence of that discovery and guessed the goddam word? O well, Sam was like that. He knew everything that was going on anyway. Take that rainy afternoon. He had been griping all afternoon long. It was remarkable that he could find so much to gripe about. Matthew admired Sam's ability to be eloquent but hell and goshamighty enough of a thing is enough and Matthew wished as he stood at his stone and watched the rain fall on the Blue Ridge Railroad tracks and on the warehouses that stood along the cut and on the automobiles that were parked behind the printshop and on the broad and lonely fields of South Carolina that it would all pass away, the afternoon and the griping, the printshop and his apprenticeship, the people who wanted things printed on little pieces of paper and the people who came in to sit by the stove and bake their shanks and hams and behinds, he wished that a great and miraculous swoop would descend and take them all away but whereto he didn't know and to tell the honest-to-God truth he didn't give a happy goddam.

O the misery of being a nonboy (too old) and a nonman (too young)! O the idiocy and the awkwardness, the shame and the disgrace, the stoicism and the hurt of being such a pitiful one. It was enough to drive a fellow to quick insanity, to tear his hope and joy and wonder and appetite for life right out of his breast and fling it to Judge Fuller and Sam Caxton and Gran'daddy Reynolds and all the vultures who hovered over life and nibbled from the sidemeat with arrogant distaste but insatiable hunger. It was enough to warp the very flow of life from innocence to sophistication, from childhood to manhood. It was an agonizing, cruel, bitter, unexplained and apparently unexplainable mess.

And it was the same with girls. They get it worse than boys. They get the vast element of uncertainty that boys really never have even if they do go through veritable hell in their adolescence like young monks who do not know or do not have the sense to know if they are geldings or if they have the potency of springtime bulls. Girls have an uncertainty that they know they will not, or can't lose until that night when they are told that they have been married to such-and-such a fellow out of a lot that they have been dating or until the moment they rise to the emotional crisis that cannot turn back except into the *continued* and fruitless *continuance* of maidenhood and which cannot go forward except to the at least momentary alleviation of adolescence embodied in a childish and inquisitive adventure which they had all along suspected and even hoped was the first and undeniable stroke of life after which the sun would be more golden and the world of men would forever be meaningful in a manner so charged with excitement and emotion that nothing else except this acquiescence to the onrush of maturity would matter to their nolongerthen perturbed and distracted selves, their (they consider) dormant selves full of the insistent and unrelenting desire to be a woman.

Boys have it a little better than that. Their perturbation is not so much sexual as it is emotional. That is, they have the added and almost insurmountable business of being men with an unconquerable integrity. They are not offered, nor do they want it except in rare and pitiable cases, the security of a protecting mother and father or the security of being the guarded sex. Matthew wished that the afternoon would be swept away with a magical finality because he was in the very and actual midst of the boy's special problem of accumulating and assimilating and building, like a blind architect, an integrity, a soul as it were, and, along with the integrity, an intelligence which would be his answering device to whatever more of that hellish adolescence should smite him with its fumbling hand.

Matthew was sore that afternoon and if he had known just exactly what he was sore at he wouldn't have been sore. He knew it too. He just wanted to be taken away from it all. He watched the rain broom across the parkinglot and he was already in that dullness of complete activity (he had been put to interleaving pink and white sheets which would go with the bluesheets of Wilson and McFalland since he had mashed the line of type out of malignant stupidity) that dullness of complete activity which can give the mind all the wandering freedom it wants. Matthew was thinking about fauns and satyrs and hamadrads and Pan and Bacchus and about the barren, blackened, plowworn fields of South Carolina which have never had any gods, no woodhaunts and goatpeople.

Mr. Caxton, a short little Bavarian, was fussing about the poolhall next door. It was the poolhall in the back of Strickland's Café where all the men in Hampton who had nothing to do spent the long days. There was Joe Strickland who was a good electrician but who did no more work than was possible for human existence, and a bare one at that. There was Buck Sassard who painted houses when he wasn't drunk and Stephanos the Greek who played pool from early in the morning until late at night and no one knew where his money came from. They just knew that Stephanos had money. Nobody cared beyond that. Mr. Caxton was fussing because there was a drunk out in the alley. He was lying in the rain and saying things to the

stinktree. Somebody threw him out there awhile ago. Mr. Caxton said it was a fool thing to do.

Sam was talking to his father about the drunk and he used words of immense vulgarity and lewdness but his father didn't mind because the words had to do with the drunk who was lying out in the rain.

They all went to the window to see this fellow who was so drunk with whiskey or beer or with watching the poolgames all day long or with simply having nothing to do or with lying out in the rain. He had on white painter's overalls and he was in bad need of a shave. He was gesticulating toward the grey sky and saying things which could scarcely be heard.

—Damn you, you consarned blacktongued rain, you . . .

Mr. Caxton shook his head in disapproval. This sort of thing has got to be stopped. This sort of . . .

Matthew went back to his interleaving. What a terrible thing to see that fellow out there in the rain. Matty didn't know what it meant. I guess nobody, he figured, I guess nobody in all the world has got time to stop and figure out why a fellow can lie out in the rain and everybody else just stands around and says, 'This sort of thing, by veritable God, has got to stop. Then of course it would be all wrong to go out and move the fellow out of the rain.'

Matthew remembered the Christmas before and what had happened at Strickland's. It was a matter of morals for him.

A brother-in-law to Clyde Loudermilk had come in to shoot Clyde, Clyde had ducked, the bullet had gone through the chest and therefore lungs of an MP who was waiting between buses and had ricocheted off of a refrigerator and lodged in the left buttock of the scarest nigger in all South Carolina at that moment. It had been a moral matter for Matthew. He was busy building his integrity and the impulse of the story, told by his father early on the Christmas morning that it happened shook a lot of the foundation. He went around the rest of the week saying, I will not let it enter into what I've been thinking. I will not. I will not. I will not. I will not let this enter into what I've been thinking. O Lord, don't let it bother me. Don't let it bother me.

Matthew didn't come to realize anything on the rainy afternoon. He knew damn well at the time of the shooting that he couldn't keep anything out of his mind. The mind accomplishes all sorts of things by itself when the consciousness isn't bothering about anything at all. Or when it is. It was all like that sentence in the Latin grammar. Lucullus has accomplished much. Lucullus hasn't accomplished anything. The rain falling on the bleak and barren hills of Italy did it for him. Drunks lying in the rain and talking to a stinktree and to the sky did it for him. But, as it were, Lucullus has accomplished much.

## MARY ANNE CLEGG:

### Blue?

He who would define  
The color of the sky  
Must see it first  
Through hard stiff columns  
Of tree trunks  
Compressing the hue—  
Depth of ranks of tree trunks  
Deepening with distance  
An illusion of tangible stuff—

Yet the steps are many  
And the trees intrude.

If these living  
Fence-posts were strung with wire,  
One could draw back or roll under.

But the only tie between the trees  
Are the cobwebs,  
Which I see when I am caught—  
A maze, a mycelium  
Pressing through the thin skin and  
the tightening bone

Of the forehead  
To the soft wrinkled mass of the brain:  
The cobwebs move with the indenting  
Force of the finest wire.

But the retarder,  
Perhaps the dead end,  
Is essentially a cobweb  
With a mindless ally, a tree—  
And beyond all this  
Is a small warm house,  
A person,  
Someone who will go with me  
Up the mountain  
To the sky unfettered  
Where the true color awaits.

## MORTON SEIF:

### Song of Erda

*"Waver, Wotan, waver  
Quit the ring accursed."*

—DAS RHEINGOLD, SC. IV

The man who stoops to pluck the earth  
Like flowers, woos as insects do  
The secret stamen pistilles,  
Deluded by delicious pollen.

Immaculate, robed sorcerer,  
Ignore the nettled sorrow and  
The sudden order; go, secure  
Your cardboard tower in the fastness

Of a viscous hour, about  
It hang red clouds that rise above  
The dust that stays skies blue; consort  
With furred and nyloned witches there.

Roll lightning, split the nuclei  
Of atoms, suit the world to please  
Your geometrically cold pleasure;  
Make believe that your discretion

Has improved the creation . . . Alberich,  
Exhume the buried Rheingold,  
Fashion rings of power;  
Search for the immortal isotope.

Bombard the map with Oak Ridge Piles!  
Then chafe, frustrated by the gods  
Until Valhalla flaming topples  
To the smooth as mirror sea.

The cyclotrons run down, love's image  
Will suffuse your soul, and the  
Apocalypse forever seal  
This time, this place beneath the waves.

# NANCY SHEPHERD:

## Mr. Lowry

Every room in the house was rented out the night Mr. Lowry came back. I was sleeping with my cousin, Josie, in the front dining room. I lay there, glad that she was finally asleep, because I was tired from trying to think up reasons why Bill hadn't come to take her out. I had even tried telling her that Bill was just no good anyhow. But that had only made things worse. I had said who did he think he was anyway, but that hadn't helped any either.

I was trying to lie on the top of my head to keep my curlers from poking. Josie's hair was thick and auburn and wavy on the pillow, but mine was stiff and straight and had to be put up. I could still hear Saturday night negroes passing on the street. The sideboard and the china closet showed blacker than the dark, and I could see Nanna's good white china through the glass. Over in the corner was the old Victrola with the records about the Titanic and the Santa Barbara earthquake and "Jada" and "Yes, we have no bananas."

I heard Nanna's voice in the hall. "Why, no, I'm sorry, but you know it's all I can do to keep track of which room each person has, much less——"

Then Mr. Lowry's voice. "But you're sure my wife left no word?"

"Maybe she's at the show. It usually gets out late on Saturday nights, I understand."

"Well, thank you, ma'am. If you don't mind, I'll just wait out on the porch."

The front door closed. The sound of Nanna's footsteps grew dim somewhere in the back of the house.

Mr. Lowry dragged a chair across the porch. I looked over at Josie, but she didn't stir. Betty must not have been expecting Mr. Lowry. I propped myself up on my elbow and leaned over toward the window. I kept watching Josie, trying not to make any noise. I lifted the bottom of the shade.

