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WINTER ISSUE

1953

Volume LVII

Number 2

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WOMAN'S COLLEGE of the UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro, N. C.

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*Speechlessly we seek  
by Jean Hollinger*

# Green Was the Color

Jarrad Denhard

She looked down from the bank that was like a cliff, to the water lapping kittenishly along the foot of the bank where the beach should have been. There was none. There was the water and the cliff and the little house that should have been on the beach but wasn't, because there wasn't any beach, and so it was leaning on the cliff with its pile feet in the water. And there was the sun and the motor-boat sound and the gurgle of a wet child's laughter.

The house was sitting smally below her trying to hide its lack of paint by losing itself in the brush on the cliff, but she laughed at it. She put down her suitcase and leaned on the stair rail and she laughed at it. Then she couldn't wait any longer and she started down the side of the cliff. The steps were very steep and her legs were very long. She stopped at the first foothold that could hardly be dignified as a landing and thought that it was going to be too much after all. She was getting old and stiff and her breath was already short and she just couldn't make this trip down again much less get up to try. But there was the house, her house. The first place that had ever really belonged to her. It was tiny and old and unpainted and generally uninhabitable but it was hers.

"You are a mess, but you are mine and that suits me." She went down the rest of the steps deciding that she had better name her house *Suits Me*, because it did, and then again it was the unanswerable answer to the slighting comments of her more worldly friends. She reached the doorway and leaned against it, for a moment caught between the house and the cliffside. She smiled because it was so quiet and she felt so safe there. Then she laughed aloud, because she liked the feeling so well. The door opened easily at her touch and she was there.

"This will be my sitting room," she thought, "and that will be my bedroom. I wonder if a bed will fit in there." She looked out of the sitting room window and discovered the dock below. "So much for this floor." There were steps leading down the bank side of the house—straight down with a turn at the bottom so that she could close her eyes at the landing and discover the room all over again. She felt as the wet child must have felt, but alone. She wished for someone to share this house with her. The rippled sun splashed the walls of the room and she called it her own, but that was not enough. Now she must give it to someone. Then it would be truly hers. Across the room was the door leading out onto the dock. There were no transitions in her house. You were inside or out, up or down, but never in between. She liked that.

The dock was warm in the tired sun with just a hint of dampness creeping back to announce the night. She folded herself wearily onto the doorsill and lit a cigarette with practiced efficiency. Her eyes followed the match down into the water and caught there the image of a face. It was not hers, so it was all right to speak to it.

"Hello, how's the water? Come up and visit awhile." The small boy did not answer but hauled himself up to drip carefully on the edge of the dock away from her. He did not look at her at once and she was grateful simply for his presence. To her unpracticed eye, he looked much like the general run of small boys; too thin, too bent with the self-consciousness of suddenly having too many bones, a little cleaner than most—but then he was wet and shiny in the sun and it was hard to tell. His hair was drying into a rough brownness that would be unkempt in a moment. A breeze ricocheted off of the bank behind her and the boy shivered. She told him to go in and get her raincoat to wrap up in. He was not very talkative and certainly not very handsome, but he was her first guest and she must treasure him.

The boy stood up and walked carefully on the far side of the dock watching the boards so that he would not stump his toes. He did not look at her until he had reached the doorway and then he thought, she is old. He stumped his toe on the doorsill and blushed and went into the house. It still looked the same as it had when old Mr. Ben had kept his boats in it. He did not see how anyone could live in it but then she was one of the summer people. The room certainly was a mess. It was meant to have a boat in it and there was not a boat, and so it should not have been a mess. He looked in several paper cartons that might have held a coat and found books and records and a record machine and light bulbs and baked beans and even sheets and blankets. The blankets were soft and scratchy and his tingling flesh could almost feel them around him, but she had said a raincoat and he could not find the raincoat. He went back to the doorway.

"I can't find the raincoat." He had looked into the paper cartons that were hers and so now he could look at her when he said it. She was still sitting on the doorsill. She had to look up to see him. That was better.

"Look on the stair rail." She stood up and stretched and she was very big. He went back into the room and found the coat. It was the color of wet sand, but it was not wet and it did not scratch and he put it on. Then he could not see his long legs and the fingernail that he had chewed off yesterday when his mother had yelled at him and he felt warm. The

dock was cold when he went outside. She was not fat and slouchy like his mother, just big like a man is big and her hair was short too. He could not remember how long his mother's hair was. It really did not matter. He walked up beside her.

"I'm warm now, thank you."

She turned and saw that the fingernail and the legs were hidden and she smiled at him. She could feel the width and warmth of the smile as it spread across her face and she wondered who this little boy was.