Mr. Lowry's cane, swinging like a pendulum, was crooked over the curled banisters. Mr. Lowry himself was sitting just behind the vine in one of Nanna's porch rockers with the woven backs. He was jerking his half-bald head back and forth, slightly, swiftly rocking himself on the warped floor boards. His hands were fumbling in his pockets. Leaning over then, he knocked his pipe against the post several times as if he were nailing up a calendar. The whole time he was filling his pipe he kept rocking and looking out toward the street. The match close to his face showed more than I could see by the street-light from over in front of the *Enquirer* office. His mustache stuck out like a shed over his pipe, or like a tobacco barn with smoke coming out the way it was. His nose was worn and rough like a pine knot, his eyebrows like the two halves of an extra mustache gone separate ways.

He had looked at his watch three times before I let down the shade against the screen. I lay back in bed.

Mr. and Mrs. Lowry had first come there three weeks ago from Florida. I had stood silently in the front hall watching them while Nanna talked.

"Yes, I have one vacancy I'll be glad to show you. It's at the front of the house upstairs on the right. It looks down on the street and the mock orange tree, and it's off from the other rooms. You get a nice breeze there too. This is my little granddaughter, Mr. and Mrs. Lowry. The pigeons get noisy once in a while 'round in the eaves, but you get used to them. There's no noise from the church except on Sundays, either." She had looked at me for a moment when she came to the "little granddaughter" part. She always said "little," but she knew I was fourteen.

"Mrs.," Nanna had said. I realized then that the Lowrys weren't father and daughter and wondered if Mr. Lowry had money.

He stood there making invisible periods on the floor with his cane next to the four suitcases. His stiff white collar held his

head high. Some grey hair grew between his ears and the bald spot. His wife was beside him. I looked hard at her suntan and wondered if her nose were going to peel. She ran her fingers along a blonde wave to push it into place and lifted her eyebrows which were thin and surprised-looking. The hall light flashed silver on her hair clasp. She felt me staring and tilted her head to say "Just call me Betty." She smiled big and wide, and her lashes made the light in her eyes bob up and down. I grinned back at her.

Mr. Lowry picked up the suitcases, told his wife to come along my dear, and started up the stairs. Nanna went first, sticking a loose hairpin into the big white ball of hair on her neck, like she sticks broom straws into pound cake. She pulled her red shawl tight around her shoulders.

"Of course I'll be away traveling most of these next few weeks," Mr. Lowry said.

I waited, leaning against the downstairs banister until Nanna's black shoes, the Lowrys, and their luggage had disappeared. Then I stood listening until I heard them overhead, walking past the gold-framed lady at the organ with the angels dropping roses on the keys.

Josie would be glad Betty had come. She always said nobody interesting ever stayed there. I thought Karl was interesting enough, but he had taken his bassoon and left town with the circus.

Josie was glad. She and Betty would go out to the kitchen in the afternoons and sit at the big square table eating fried half moons of apple pie from the warming oven over the stove, or peeling sweet potatoes, baked and still hot enough to make the butter run. Pretending to listen to Nanna's regular reading of the obituaries from the *Enquirer*, I could hear their laughter from out in the kitchen. Josie talked to Betty about the dress material she measured out all day long at the department store to show to old ladies who were looking for remnants. Josie started talking to her instead of to me even about Bill. She began treating me as if I were young. I think Nanna noticed too, but she didn't say much. Josie was nineteen and only her niece.

One day, I found Josie upstairs in Betty's room. Betty was lying across the bed on her stomach, her legs bent at the knees, her toes drawing circles in the air. Josie was turned sideways in front of the tall mirror smoothing the waist of an aqua dress.

"Isn't it adorable on her?" Betty made a corkscrew with her hand, and Josie turned around.

"You like it? Use it any time. The hem's just perfect for you, and I never wear it. Now try on this red suit."

Josie said ooh, she bet Bill would like it.

"And when do I meet this Bill? That's all I've heard!"

The first days after Betty met Bill she kept asking questions about him. Josie would blush and try not to smile so much. Then Betty stopped asking questions at all.

Something woke me up. I was lying there in the dark trying to figure out what I was doing awake. A rooster crowed somewhere way out behind the house. Then I heard voices out front.

I leaned over and looked out under the shade. Josie moved. "What in the world are you doing? What time is it?"

"Be quiet," I said.

"What's going on?" she whispered. She leaned over and pushed her head next to mine. "Mr. Lowry!"

"Yes," I said.

He was standing behind the vine. The chair beside him was still moving slightly back and forth. He reached for his cane, lifting it noiselessly from the banisters and setting the tip of it just as noiselessly on the floor. He leaned on it and waited, watching.

Betty and Bill were coming slowly up the walk, supporting each other with their arms looped together. They weren't walking straight. Betty started to sing, but Bill said, "Sh-h-h." He stopped beside Nanna's angel trumpet bush and picked a big

white bloom. I knew Nanna would be mad. She was proud of her angel trumpets. He covered Betty's nose with it and said, "Smell."

"Um-m-m." The rooster crowed again. Betty leaned her head sideways and pulled Bill's sleeve. "Listen! Maybe it's morning." She turned her ankle on the bottom step and told Bill dammit she could walk.

Mr. Lowry got a better grip on his cane and moved back farther behind the vine. Josie didn't say anything.

Bill kissed Betty twice. "Once more," she said, giggling. She was on the step above Bill. He moved slightly toward her, then stopped.

Suddenly he said, "Josie! I've got a date with Josie. Where's Josie?"

"Ah, no, you haven't. That's tomorrow night."

Bill said, "Yes, tomorrow night."

Josie bit her lip.

Bill had gone and Betty was reaching for the door knob when Mr. Lowry stepped out from the shadow of the vine.

"Betty," he said. I could tell he was trying to be stern, but

his voice was weak and trembling. His hand shook on the crooked end of his cane.

Betty started and turned around, leaning against the doorway. "Why, Mr. Lowry, hel—Jo!" She grinned.

Maybe it was the way he looked at her that made her stop grinning. Her whole expression changed. Her eyebrows came together; her lower lip curled. She whimpered, then sobbed, shaking.

"Let's go upstairs. You need sleep. We are leaving tomorrow." His shoulders drooped. He pushed the door open with his cane and caught her arm. The door closed behind them.

I let the shade down slowly. Betty would leave tomorrow with Mr. Lowry. Suddenly I was happy. I knew that if Josie had any more talking to do about Bill, she would come to me. She was lying back on her side of the bed. Still she didn't say anything, but she wasn't asleep. Thinking that probably she was looking at the dark and the china, I looked at the dark and the china, too. I thought about Mr. Lowry's voice and the way his hand shook. There was still a little time left to try to feel bad before I went to sleep again.

## BARBARA WESTMORELAND:

### Christmas Story

Merry Christmas! and a mechanical tone  
Of frivolity for all those  
Who are sitting like stressed rings  
Of time; opening and closing misguided eyes  
In front of the cracking hearth,  
For they are looking under the patterns  
Of bricks laid criss-cross  
Upon the unplanted tile  
That lines existence, and when once sped  
Its way, lies among the glare  
Of the bright lights and their rhythms,  
Their pounds—  
And as the bricks pile away from the heat  
Their melting mind's eye  
Drips a thousand shy tears,  
They see—  
No bedtime stories to tell the eager ones  
Who sit between the twining flames,  
For tonight the fleas have left  
The puppy's back, and become camels—  
And far into the night they wish  
For the old music, but long ago  
The Opera house was closed, and it will spend  
Its entirety cluttering God's attic rooms—  
They can not warn the little ones  
Of all the beatings and the pushings  
On their bald heads  
For there the children stand without their hats  
And hang their passions  
On a crying one in the distance—  
They can move about the stars  
And still no crying one will freeze their tears,  
For the time that makes the years pass  
Will make them pass no longer—  
So the little ones will crunch their incantations  
Between the sheets, and kiss  
Their playful fingers upon the quilt  
And wait for all the toys in Christmas packs  
That all the rich will pile away  
And all the rest will stare at  
From the windows of the store—  
Only dream the wretched frog  
Croaking in the distance  
Is four and forty yards  
From the cold and unprotected room—  
And the smells of hay on all the cold stars  
Are really sticks of candy—

### Directed Life

Out of the realms of sleep  
And into the waking worlds,  
For mine is a life directed  
And briefed,  
And hung upon the leaning towers  
To be sent spinning  
Through the maze of smoke-cloud mists,  
Or shoved over the knolls, to crawl  
Into a quenched knowledge  
An ice-cube faith,  
Occasionally stopping to watch  
The curling of cats in vacant spaces,  
Or to eat from the silver cans  
With starry eyes and peering lashes,  
For I am now a nervous ghost  
Darting through a dozen streets  
And leering at the forms  
Neglected, burrowing into the dust—  
That I am waiting  
For the dazzling time  
When all the angels  
Peep from their gilded palace windows  
And hurl their zinc wings  
To break these mists—

### Often on a Sunday Morning

Often on a Sunday morning I think  
Of those who throw their inner bodies  
To the unknown, and yet who feel  
So safe—  
Of those who wear their complexes  
In a hundred different colors  
To a million different churches—  
Of those who watch the fish eggs hatch  
On Sunday afternoon,  
And swim, each into a different water—  
Of those who yearn  
To swim away; and yet who cannot  
Hurt a pious mother, an aged father  
And choose rather  
To fill the benches and wear the hats.

## LOUIS STEVENS:

### The Journey

Jesse was sitting on the porch step when his brother, Murray, entered the yard. He had been waiting for almost an hour. Murray nodded at Jesse and started through the front door when Jesse's voice stopped him.

"Murray. I know something you don't."

Murray had been working all day in the warehouse at the bottom of the hill. He was tired and a little cross, but he managed to smile at his younger brother.

"You do, Jesse? What is it?"

Jesse grinned mischievously and stuck out his lower lip. His blue eyes were shining as they always did when he had a secret.

"I'm going away."

Murray let the screen door slam after him. Jesse heard him reply from the living room.

"Sure ya' are, Jesse, sure ya' are."

Jesse frowned. It was always this way. No one ever believed him. No one ever seemed to care. But he would show them all. He would show them today! He rose from his position, spat into the dust and marched loudly and defiantly into the house. Murray was sprawled in the overstuffed leather sofa, which, although it was beginning to show signs of wear, commanded the entire room. Jesse stood before the fireplace and began to count the bricks. He had traced his finger along eighteen bricks before he said to his brother.

"I am going away, Murray. You wait and see."

Murray lit a cigarette and threw the match into the fireplace.

"Sure ya' are, Jesse. Now run outside and play."

Jesse frowned. Murray always wanted him to play. Even when there were exciting things going on in the house, he was always sent out to play.

"I get tired of playing, Murray. I don't know what to play anymore. I already played everything there is."

Murray glanced at his brother and knew that he was about to cry. He didn't like it when Jesse cried.

"Ya' said ya' was goin' away, Jesse. Where? Where ya' goin'?" Jesse's expression changed instantly. He was happy again.

"I can't tell where, but a long, long way."

He giggled and began to dance around the room. He heard his mother's voice from the kitchen.

"Jesse, stop that runnin' around. You'll make my cake fall. Go outside and sit on the front steps till I call you to eat."

Murray threw his cigarette into the fireplace. He watched the ashes drift hesitantly to the floor, then he rolled over on his side and closed his eyes.

"Do like mama says, Jesse."

The younger boy glared at Murray, then at the kitchen door, which was spotted with dirty fingerprints. He marched through the front door and Murray heard him stomping on the porch. Mrs. Jones came into the living room. Her face was flushed and a wisp of tired, grey hair was falling over one eye. She was wearing an apron, which suited her perfectly.

"Murray, don't go fallin' asleep now. It's almost time to eat. Go out on the porch and talk to Jesse. He's by himself all day long."

Murray rose to a sitting position on the sofa.

"Aw mama, not now. Sides, he's off again. He's goin' on a trip this time."

Mrs. Jones looked in the direction of the screen door and smiled. "I know, Murray. He's been ravin' about that all day long, poor boy."

Murray was like his mother only he was more practical.

"Look, mama, for the kid's own good, you oughta' put him in that school. It ain't such a bad place. They'll take good care of him."

Mrs. Jones turned on the boy.

"You shouldn't say that, Murray, ever. Jesse's a good boy. It's not his fault he's the way he is."

"He oughta' be in that school, mama."

Mrs. Jones started back into the kitchen. It seemed to Murray she lived in the kitchen. She paused at the door.

"No, Murray, no. I won't have Jesse put in a Institution. I don't care what. I jest won't send him there."

She disappeared through the swinging door. Murray could smell the heavy aroma of onions. He got to his feet slowly and ambled towards the screen door. Jesse was lying on his back on the porch, his long, awkward legs propped against the railing. He was smiling up at the sky.

"Jesse, time to go wash. Supper's almost ready."

Jesse winked at his brother. His eyes were shining.

"Ain't got time. Got to pack. I'm going off—and I'm going tonight."

Murray shrugged his shoulders and joined Jesse on the porch. He flopped in the old rocking chair and decided to light another cigarette.

"Why you goin' away, Jesse?"

Jesse jumped quickly to his feet and began to caress the post. He began to talk, so fast he couldn't form all the words correctly. Murray didn't understand all of what he said. He didn't really care.

"I'm going away from here—forever. I'm going on the train tonight. Way away where I won't have to play all the time, and I'm going to see things, big giants and castles and rivers and animals and fish. Fish most of all. All kinds of fish. The yellow kind I caught in the creek, and striped ones and long kinds that look just like snakes, and kinds that puff up all over. And I won't play 'cept when I want to. That's why I'm going away." He added quickly, "You wanna come too?"

Murray blew smoke at the sunset and wished that it was time to eat.

"Naw, Jesse, I don't think I can go. I gotta' work tonight, but I'll tell ya' what!"

Jesse sprang to his brother's feet and began rubbing his hands over Murray's dirty shoes.

"What, Murray? What?"

"I'll walk down to the train with ya' after we eat. That okay?"

Jesse jumped to his feet and stood very straight.

"No, Murray. I gotta' go now. The train's coming. I ain't got time to eat. I gotta' go pack."

And with that, he dashed into the house. Murray heard his plodding on the stairs. He shook his head sadly and flipped his cigarette into the yard where it kicked up a little dust. He knew his mother was a stubborn woman. He'd have to get Jesse into the Institution himself. He remembered that Jesse was twenty-one, almost twenty-two. Perhaps it was already too late! He heard his mother's voice.

"Murray. Jesse! Are you washed yet?"

She came to the screen door. Murray wondered if his mother had ever been a pretty young girl.

"Mama." Murray didn't know how to say what he was thinking. He blurted, "Mama, what we gonna' do about Jesse?" She smiled. She was not a practical woman.

"Nothin', Murray, nothin'. You go down to the crossin' with him. He wants to catch the train."

Murray couldn't believe what he had just heard.

"Mama, are ya' serious? Are ya' gonna' let him run away?"

Mrs. Jones laughed, then Murray understood. Everything was suddenly all right again.

"It's the 5:15 that'll be comin' through. Go down to the crossin' with him."

Then Mrs. Jones was gone again. Murray relaxed in the rocking chair. He was relieved. He didn't know quite why. He shouldn't have worried. Tomorrow he would talk his mother into sending Jesse away. It had to be done—tomorrow.

"Murray, Murray, are you ready to go?" It was Jesse with a shoebox tucked tightly beneath his arm. "Are you ready to go?"

Murray rose and placed his arm around his brother, who was four inches taller.

"Sure, Jesse, let's go. Better hurry or we'll miss the train. We don't wanna' miss the train."

Arm in arm they walked through the front gate and turned in the direction of the railroad tracks. Murray reminded himself that the gate needed painting. He looked at Jesse and knew somehow that his brother was completely happy for the first time in his life.

"Write to me, Jesse."

He couldn't, at the moment, think of anything else to say.

"Huh?"

Jesse was too busy thinking about the wonderful things he was about to see for the very first time. He thought about trains and animals and fish, but most of all he was thinking about the train.

"Write to me."

Jesse heard the whistle of the 5:15. It seemed to be calling to him.

"Sure, Murray, I'll write. Let's hurry."

They broke into a run, Jesse keeping in the lead.

"Hurry, Murray, hurry!"

They waited in silence. Jesse was breathing heavily, and then,

Murray was sorry he had come. The whistle broke the stillness of the late afternoon again. It was closer this time, still calling. Jesse began to jump up and down. He was perspiring and his trembling hands could barely hold the shoebox.

"It's comin', it's comin'!"

He grabbed Murray's arm and pointed at the thick clouds of black smoke, which had just blossomed over the pine trees by the curve.

"Jesse—"

Murray started to speak but changed his mind. Not now. Later.

Then, as if the earth had opened up, Jesse saw the train, roaring down the tracks as if the whole world was falling sideways. Jesse was screaming and waving his arms. The engine seemed to laugh and the ground trembled. A moment of flashing steel, flying cinders and then, the train was gone, as quickly as it had come. The coal dust was settling on the tracks as Murray looked up at the sign beside them. It simply read *Danger—Railroad Crossing!* He turned in the direction of home and started to walk. Jesse followed without a word. He was gazing at the ground. He didn't understand.

"It didn't stop, Murray. It didn't even stop!"

## GUY DAVENPORT:

### The Fox

*Fox went out on a stormy night,  
Prayed for the moon to give him light,  
For he'd many a mile to go that night  
Before he'd reach town O,*

*The town O, the town O.  
For he'd many a mile to go that night  
Before he'd reach the town O.*

—FOLKSONG

Crack of doom nor dawn nor all the curse  
Of thunderbalk across no livid sky of now  
Could bolt such wizard fox of cunning  
Across a frostlaced stubblefield, obliquely shot,  
As could do the overt smell of hen and rooster  
In Flipperflapper's henhouse on the hill.

He prayed the moon to splotch the briar  
With purple lines to fence away the dark.  
He crossed the swamp and crossed the road  
And leered his grin of cheap desire  
Into a haunted clump of muscadines.  
Leaping lunatic, he like wind lept through a ghost.

The drooping heads of dozing matron hens  
And the valiant plumes of sultanheaded cock  
He drank with pleasing, sinister eye  
And gaping wide his gunnysack with craft  
He stole away Belinda, Cora, Anne, and Sue.  
With guile he growled away and slunk.

Then tornadoripped the henhouse inward blew  
With feathers, cackles, squawks, and dark.  
Her witchy head in nightcap outward thrust,  
Mrs. Flipperflapper shouted hell and thief  
Into a deep and wondrous-echoed nothing,  
Seeming night and cold and foxtracked all along.

Orangegold and warm and glow the fox's den  
Was reek with feathersmoke and chickenblood.  
Mr. Fox and Mrs. Fox talked politics at length;  
The velvet, cold, and moonful night outside  
Passed over the little greedy foxes gnawing bones.  
They licked out their scarlet tongues and slept.

## JIM DICKEY:

### Reflections in a Bloodstone Ring

This moveless anonymous sector,  
Seagarnished and vein-flecked, grows past the shade  
And rapt insouciance of classic head, and holds  
The chalice face in structures of regret.  
The darkling eye, thrust through supernal screen  
Or window in the hovering fog of breath,  
Stands open to the winter of the will  
Or climbs carved rungs of spine to find its end.

A fatal process, like beckoning to the blind,  
Bends blood and ivy round a sunless glen.  
Death's diamond delves the socket of the rose,  
And perfect love subsists without a kiss.

### Amputee Ward: Okinawa, 1945

Displayed in acreages of cracking light  
More hopeless than the spatulate cross  
Thrust by a withering sea, they lie  
In the immaculate percentage of their loss.

One plunges like a porpoise; his farrowed face,  
The shape of rotting blood, leaves him forever.  
One winnows sheets like thorns, and water-crazed,  
Explores extravagant jungle-trails of fever.

Here each is desperate duchy in the floes:  
An angelus of anguish bells their fall  
As photographs betray them; gifts and girls  
Perfect a fearful violence, worst wound of all.

The medics in their sterile winter-world  
With hands like guttering fountains underground  
Are sightless nomads, and leaves of shaken breath  
Vast cacti in the desert of a wound.

Their blood drives all their debtors from the clock  
In tides that move beyond a kissproof dawn.  
Locution fails. To traverse this lost ground  
Past poem's periphery: transfixion of the swan.

## HARRISON KINNEY: \*

### Mr. Loretti and the Parson

In the summer a tide of evangelists would seep into northern Maine behind the advance of warm weather. The potato farmlands seemed to be one of the last fertile strongholds for those roving bearers of the Word who reflected, but dimly, that age of religious oratory which had spawned and inspired them. Those August Sundays of Coolidge prosperity would find the churches, camp grounds and brown canvas circus tents which dotted the Maine land surrounded by quadrangular ranks of dusty automobiles and filled with guest speakers who preached the message of the Lord in a terrible and thundering way. There were threats of Hellfire, accompanied by appropriate pulpit-pounding gestures in the manner of all the Moodys and Billy Sundays, and still none of which ever seemed to keep the children from falling asleep on the hot benches.