"Who are you, I mean what's your name?"

"Peter." He looked with a frown at the place on the coat where the third button should have been. It was not there. His eyes shifted to the dock.

"Is that all?" she laughed.

"Yes."

"No last name?"

Her voice was gruff and like the doctor's voice when he spoke to his mother. It wasn't that he didn't like the doctor. He was not very patient but he was nice.

"Yes."

She saw that she had frightened him and she was angry. She could talk to a busy salesman or an important customer, but she could not talk to this child. She reached out and turned the coat collar up around his ears and then reached for another cigarette.

"It's Johnston." And he smiled.

She thought it was a wonderful smile, all crooked and shy and satisfied.

"I'm Carolyn Thompson, but call me Tommy."

"Why?"

"Because Caroline doesn't fit me and Tommy is shorter."

He did not remark upon this and she turned to see what he was thinking. He was looking at the curve of his toes around the splintered edges of the dock.

"Tommy's easy enough to say, isn't it?"

"But are you a Miss or a Mrs.?"

"Neither to you. Don't worry about it. Just Tommy."

"Why are you living in Mr. Ben's boathouse?"

"Because I like it here. There's water and sand and not too many people and mostly because it's mine now. I've never—" There was no reason for Peter to move closer to her, unless maybe it was because the sun was going away and the water was making lonely sucking sounds at the foot of the pilings.

"I like your coat." He said.

And in the shadow she could blush and ruffle his hair without seeing herself acting like a fool over a scrawny little boy who turned blue when the sun went down.

"You'd better wear it home. You can't swim back now. It's too cool."

"I'll walk and I won't need it. I'm warm now." He began to unbutton the coat with reluctant fingers.

"Where do you live?" Peter moved away from her then a breeze came up out of the water and was cold on the arm where he had been.

"Around there." He did not point and she did not ask where. She wanted very much to know but she would not ask any more.

"I thought maybe I could drive you around."

"No."

The sun was gone and they stumbled on the embarrassed doorsill as they went into the house. Tommy went into the little kitchen and found the oil lamp that Mr. Ben had left in the house for her. She had thought that she knew how to work it but she turned the wick too low and could not get it to burn and she cursed and lit a candle instead. She saw Peter in the doorway watching her. She said that she was sorry, she shouldn't have cursed.

"That's all right. Mother does it all the time. The same way only longer."

Tommy looked under the sink to find a holder for the candle and left the kitchen which was really too small for conversation. She would remember that. Some rooms in her house were too small.

They went up the steps single file to the door and the bridge that led to the bank steps. Peter went first, quickly, conquering each step with unknowing ease while Tommy counted the stairs half to herself so that she would know the worst of her trip. Her suitcase stood at the top by the rail and she was glad that it was there. Her hands would feel empty.

"Can you find your way?"

"Yes."

"Hadn't I better go part of the way with you?"

"No."

"Well, be careful." She turned abruptly and fumbled at the handle of her suitcase.

"I'll be back." He said. Tommy straightened into the warm darkness and the suitcase was not heavy.

"Good. I'm glad." And she started down the steps to her house.

She began the long process of unpacking, going from one room to another, finding sheets and blankets and light bulbs. Then she remembered that her bed was not there and she did not need the sheets after all. She put them back in the box and took the blanket with her to the floor below. The door to the dock stood open and there were night sounds in the room. She pushed the old chaise close to the window that was open over the water and knelt framed by the blackness while she lit a cigarette with tired hands. The match floated slowly down to the water, still glowing, until it was reflected briefly and then was gone. Tommy curled her length into the hollows of the knobby mattress and waited for the darkness and the sound of the water to cover her, but the red glow of the cigarette held her attention. It was a note out of tune, out of the cool damp stillness in the room. She thought of Peter. She dragged deep on the cigarette and threw it out of the window down

into the dark and the wet where it made a last splutter of helplessness and died. Then it was quiet and she slept.

\* \* \* \* \*

Tommy drove along the highway with a feeling of urgency. It had been a long day, starting with sun-up and cramped bones and hating to leave for town. She might as well not have gone. She had felt out of context in the world that should have been her own. The lights of the long open corridors filled with racks of dresses, and coats, and gowns that were advertised as fluffy, were cold and lent no color.

The light was red and the sun was gold and windshields flashed their jeers because she was still. The day had been a busy rushing clamoring stillness, all day of it. The light was green.

She supposed they had not understood her today. The girls in her department had laughed at her stiffness and she had pointed out a customer who wanted to be waited on. They had not laughed at her any more. And Mr. Pierce had called her on the carpet for that shipment of blouses that had not sold and she had not been sufficiently sorry. She was only sorry that she was there. She had eaten alone in her office. The others sat at their table and wondered why she always ate alone in her office. She did not really like lunch and she was busy and it did not really matter.