The visiting clergymen who came to our church in Easton were entertained by the regular members of the church, on a rotating basis. It was under this arrangement that Mr. Coswell stayed with us for a month in 1927. The first Sunday morning that we saw Mr. Coswell, my brother George and I were taken to the Easton Baptist Church. We arrived there, as always, during the organ prelude, a little before the service began. This permitted my parents time to investigate the congregation and to note those present or absent. We sang the first hymn standing and, after the responsive readings, we sang the second hymn with the people seated. During the morning prayer and Sunday school announcements my brother George looked at the women's hats and I looked at the figures on the stained-glass windows. After the collection had been taken Mr. Jenkins, our regular minister, stepped to the pulpit.

"The mercy of the Lord is everlasting and always with us, Brethren," he said solemnly. "Last week I told you we were to have with us a Mr. Merrill from Iowa, accompanied by three young theological students, singers of the Gospel. Unfortunately, I received word two days ago that, through a misunderstanding of their instructions, they went to Easton, Pennsylvania, instead of Easton, Maine. And I was also told that they are doing such excellent work there in the service of the Almighty that it seemed inadvisable to transfer them at this time. The kingdom of God recognizes no state border, my friends, and sometimes I think that the teaching of His power and grace is really more needed in Pennsylvania than in Maine, anyway. As you know, however, I was hoping to get away this month on my annual visit to my mother in Portland, who suffers quite severely from asthma at this time of year, and there was no substitute for me in sight. And so I prayed, Brethren. I lifted up mine eyes unto the hills and He heard me, and He answered me. Last night Brother Coswell drove into my yard, as one descended in a golden chariot. Brother Coswell does not happen to be an official member of the Baptist Missionary Society but I have talked with him and I know he has a great and wonderful message for you, Brethren, and I know he will perform as an able servant of the Lord in my absence."

Then Mr. Jenkins turned the service over to Mr. Coswell who was dressed in a morning coat, striped pants and spats. Mr. Coswell had a rather dark face which made his teeth very white and his smile a very personable one. He wore a carefully pruned moustache and had wavy black hair. He was not a dynamic speaker, as evangelistic speakers go, but he spoke firmly and with a radiant conviction that brought tears to my mother's eyes. He pointed out the necessity of being born again and that any alternative short of being born again could only result in eternal damnation and being denied the Kingdom of Heaven. He prayed with effective inflections of his voice, beseeching the Lord with a frantic concern to help those who had not yet seen

the Light to cast out the demons from their lives and to dedicate their hearts to the spirit of Christ.

Mother had always enjoyed having guests in our home and she especially liked Mr. Coswell.

"He's such a sincere man," she told Mrs. Shirley Jones next door, "and he seems to enjoy his meals so much."

The core of my mother's ego was her exceptional ability as a cook and, like any other vanity, was fattened upon praise, even when she was wholly aware that the praise had become mere routine. Mr. Coswell probably exhausted all the superlatives of appreciation in his vocabulary at that first Sunday dinner in our home, but however repetitious his exclamations over Mother's meals may have become as the days passed, they were always sufficiently effective to win the best piece of steak on the platter or the largest slice of rhubarb pie.

"Sometimes that man acts like a damned fool," Father said to my mother. "I don't see why we can't sit down to just one meal without having to witness a regular vaudeville act."

"Mr. Coswell is a good Christian man who knows and appreciates the quality of good food," Mother replied easily.

Mr. Coswell slept in the attic room with George. Ordinarily I would have been asked to surrender my bed to the evangelist and share George's room, but George, who was twelve, four years my senior, had a habit of walking in his sleep which Mother feared would lead to an act of violence some day. My mother always worried about George. Moreover, she hoped that Mr. Coswell's rooming with George would have a beneficial influence upon her son. This was shortly after George had shot Sheriff Jones with an air rifle from the trap door in the attic roof.

Mr. Coswell and my brother became great friends. I could hear them talking above my room after all the lights were out at night. Revival services were held in the church on Monday, Wednesday and Friday for the month of August and George always went with Mr. Coswell, sitting in the front pew and watching him with secret admiration. Mother wrote Aunt Martha an ecstatic letter of this apparent transformation in George.

"Mr. Coswell is surely an angel of the Lord," she wrote. "If anybody can bring about George's spiritual salvation it will be he."

At supper on Thursday night Mr. Coswell announced that he had been invited to Woodstock, New Brunswick, to lead a young people's religious discussion and to assist in a community singing of hymns.

"I know George would be of great assistance to me," Mr. Coswell said to my mother, turning on his ivory smile, "and I wonder if you would mind if he came along. We should be back early."

"Oh, how wonderful!" said my mother. "If George wants to go, by all means."

Mr. Coswell drove a long black Lincoln car which carried Illinois license plates. There was a strange pattern of dents in the back of the square body and several holes were punctured in the large, box-like trunk and the rear window glass.

"I was unlucky enough to be caught in a running gun fight between some criminals and the Ohio state police," Mr. Coswell told us casually, the first day that Father noticed the holes.

"How dreadful!" my mother said.

"However," Mr. Coswell continued, "the Lord, Who is my shepherd, saw fit to spare me and I hope I shall be permitted to continue in His service for at least a little while longer."

My mother always thought it was very odd that Mr. Coswell never wrote any letters or received any mail.

"Don't you ever keep in touch with your home?" she asked him one day.

Mr. Coswell gave a good-natured laugh. "I received the Call at an early age and since that time I try to be wherever God needs me most. I was born in Oregon, Madam, but I can really claim no community or state as my home."

This increased my mother's sympathy for Mr. Coswell. She was a sentimental woman.

\* Mr. Kinney is now a graduate student. This story has appeared in *Stateside*.

Easton is within six miles of the Canadian border, and by the second week Mr. Coswell and George were driving to Woodstock three nights a week, stopping first at the church to pile some hymn books in the trunk of the car.

The second week in August Mr. Loretto came to stay with us. Mr. Coswell had mentioned several times that his "helper" was coming soon to join him.

"I'm sure you will all like Brother Loretto," Mr. Coswell said at dinner one day. "I have a special fondness for the man because he was my first convert. I found him living a life of sin in Kansas City, Missouri, but, praise God, he has seen the Light and is now a faithful worker and a comfort to me."

"Does he play the piano and sing?" Father asked.

"No," said Mr. Coswell, with his pleasant smile. "He helps drive my car and acts as a kind of secretary to me, I guess you could say. I find driving very fatiguing, you see."

Mr. Loretto came on the train. His complexion was even darker than that of Mr. Coswell's. He had black, shifty eyes and he seemed rather neurotic, staring suspiciously about him. He wore a fairly bright plaid suit with a checked vest and a straw hat.

"How ya," he said, each time Mr. Coswell introduced him. The first night at supper Mother told Mr. Loretto he was to sleep with me.

"I got ya," he replied, without looking up from his plate.

When Mr. Loretto came into my room later that evening, I had been in bed for several hours. He closed the door quickly, stooped listening for a moment in the darkness and then snapped on a flashlight which he waved nervously about the room. He then went over to the window and looked out, grunting from time to time. Pulling down the window shade, he turned on the light which hung from a cord in the middle of the room.

"How ya, kid," he said to me.

"Hello," I said.

"Does that door lock?" he asked.

"No, sir," I said.

"Then I guess we'd better put somethin' against it, hadn't we?" he said, looking about him. "We don't want to get caught nappin'."

So I helped him move a large dresser against the door. It made quite a bit of noise and Mother came into the hall and asked if everything was all right. I told her it was. I said that Mr. Loretto and I were pushing the dresser against the door and that everything was all right. Mother stood in the hall for a while thinking about this and finally went back into her room.

"That's at least a twenty-five foot drop out the window," Mr. Loretto said, taking off his clothes and talking more to himself than to me. "The sheets wouldn't reach that far tied together. I guess we'd just have to blast our way out the door, eh, kid?"

"Yes, sir," I said.

Mr. Loretto wore undershorts with yellow flowers on them which looked like bedroom wallpaper. He took an Army automatic pistol from his shoulder holster and put it under his pillow. Then he turned out the light, climbed into bed and lit a cigar.

"Leave it to the Parson to find a spot for holin' up," he said. "I was for headin' for Arizona but I guess the Parson was right. The Parson's always right, kid."

"Yes, sir," I said.

"What about an ash tray?" he asked. "Ya don't have no ash trays. Don't any of your folks smoke, kid?"

"My brother George smokes," I said. "He and his gang. But they always smoke in the ice house so my mother and father won't see them."

"That's a hell of a place to smoke," said Mr. Loretto. "What do they expect a guy to do? Get out of bed, run over to the window, flick the ash and then run back again? Ya can catch cold that way."

"Yes, sir," I said.

So Mr. Loretto dropped all the ashes on the floor beside the bed and finally put out his cigar and went to sleep.

Mr. Loretto never went to the church services in Easton but he never missed going to Woodstock with Mr. Coswell and George for the Young People's Endeavor meetings and hymn singing. He was a man with ragged nerves stretched to a rather intense degree. Nearly every night he heard strange noises inside the house or outside our window.

"Listen, kid! I heard a door slam!" he would say in a terrified whisper, sitting upright in bed and pulling the bed clothes off me. "Did ya hear anything, kid?"

"No, sir," I would say, sitting up with him.

"I'm tellin' ya I heard a door slam," he would repeat in a slow, deliberate whisper, snapping the safety catch off his gun. "Ya'd better climb under the bed, kid. There may be some blastin' and I don't want ya to get hurt, see?"

So I would lie under the bed in my pajamas while Mr. Loretto skulked about the room in his flowered undershorts, stopping to listen in the darkness from time to time.

During the day Mr. Loretto seemed able to exercise more self-control. Once, however, he was in the front hall when the doorbell rang over his head. Immediately he flattened himself against the wall, his hand inside his coat.

"Don't answer that, lady," he said to my mother, hoarsely.

"Why, Mr. Loretto," Mother said gayly. "It's only Mrs. Ross. Why shouldn't I answer it?"

Mr. Loretto gave a sickly smile. "Oh sure, sure," he said. "I was only kiddin' ya."

"What a strange man Mr. Loretto is sometimes," my mother said to Mr. Coswell later.

"Brother Loretto has a bad case of shell shock from the War, you know," Mr. Coswell told Mother in a confidential tone of voice. "He went through the entire Ardennes campaign without a single rest period. Sometimes the poor man thinks the Germans are still after him."

"Why the poor soul!" said Mother. "I think that's dreadful!"

One night when Mr. Loretto got back from Woodstock with Mr. Coswell and George he was unable to sleep at all. Finally, at one o'clock in the morning, he got up, pulled down the window blind, turned on the light and began pacing back and forth. I had long since given up any serious attempt to sleep with Mr. Loretto in the room. I watched him, my head turning on my pillow to keep him in sight as he paced.

"How old are ya, kid?" he suddenly asked, stopping at the foot of the bed.

"I'm eight years old," I said. "I'll be nine in August."

"Can ya read, then?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," I said.

"Ya know, kid," Mr. Loretto said, climbing back into bed, "I never had much time to learn to read and I was wonderin' if ya'd mind readin' to me a little."

So I got out of bed, went over to my book shelf and came back with a book.

"What's the book, kid?" he asked.

"*The Adventures of Uncle Wiggly*," I told him.

Mr. Loretto snuggled back in bed and smoked a cigar, his eyes on the ceiling, while I read aloud. After a while he became restless again.

"Look, kid," Mr. Loretto said irritably, "I don't mean to interrupt ya, see? But why all this beatin' around the bush? Does this fox ever catch up to Uncle Wiggly or not?"

"No, sir," I said.

"Then read me something else, huh?" he said, lying back in bed.

I made several trips to my modest library. Mr. Loretto was equally unappreciative of *The Three Bears* and showed a marked impatience with the first part of *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. But he did like *Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue*. He would listen to their enterprises until I was too drowsy to continue. On nights when Mr. Coswell preached at the church in Easton, Mr. Loretto would often come to bed early in order to hear more about Bunny Brown and his sister taking ocean voyages, going on camping trips and exploring haunted houses. Sometimes I would forget where we had left off but Mr. Loretto always remembered.

The night Mr. Loretti left us, we had finished the entire Bunny Brown series and had started on the Bobbsey Twins. Mr. Loretti showed visible annoyance with the maliciousness of the bad boy who tormented the Bobbsey Twins from page to page. Mr. Loretti would twitch in bed angrily.

"Somebody should have put the slug on the little piker," he would growl, his cigar waving in his mouth as he spoke.

Mother became quite alarmed when I began falling asleep at the breakfast table. She took me to see Dr. McKay who took my temperature and asked me several questions. He recommended my taking afternoon naps.

"It's probably helping Mr. Loretti move the furniture around in your room every night," my mother said to me. "The poor soul! I suppose we should humor him for Mr. Coswell's sake."

On a Tuesday night at supper Mother asked Mr. Coswell if he would mind taking me with him on his trip to Woodstock for the Young People's Endeavor meeting.

"I'm sure he's old enough to get some real good from the religious discussions," my mother explained.

"Of course, of course!" said Mr. Coswell. "I was going to suggest it myself."

So after supper Mr. Coswell, Mr. Loretti, George and I went out and got into the black Lincoln. Mr. Loretti, who drove, got into the front seat with George and Mr. Coswell sat in back with me.

"I don't know, Parson," said Mr. Loretti. "I kinda wish the little guy wasn't with us. He might get hurt."

"He'll be all right," said Mr. Coswell, smiling and patting me on the head. "He and George both should remove all suspicion."

"He'd better keep his mouth shut," said George.

"He won't say anything, will you, my boy?" Mr. Coswell asked me.

"No, sir," I said.

We drove up to the door of the church vestry and went inside for an armful of hymn books which we put in the trunk of the car. Then we got back in the car and drove to the Canadian border. Mr. Glass was on duty at the American customs house.

"Well, Mr. Coswell," he said, taking the license number of the car. "You're at it again, I see. Don't you church people ever take a night off?"

"I feel that every night I can serve the Lord in some way is far better for me than any night I could take off," Mr. Coswell said with a smile.

"Well, that's just fine," said Mr. Glass, looking at Mr. Loretti's driver's license. "George, I see you have the little brother tonight, eh?"

"Yup," said George.

"Well, I hope you have a pleasant evening," said Mr. Glass.

Mr. Loretti drove a little farther and stopped at the Canadian customs house, which was in a white farmhouse set back from the road. The officers asked Mr. Coswell if we were bringing anything into the country and Mr. Coswell said that we weren't. It was almost dark when Mr. Loretti turned the car off a gravel highway onto a farm dirt road. We stopped in the yard of an unpainted farmhouse while Mr. Loretti and Mr. Coswell got out and disappeared through the kitchen door of the house. They came out carrying two cases of Canadian whiskey which they placed in the trunk under the hymn books. Then we all sat in the car and waited until it was completely dark.

"I get awful restless workin' one territory for very long, Parson," Mr. Loretti said.

"We'll be leaving soon," said Mr. Coswell. "There's no reason why we should arouse suspicion by leaving before my services are over, unless we are compelled to."

"One of these days," said Mr. Loretti, "some mug's goin' to wander into that church and spot ya. How do we know the Schultz mob won't get the tip-off and start musclin' in?"

"If they move in, we'll move out," said Mr. Coswell.

"That's okay with me," said Mr. Loretti.

"Don't forget, George," Mr. Coswell said to my brother in

the front seat. "Don't spend any of your money for bicycles or air rifles until after we're gone."

"I won't," said George.

"And now, young man," said Mr. Coswell, turning to me, "do you know what you're going to tell your mom and dad when we get home?"

"Yes, sir," I said.

"That's fine," said Mr. Coswell. "Just fine. What are you going to tell them?"

"I'm going to tell them that we drove over to the Province, bought two cases of whiskey and then took them back across the border," I said.

Mr. Loretti looked startled.

"No, no!" said Mr. Coswell. "We sang hymns tonight, understand? We sang hymns tonight."

"Yes, sir," I said.

"Can you remember a hymn we sang tonight?" asked Mr. Coswell.

"We sang 'Yes, We'll Gather at the River,'" I said.

"Excellent," said Mr. Coswell. "That's a fine old hymn, too. Would you like to sing it now?"

"Yes, sir," I said.

So Mr. Coswell began singing, "Yes, We'll Gather at the River" and I joined in with him. When it was completely dark we drove back to the border. The Canadian officials asked if we were taking anything out of the country and Mr. Coswell said that we weren't. Mr. Lawson was on duty at the American customs house.

"Well, well," he said. "We have the whole family with us tonight, haven't we?"

"We have, indeed," said Mr. Coswell with his pearly smile.

Mr. Lawson opened the back door of the car and looked around the floor. Then he lifted the top of the trunk and looked at the hymn books.

"How did the service go tonight?" Mr. Lawson asked, coming back to the car window.

"We sang 'Yes, We'll Gather at the River,'" I said.

"Now isn't that fine?" Mr. Lawson said, reaching through the window and patting me on the head.

After we left the border we drove several miles into the wooded country and stopped in the dark beside a large truck van. Mr. Coswell and Mr. Loretti got out, took the whiskey out of the trunk and gave it to two men.

"We should get a much better price than this," Mr. Coswell said to the two men. "This isn't your bootleg stuff, or your bathtub gin. It's excellent Canadian whiskey. It was my choice even before the Harding administration."

Then Mr. Loretti and Mr. Coswell turned on a flashlight, counted the money the men gave them, got back into the car and we drove home. Mother was sitting up, waiting for us.

"Did you have a nice time, dear?" my mother asked me.

"We sang 'Yes, We'll Gather at the River,'" I said.

"Oh, that's lovely," said my mother. "Just lovely."

A few days before Mr. Coswell's services were to end in Easton, my brother George stuffed a bundle of sticks into the exhaust pipe of Sheriff Jones' car next door. George had never forgiven Mr. Jones for having confiscated his air rifle after George had shot the sheriff from the trap door in our attic. Everybody in the house was in bed that night when Sheriff Jones came out to drive his car into the garage. Mr. Loretti was tossing restlessly in bed, smoking a cigar, and I could hear George and Mr. Coswell talking upstairs in the attic room. When the sheriff started his car the effect of the blockade of the cylinder outlet amounted to a series of rapid, staccato backfires. Mr. Loretti threw his cigar across the room and leaped out of bed, carrying most of the bed clothes with him.

"It's the Schultz gang!" he yelled. "Somebody squealed!"

I slid under the bed immediately, as previously instructed, and heard Mr. Coswell thumping about upstairs. Mr. Loretti tugged the dresser away from our bedroom door with much squealing of the casters. He tore the door open and dashed into the hall, carrying his flashlight. My brother George walked in his sleep

occasionally and Father, hearing the noise, believed George to be the cause of it. He got out of bed, followed by my mother, and went into the hall.

"Where are you, George?" Father called.

Mr. Loretto, hearing a voice so near him, started and snapped on his flashlight in alarm, shooting the beam of light at my father, who stood blinking in his white night shirt. The spectacle seemed to be too much for Mr. Loretto's nervous condition. He howled something hysterical and unintelligible and clattered down the back stairs, dressed only in his shoulder holster and his flowered underwear. Mother ran after him.

"Don't be afraid, Mr. Loretto," she shouted down the back stairs, "we won't let the Germans get you!"

I heard Mr. Coswell run down the attic stairs and after a while the kitchen door slammed below and then there was the sound of the Lincoln starting up. Father came into my room and turned on the light.

"Good God!" he said, with panic in his voice. "Where are you, son?"

"I'm under the bed," I said.

Father got down on his hands and knees and looked at me under the bed.

"Why are you under the bed, son?" he asked quietly.

"Mr. Loretto said I might get blasted if I didn't get under

the bed," I said.

"That man is a damn fool," said Father. "I always said so."

"Yes, sir," I said.

George shouted down the attic stairs and asked what had happened to Mr. Coswell.

"It's poor Mr. Loretto," Mother called back. "I think Mr. Coswell had to go after him. He thinks the Germans are after him, I suppose."

But Mr. Coswell never came back with Mr. Loretto. Mother never understood it.

"What a strange thing," Mother kept saying, whenever she would see Mr. Loretto's plaid suit and checked vest hanging in the closet of my room. "You'd think at least they would write and ask us to send Mr. Loretto's suit to him."

The Sunday after Mr. Coswell and Mr. Loretto left, my parents took my brother George and me to church. Mr. Jenkins was back in the pulpit. During the period of Sunday school announcements he told the congregation that his mother's asthma was much better. He spoke joyfully of the fine work Mr. Coswell had done in his absence, saving a total of eighteen souls, to be baptized into the church. After the collection was taken Mr. Jenkins preached a sermon which he called "The Need for Prayer," while my brother George looked at the women's hats and I looked at the figures on the stained glass windows.

## EDWARD W. HAUTAMAKI:

### All Paths Lead Home

Inexorably wheat futures climb:  
2.12 . . . 2.35 . . . 2.66 . . . 3.07, perhaps *ad infinitum*,  
What difference does it make?  
They climb.

Soft hands which never pulled a head of wheat  
To test if it were ripe,  
Well-cared-for feet which never knew the paths  
Which led to waiting fields,  
Ennued eyes which never fought against  
The too-muchness of harvest,  
Conspire.  
In hushed money-changer's temples,  
With the motion of a hand,  
The flicking of a yellowed eye,  
The movement of a foot compelled by fear,  
The conspiracy is done.  
Someone profits, someone loses, someone dies.

Somewhere, those whose lives lie in the covers  
Of a ration book, that impersonal reprieve  
Which mocks, "You. Go on. Rip out another  
Day, ration out your life along  
The perforated edges of a stamp,  
Feed the spark which some amoral God  
Blew into you,"  
Somewhere their lips frame questions mute  
As half-remembered afterthoughts.

Somewhere once-proud necks and once-proud faces  
Bend and make their solemn promenades  
Along the streets.  
Greedy eyes ponder the reality  
Of plate-glass windows.  
(Is this the shibboleth which plucks the sheep from goats?)  
Shuffling footsteps pad their way, each time  
A little surer, up darkened alley ways.  
Heavy heads, like poppy pods on feeble  
Stalks, bend over garbage cans,  
Ears filled with the sound of tin which scrapes

On tin. And over all the wine-sweet smell  
Of garbage.

Inescapably, somewhere all this,  
While *Time* blandly sells its indulgences  
To those who'll buy:  
"There is no villain but the law of supply and demand."  
Some hundred thousand souls absolve themselves  
With twenty-cent indulgences

And still, inexorably wheat futures climb,  
There is no real villain . . .  
(Then what the shibboleth?)  
Inescapably, somewhere all this, unanswerable.  
But all paths lead home.

### Incantation

Searchlights,  
That I might live, and though another die,  
Push your white, unreasoning fingers upward  
And with deliberation, seine the sky.  
Seek there the petulant drone which drives all reason  
From my mind, and when your fingers touch  
The source, pause but a moment, then spell out  
Its doom against the night.

And should I gloat, knowing someone much  
Like me plummets earthward from the sky,  
Soon to lie upon the earth like  
A broken bird, I gloat from reasons much  
Thought out: if one of us must go, then I  
Would rather I remain.

So searchlights,  
Push your fingers skyward, seine the sky  
Again tonight, and when your finger touches  
Him, dash him to the ground.

## ELLEN METZ:

### Darkness

Darkness terrified me. All my life I had been going to bed across a dark hall, and all my life I had been afraid. I had never told anyone; no one I knew feared the dark—not even my little sister. And she would call me a coward if she found I was afraid. I knew that I was a coward; but if no one else knew, I could pretend that I was brave. Yet each night I tried to postpone bedtime. It was not that I wanted to stay up and play as my mother thought. I was tired. I wanted to go to bed. But I was afraid to cross the hall—to walk into darkness.

Finally my mother would insist that I go to bed. The living room was light; the hall beyond was dark. But I must go to bed. I would cross the room and open the door, go through, and close it behind me. When I closed the door, I closed myself from everything real—from everything living. When the hall was light, there was furniture in it, but now there was none. There was nothing in the room, nothing in front of me, nothing behind me—nothing. I wanted to return to something. I would run. I would crash into things—things that were not there, yet I could feel them. I would run again, but I could not run fast enough. My feet clung to the floor. At last I would reach the bedroom and fumble for the light switch. I couldn't see it, I couldn't find it, it was not there. Then accidentally I would strike it and the darkness would melt.

Everything was real, secure, until I got into bed and Mother turned off the light. Then the room, the world, everything disappeared. I could see forever, yet I could see nothing. I remembered the corner across from my bed where two walls and the ceiling met. I tried to find it, but it was not there. I could see only darkness. I looked through darkness and saw more darkness—always darkness retreating into darkness. The darkness went on and on forever. How long was forever? If I could see or even imagine where forever ended, I would not be afraid. I could feel myself going through that soft blackness and on and on . . . forever.

Sometimes I would wrap myself so tightly in the covers that I was convinced that they at least were there, even though I could not see them. But even then I was afraid to go to sleep, for when I slept, the covers, too, would disappear. And what if I should not wake up? The covers, everything would be gone forever. What are things like when they are gone? I tried to find the corner of the room again. It was not there. It was dark. But what is darkness? What is nothing? I did not know.

But I had to know. I cried for help. My mother opened the door. She had let in light and I could see things that had proportions and limits. I tried to tell her what was wrong, but I couldn't. "It was just a bad dream, darling. Go back to sleep." Go back to sleep, to darkness, to unreality. "Don't be afraid. Mother is right here." And so was everything else when it was light; but when it was dark, Mother would not be there either. She turned off the light and left. But I was too tired to think. I went to sleep.

In the mornings when I would wake, a warm square of light would be lying on the floor at the foot of my bed. Pale light filtered through the curtains and fell softly on the flowered chintz spreads, on the deep white rug on the floor. I would squirm and stretch under the covers. My life was full of familiar things and there was no room for darkness.

But day would always end and darkness would begin to gather and to press in upon the window panes. I wondered if the glass would hold or if the darkness would break through and come

flooding in. But then the shades were drawn before the darkness, and my sister and I could play in the light of the living-room. Sometimes my mother would come in and ask one of us to run an errand. I would feel all the fear of last night and every night rush up inside me. I would sit motionless and silent, waiting for my little sister to say that she would go. If she did not, I would bribe her. But one night she would not be bribed. "I went last time," she whined. "Why can't you go?" I could not tell her that I was afraid to go when she was not. What could I say? I went to the outside door.

I turned the knob and pulled. Darkness would rush in upon me—but no, the porch light was on. I walked slowly down the steps into the street. The light from the porch spread out onto the pavement. I could see things—the curb, the grating in the gutter, the black shadows lying across the grey street. My own shadow was weaving on before me. It was funny wobbling on its long, uncertain legs. We walked along together, my shadow and I, and the light retreating behind us spread out upon the street. Then I turned the corner. My shadow sprang sharply ahead and disappeared. A wall of darkness loomed up before me, spread over me, swallowed me.

The curb was gone, my shadow was gone, and I was gone. I knew where I was. I was just a block from home. But how did I know? It was dark and all darkness everywhere is the same. I must go back. But what could I say when I went back? "Don't think" I reminded myself. "Don't think and you will not be afraid. Don't think. Keep going." I plunged forward into the mass of blackness. "Don't think, don't think." But my feet moved faster and faster. Yet I was not moving. I was in the same place because it looked the same. But wait—it did not look the same any more. Ahead of me a streak of yellow pierced the darkness. A light. A street light. I began to run. The light moved nearer and nearer. Now I could almost touch it. I stumbled out of the darkness into the soft yellow puddle. Light poured down upon me.

I blinked and looked around me. I stretched out my hand. I could see it. I was here again. But where was here? What did here look like? Here was yellow. Here was light. There was light everywhere—around me, in front of me, over me. But what was light? I stretched out my hand and saw it go through the light. Could light be anything at all? But light must be something, for it ended out there in front of me. Nothing did not end, but something did. So light was something and I was in a circle of it. But what was beyond? Everything is somewhere. So everything that was not in this light was outside. And there was nothing in the light but the light and me. Everything else was outside looking in at me. The blackness, all the gone things in the blackness, all the world I knew and all the world I did not know was outside looking in at me, not touching me, just staring at me—not caring. I was alone and little in a cell of light. Alone and little—and the rest of the world was big, and together, and outside, and watching me, and not caring. I wanted to be with the rest of the world. I must get out—I must. I ran against the gleaming walls. But they were not there and I fell into darkness.

The darkness lifted me. The darkness wrapped itself around me, but it was soft. I turned and with the darkness and with the world looked back. One spot of yellow in all this bigness and blackness; one lone spot of light surrounded by the world, yet separated from it. I felt a little sorry for the bare and lonely little light, but there was nothing I could do. The night, the world moved on and I must move on, too. I looked once more at that naked little dot, then turned away and moved on through the darkness. I was not afraid.

## DAN W. KROLL:

### Gussie

That day I was walking back up Filling Station Street after having delivered my load of groceries. Gussie was walking toward me from the direction of town. I think I had seen the runt boy before this, although the encounter was the first time I really remembered. At that time I was about eight years old, and rather big for my age; I reckon I looked about ten years old. I do know that Gussie was older than I; four years at the very least, and perhaps six; but you would never have guessed it from his size. He was slender and wiry and pale; he smoked cigarettes almost all the time. His fingers were stained with them. He walked with a funny, nervous, angling stride, his thin face tense, his small blue eyes hard.

I don't know why I did it. Maybe it was the same gesture a friendly pup makes at a bigger dog, or even a human. As I came alongside of Gussie I reached up and snapped my fingers in his face. It happened so fast it left me dizzy and bewildered, and all the blood in me ran to the bottom and stopped, leaving my tongue twice its size and my heart hammering all over me.

"You goddamned son-of-a-bitch!" Gussie screeched at me, and he out with his knife in a flash and began cutting right and left at me. "I'll cut your damned heart out!"

As I backed away—my feet still had the power to move backwards—I watched his anger-anguished face. I'd never seen passion like this in a human being. He made long sweeping motions of his knife—I remember how the sunlight flashed on the keen polished blade—but somehow I managed to stay just without the reach of that knife. When I got my voice back at all I mumbled a halting apology. I hadn't meant to—didn't mean a thing by it. I was just joking. Didn't mean no harm. His flood of profanity, the most eloquent I had ever heard from a boy's mouth, lasted on for a moment but it gradually subsided as he accepted my utter subjugation and abject manner.

At last he stopped brandishing his knife. In a mollified but warning voice he said, "All right, but damn you, don't you ever mess with me like that again."

"I won't," I promised humbly, a sense of relief flooding me that left me weak and tottering. "I won't never mess with you no more."

He closed the knife with an oily click and gave me a last glare. "See that you don't."

He was gone then, and I remembered again the sun was shining and I had not mixed with that gleaming knife of his. At first I walked slowly, for I was too weak to run; then I turned the corner at Jab's place, a nigger joint, and fled.

After that if I saw Gussie first he never got a chance to see me. There were times, though, when I just couldn't dodge him. He sold the *Weakley County Democrat*, the local newspaper; and my grocery delivery routes and his paper route would cross in spite of my every effort to keep them apart. Once I remember meeting Gussie when he was in a good humor. He had his papers, I had my bundles of groceries. Gussie finished his cigarette and tossed the butt away. He rolled another, struck a match skillfully on his fingernail, lighted and took a deep inhale.

"By God, Dan," he said, "I aim to get me a big paper route. Going to get the *Commercial Appeal* and the *Scimitar*. By God, this stinking sheer ain't fitten for niggers to read. I figger I can pretty soon put old lady Argo out of business."

Old lady Argo was a hard-bitten widow who had the *Commercial*, the *Press Scimitar*, the *Banner* and the *Tennessean*—just about all the papers in Martin.

Gussie shifted continually, spitting and inhaling. I listened with a respect born of fear and terror.

"You can sure do it," I assured him.

He sucked deeply on the cigarette, and without tossing it away, rolled another with one hand—it was the first time I had ever seen anyone do that; and lighted the new smoke from the stub of the old.

"By God," Gussie said, "I'm going to put that old bitch out of business. I'll show 'em who's who in this jackass burg. By God, I might hire you to tote the papers for me, Dan. It'd pay lots better than hauling sacks of cans and soup bones. By God, I'd be willing to pay as much as three dollars a day, maybe." He shuffled and smoked and spat.

"It's be mighty good to work for three dollars a day," I said. I would not have worked for him for a million dollars.

I turned and watched after his slight retreating figure. He walked with a nervous shambling intense way. His face was old, almost that of a man; his big-talk was the way men talked down at the pool hall on Saturday night when they had whiskey in their guts; but the smallboned figure of him was that of a runt.

At Harris Brothers where I worked, J. T. and Tom Harris talked between themselves after Gussie had been in and bought some baloney and crackers to take home with him. Gussie lived with old Doc Bloodgood, his uncle. Bloodgood was a horse doctor. He lived in a little house about two blocks north of the business section, almost in nigger town. It was a corner house, back from the highway, hidden under big trees. There was a high plank fence around the secret back yard where Bloodgood sometimes did his doctoring. He was a large ox-boned man, with tobacco-stained tusk-like teeth and an important authoritative manner, such as backwoods hicks and bullies often have. Gussie's father and mother were dead, I think.

But the Harrises were looking for a short knife used in cutting the baloney. "I know good and well it was here just a minute ago," J. T. said. "Where the hell did it get to?"

Tom Harris' face lighted up. "It was that damned runt of a Gussie Bloodgood."

"The thieving bastard," J. T. said.

"He'll try to cut somebody with it," Tom said. "I hear he's a bad 'un. They say he cusses equal to an infidel and would cut the heart out of you at the drop of a hat. He won't go to school. He tried to cut the teacher, so they say. He stole the kids' lunches in his room and stole some money out of the teacher's purse, and stole some books and sold them second-hand. He stole the knife, I bet a barn."

"The thieving son-of-a-bitch," J. T. said.

"He's a bad 'un. He'll come to a bad end, mark my words."

I grew more and more afraid of Gussie. I never went out the Fulton highway past the Bloodgood house if I could help it. Weary as I might be from carrying groceries all morning, if we got in an order from R. M. Saxon's, way up Punkin Hill, the longest route I had to walk, I would go out the back way from the store, follow the lane up around Valley of the Shadow Cemetery almost a quarter of a mile out of the way, and thus avoid the horse doctor's place—lest I run into Gussie.

I would hear the Harrises talk about him after this. How he was a dirty runt, how he smoked so many cigarettes that it often took a bag of Old North State a day for him, how he had a bad cough all the time, how he cussed and said there was no God, and such things. They talked of all the cutting scrapes Gussie had been in. I would listen and my feet would get cold with fear. I don't know why I was so utterly afraid of Gussie. I always talked and smiled when I was where he was; if I could I ran and got away. I never crossed him. But that day in front of the store there was neither escape nor placating him. I was sitting on the meat counter with Hooks, the nigger boy that swept out the store, when Gussie came along. He was mad and I sat with teeth chattering. Hooks rolled his eyes and froze where he sat.

"You black ape, get going," Gussie said.

"Yaw suh," Biggs said, and started to rise.

"I said GIT!" Gussie snarled.

"Yaw suh, I is gittin', Mr. Gussie."

"Git faster, you black son-of-a-bitch!"

"I is gittin' as fast as I kin."

Hooks backed away a pace, facing Gussie, who grew rigid with fury. The flopping cigarette dropped from his thin square lips. Hooks was a rather large nigger boy, as gentle and mild,

likely, as me. There was not a harmful act in all his good-natured elephantine bulk. Gussie advanced on him.

"You sass me, and I'll cut your heart out!"

He was out with his knife and bending his frail wiry form low as he attacked. I stood by, powerless to run or defend Hooks. That knife flashed. Gussie worked it like a wheel. Swiftly, round and round, as if he had practiced the motion in many a secret hour, of how to cut a human being down in his tracks. I heard the blade when it went into Hooks' black meat. I heard the low strange groan the nigger boy gave when he knew he was being cut to strips. Hooks did not run. He stood there, even started toward Gussie. Gussie side-stepped, missed a jab, and Hooks moved up, his hands empty, blood running from what I knew was a cut in the artery of his arm. All at once Gussie began to scream.

"Don't you come on me, don't you come on me!"

Whether Hooks knew what he was doing or not I had no idea. He had no knife, I was positive of that. He just moved up on Gussie. He put out the hand that was spurting blood. The blood squirted all over Gussie. His face was as white as cotton domestic. Gussie screamed and then began to wail and whine and sob.

"Don't you come on, don't you hurt me, don't you touch me—get back, I tell you."

Hooks stolidly advanced. Gussie dropped his knife. He fell back against the wall of the store. Hooks held up his hand and more blood spurted in Gussie's face. Gussie hollered:

"Mr. Harris, Mr. Harris, for God's sake come and help me! This nigger's fixing to kill me."

J. T. came out and took Hooks into the back of the store. They got a sheet and ripped it and tied up his wound. Hooks almost bled to death.

It must have not been long after this that we heard Gussie was sick in bed. The Harrises spoke of it together. Bloodgood said, so J. T. reported, that the doctor tending him had no sense. "When I drench a plow mule and it don't do no good," Bloodgood had said, "I double the dose. But Doc Twitchell won't double nothing." The news came that Gussie was getting worse. In a day or two it was being said Gussie would maybe die. It was a chilly fall night in October. Dusk was beginning to lower when I finished my last delivery and turned my steps back towards the store. J. T. was waiting inside behind the counter.

"Dan, would you mind delivering just one more sack of stuff?"

## CATHERINE DITCHBURN:

### The Heathen

"The way these people live around here is downright heathen," insisted the man in the front seat of the car. He paused, but no one said anything. "I ask you now," he continued, "have any of you ever seen a more God-forsaken hole?"

"Well, Mr. Hent," said Miss Brown finally from her corner of the back seat, "it is a terrible climate."

"Climate!" said Mr. Hent. "Why, madame, I've seen climates that would make this look like springtime in the Rockies, but for sheer ignorant, backward, heathen ways this is it. Why these people, talking visions and holiness, are about as enlightened as cave men." No one seemed inclined to discuss the matter with him; so Mr. Hent talked on, deploring the prevalence of superstition in the community and pooh-poohing miracles and magic alike. No one disturbed him. Miss Brown felt vaguely out of her usual mild conversational depth and was determined not to venture in again. Next to her, clothed intellectually in the assurance of a well-pressed suit, sat Mr. Norton, thinking about the cool hotel veranda and iced drinks. As usual, Mr. Norton was bored. The slight curiosity which had prompted him to join the expedition had not survived the heat of the drive. Mr. Donaldson, the fourth member of the party, was

I had worked for Mr. Harris for two years and didn't mind doing a little after-hours work for him. "Sure, Mr. Harris."

"O.K. It goes out to Doc Bloodgood."

I didn't like that much, but I took the sack and went across the public square and turned up the highway. I was not afraid, now that Gussie was a-flat of his back. That is, I was not scared in the way I had been scared before. It was a new kind of fear. This time it was the dumb deep terror of death that those know who see it young.

I had never seen but one dead person. That had been my baby sister. It smothered in the bedclothes one cold night. The next day when I saw it in the plank coffin it was pale and seemed asleep. You remember always the moment you first meet death. I stood and looked at that dead little girl, and was afraid.

They said Gussie could not live through the night. I left the groceries on the back porch and beat on the screen door and left. I slipped through the close noiseless darkness and came to the side gate. I could see through the open window into the room where Gussie was lying on the bed. I did not want anyone to die. Death was a shadow lurking in the swamps. A buzzard flying across the bare, raw Obion swamps. Death was terror.

Gussie's aunt was in the room, bending over the boy. His thin face was strange in the hot lamplight. His eyes were open.

"You can't have no cigarette," his aunt was saying.

"God damn your soul, give me a cigarette."

"N-oooo"—she said in a sad scandalized voice. "Hush, and be quiet."

The door slammed and Doc Bloodgood's shadow on the wall got big as he came close to the lamp. "Lay still, Gustavus. A cigarette ain't going to help you none now." I saw Gussie wilt just as when Hooks had poured blood on him.

"Me, I'd have doubled the dose, but now it's too late." He looked out into the shadows. I had the feeling he was staring straight at me. "Pull down that damned window. It's cold. Godamighty!"

I fled.

Late the next day I climbed Punkin Hill to watch the funeral wind towards Valley of the Shadow Cemetery. Right behind the hearse, rolling in the ruts, was Doc Bloodgood's A Model. I don't remember who followed him. I only remember that I ran with light steps back to the store, feeling as I did when I had finished delivering a heavy burden of groceries.

apparently absorbed in the driving. With experienced eyes he considered the ruts in the road and said nothing.

The cloud of dust surrounding the car neutralized any chance the fields had of looking green. The landscape was saturated with sunlight whose intensity seemed to paralyze the earth. Movement originated only in this car bumping along the dirt road. Inside the car Mr. Hent was still talking.

"It doesn't disturb you, eh? That's the trouble with all Protestants. They don't care how much superstition there is floating around, and when they find a stink hole like this, they just gape at it. That's just what you're going to do this afternoon. You've just come out of curiosity to gape at that old woman's cross."

Mr. Norton stirred a little as he wondered what would be served at dinner. Mr. Hent, thinking he had hit home, raised his voice. In the next few minutes he thoroughly rated all educated men for the existence of illiteracy, disease, and "primitive religion." He concluded with a brief statement of the enlightened man's duty. Mr. Norton was thinking about fried chicken.

Mr. Hent, encouraged by his last speech, turned to Mr. Donaldson. "You know what I'm going to do," he said, "I'm going to buy this woman's worm-eaten stick and take it back to civilization where people don't talk miracles and rot."

"She won't sell it," said Mr. Donaldson without moving.

"What do you mean she won't sell? I'm not going to offer her two bits on the thing. I'm going to buy that germ-riddled toothpick with good money. Why I'll give her what she thinks it's worth. Maybe I'll give her an annuity so she can settle down and live like a respectable old woman should."

"Now look here," said Mr. Donaldson, speaking rapidly for the first time. "She lives a more respectable life than you do. And besides, you couldn't give her what she thinks that cross is worth."

"What—an old woman like that?" said Mr. Hent, getting out a small notebook and a pencil. "She probably never saw more than ten dollars together in her whole life."

Mr. Donaldson glanced at the notebook and then back at the road. "Maybe so," he said, "but you've never seen an old woman like this one."

In the back seat Miss Brown leaned forward slightly. "You see, Mr. Hent," she said, "the cross is part of the old lady's religion, and it would really be quite rude to offer to buy it. And since Mr. Donaldson is the one who knows the old lady, don't you think we should be guided by his judgment?"

"Ah," said Mr. Hent, looking up from his notebook, "so the old lady is a personal friend of yours, Mr. Donaldson."

Mr. Donaldson gripped the steering wheel a little harder as he spoke. "In a way you might say that. I've been out here several times before, and I've talked to the old lady about the cross."

"Well," said Mr. Hent, "what's her story? Come now. Don't suppress the facts."

"I'm not suppressing any facts," he said. "I told Miss Brown the whole story this morning."

"Yes, he did," said Miss Brown, "but I'm sure I don't mind hearing it again." Turning to the man beside her, she added, "Mr. Norton hasn't heard it before."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself on my account," said Mr. Norton, and he waved one smooth white hand at the other three before closing his eyes again.

Mr. Donaldson looked at Mr. Norton for a moment through his rear-vision mirror and then quietly asked Miss Brown if she would mind telling the story for him. "When I'm driving," he said, "I usually don't talk much."

Miss Brown protested and then began. "Well, you see, Mr. Hent, the old lady lives all alone and one winter when she was very ill she saw no one for days. Her neighbors are all so far away they probably didn't even realize she was sick. One night she was sure she would die before morning. She was afraid, and she began to pray. I don't know how long it was, but suddenly while she was praying a great warm light surrounded her. There beside her was an angel, who promised her everlasting life and gave her the cross. When she awoke it was morning, and the cross was hanging on a cord around her neck."

"And," said Mr. Hent, "she was completely cured, no doubt." "Why, yes, she was," said Miss Brown, "and she set out immediately to share her miracle. Mr. Donaldson says there isn't

a sick bed in this region that the old lady hasn't prayed at."

"Well," said Mr. Donaldson quickly, "she's too old now to get around much, but they come to her. Some people say she's over a hundred."

The car jolted to a stop in front of a small, unpainted house. Mr. Donaldson jumped out and opened the gate, which led into a small, trim yard. A few flowers stood straight up in the silent sunshine. Miss Brown detained Mr. Hent a moment when they got to the porch.

"You won't be rude to her," she said, turning her head to look up at him.

"I always try to be polite, madame," said Mr. Hent.

The front room of the house was evidently not used for general living. The floor smelled freshly scrubbed, and compared to the car it was cool. Mr. Donaldson told them to sit down while waiting, and he disappeared into the back of the house. Mr. Norton sank gracefully into the most comfortable chair. The other two sat stiffly in straight-chairs. Before Mr. Norton could get to sleep, Mr. Donaldson was back.

"Well?" asked Mr. Norton, opening both eyes.

"She's dead," stammered Mr. Donaldson.

"Dead?" echoed Mr. Norton. "Well, now, isn't that something! She lives a hundred years and then dies the day Mr. Hent was going to make his grand offer."

"Don't joke," snapped Mr. Donaldson. "The old lady's been murdered."

"Murdered?"

"Yes, strangled."

Mr. Norton jumped up and pushed past Mr. Donaldson. Mr. Hent followed him.

"You'd better go too, Miss Brown," said Mr. Donaldson. "Your imagination will trouble you a lot more tonight if you don't look than if you do."

Miss Brown followed him silently into the back room. In the middle of a floor littered with odd buttons, pins, and spools of thread lay a little wisp of an old woman. In her hands there was a bit of sewing. Around her neck there was a broken cord.

Mr. Donaldson took a cloth off of a table and covered up the slight body.

Since Mr. Norton had suddenly remembered an appointment, and Miss Brown, of course, could not be expected to stay, Mr. Hent agreed to wait alone in the house until Mr. Donaldson should return with the officials. No, he was not afraid, but to reassure Miss Brown he would borrow the clasp knife Mr. Donaldson offered him. So they left him sitting against the wall, his watch and the knife on the table beside him.

The others drove back to town in silence except—

"Mr. Donaldson."

"Yes, Miss Brown."

"Did she have any enemies?"

"No."

"The cross was gone, wasn't it?"

"Yes."

## JENNE BELLE BECHTEL:

### Ocean Piece

I stood upon the beach and saw  
A sea, a sky, and that was all.  
A sea, a sky, and nothing more,  
No ship, nor bird, nor facing shore.  
The empty sea, the empty sky,  
And on the beach the empty I.

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# EASY MONEY DEPARTMENT

Forget the principle of the thing—this is money! That's right—legal tender . . . in folding quantities . . . as high as fifteen bucks—that's what Pepsi-Cola Company pays for gags and such-like you send in and we print. Procedure? Simple—send your stuff, marked with your name, address, school and class, to Easy Money Dept., Pepsi-Cola Co., Box A, Long Island City, N. Y. All contributions become the

property of Pepsi-Cola Co. We pay only for those we print.

Will getting "Pepsi-Cola" into your gag hurt its chances? Don't be naive, chums. We like it. So, if you should wind up with a rejection slip clutched in your hot little fist, that won't be the reason. Well, don't just sit there! Pick up that pencil—get your stuff started now. There's Easy Money waiting!

## LITTLE MORON CORNER

Here's the gag that won a M. M. (Master Moron) degree—and a fast two-bucks—for Ben Orloff, of Univ. of North Carolina, in the November contest:

Our minor-league moron, Mortimer, caused considerable furor in local circles by entering one of our better bistros and calling for a Pepsi-Cola. When served, he proceeded to plug it down with not one, but six, straws. Questioned as to his motives, Mortimer carefully removed all six straws from his mouth and replied with considerable hauteur: "So I can drink six times as much Pepsi, natch!"

Earle S. Schlegel of Lehigh Univ. also came up with two bucks for his moron gag. Why don't you get on the grary train? Two bucks each for every moron joke we buy.

## HE-SHE GAGS

Put one and one together—and you get a He-She gag. Three bucks each to *Dianne O. McDowell* of So. Dakota State College; *Albert M. Dredge* of Duquesne Univ.; *Emmett Carmody* of Manhattan College; and *Alfred Shapiro* of New York Univ., respectively, for these specimens:

She: And what position do you play on the football team?

He: Oh, sort of crouched and bent over.

\* \* \*

She: Why don't you park the car by this sign?

He: You're not allowed to park here.

She: Don't be silly. The sign says "Fine for Parking!"

\* \* \*

He: Your eyes sparkle like Pepsi-Cola.

She: Tell me more. I drink it up.

\* \* \*

She Scot: Sandy, 'tis a sad loss you've had in the death of your wife.

He Scot: Aye, 'tis that. 'Twas just a week ago the doctor told her to dilute her medicine in Pepsi-Cola, and she hadna' time to take but half the bottle.

\* \* \*

Current quotation on these is \$3 each for any we buy. Sure, but everything's over-priced these days.

## EXTRA ADDED ATTRACTION

At the end of the year, we're going to review all the stuff we've bought, and the item we think was best of all is going to get an extra

**\$100.00**

## — DAFFY DEFINITIONS —

We're not just sure who's daffy—but we sent one frog apiece to *Don McCauley*, Baylor Univ.; *Edward Whitaker*, Boston Univ.; *Jay Duwall*, Univ. of Chicago; *Charles R. Meissner, Jr.*, Lehigh Univ.; and *James O. Snider*, Baylor Univ., for these gems:

Lipstick—something which adds color and flavor to the old pastime.

Controversy—one Pepsi—two people.

Worm—a caterpillar with a shave.

Rival—the guy who gives your girl a Pepsi.

Steam—water gone crazy over the heat.

\* \* \*

So we're subsidizing lunacy. Okay—but it's still a buck apiece for any of these we buy.

## GET FUNNY...WIN MONEY...WRITE A TITLE



Ever play "pin the tail on the donkey?" Well, this is pretty much the same idea—and never mind the obvious cracks. \$5 each for the best captions. Or send in your own idea for a cartoon. \$10 for just the idea . . . \$15 if you draw it . . . if we buy it.

Here's how we split the take for cartoon drawings, ideas and captions in the November contest: \$15 each to *Jay Gluck* of Berkeley, Calif. and *Herbert John Brammeier, Jr.* of St. Louis Univ.; \$10 to *H. Dick Clarke* of Univ. of Oklahoma; and \$5 each to *Virgil Daniel* of George Washington Univ., *Frances Chorlton* of William and Mary College, and *Sidney B. Flynn* of St. Louis Univ.

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