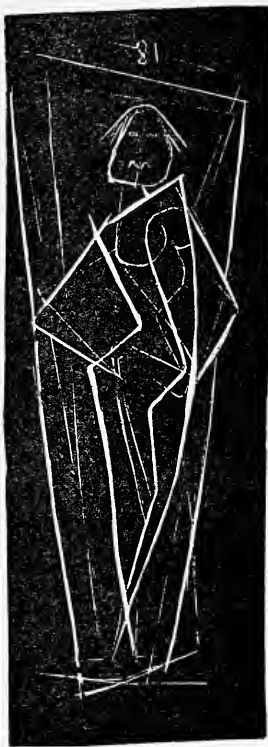
The turnoff was coming. A filling station. It belonged to Mr. Green and it was painted white with green trim. She would paint the floors of her house green because she liked green. She had to go to New York next week. She would paint when she came back. Tonight she would unpack and set up the kitchen and make the bed that must be there by now, and she wondered whether Peter would be there. She would have to find a place for the record machine. Downstairs, she thought, where the water can hear it at night.

She laughed at the child in her and turned on the radio. The dresses on sale tomorrow should sell. The ad was good and the price was right and Mr. Pierce to the contrary, she had not been in the business for twenty years for nothing.

She wondered if Peter would be there when she got home.

Peter wondered if she were there now. He would go down the steps and open the door and she would be there. He went down the steps and opened the door and she was not there. He wondered where she had gone. He went in and there was a bed that had not been there and the room was a mess too. He wanted this house to be neat. He wanted to sweep the floor but there was no broom. He could put things away. He did that at home, but here there was no place to put things yet. He remembered the sheets downstairs and ran to collect them and the blanket and the spread and ran up to the room where the bed was and dropped them onto it. He stopped

to catch his breath. He had been running when he had left the house, only his mother had stopped him and asked him where he was going. She did not want him to go because she thought the new woman would take advantage of him. He mustn't do any work for her unless he got paid. She would have stopped him



*polly swope*

but she was not dressed and he was gone. All of them were inside and she was all right so she could take care of them now. Peter tried to remember if the baby had been fed supper. He was supposed to have fed her supper and he had not. He supposed that his mother would do it if the baby cried. He began to make up the bed. He did not think Tommy would mind. He was glad that the woman in the blue uniform had taught him how to make hospital corners. The doctor had said that she was a public nurse. He did not know what that was, but she had taught him how to make a neat bed.

It was finished and it looked good to him. He was glad that he had thought of it. He went around the room straightening the boxes,

occasionally looking in to see what they held, occasionally looking back at the bed and being proud of it from all angles. He found an old rag in the corner and began to polish the window in the room, the lowest pane first because he could not reach the top one. The rag was dirty and the window was very dirty and he was tired when he heard her footstep on the bridge. He put down the rag and ran to give the bed a final pat before the door opened.

The door was stuck and Tommy swung her hip against it. It was almost as if there were something inside that didn't want to let her in. She dismissed the thought as the door gave and she lost her balance into the tumbled room. She saw the bed and Peter and then today was gone. It was yesterday and she laughed.

"Hello there. You did come. Here, help me with these, will you?" Peter moved to take some of the packages out of her arms, feeling each one carefully as he put it down.

*(Continued on Page 16)*

# without wings

## I

Before the coming of untender night  
All birds sang in unchanneled song  
To you, brown deep waters,  
That have weighted too long all awakened  
fingers,  
That have washed over these unripened sands  
Caring not to spend one brief moment here;  
Caressing always with travelled hands  
Other shores,  
Found more fertile.  
Only one bird sings now  
With eyes new from yesterday.  
Listening candles flicker in unwindowed rooms.  
Dark beyond all voices lie the waters—  
Their unable ears denying the song of any bird,  
however near.  
And the bird  
Named for innocence  
Sees three shadows  
And looking deeply into loneliness  
Leans too close and softly slips inside.

## II

Soon these hands—dry, emptied of charge  
Will stretch through rain  
To caress remembered rooms—  
Long-lived in  
Though only lately loved in taut songs unsung.  
All the birds cry upon the going—being lost in love.  
This one bird with too-eager wings  
Hurting deeply with loss's pain—  
Knowing this to be *the* going  
Feels something twist too far and break inside.

## III

All care lost somehow, sometime in tears  
Torn away as are used leaves in autumn—  
This almost forgotten bird—not called anymore—  
not even dear  
Flits against these shuttered windows  
Reminding me fitfully of itself.

*At last, my love, my dearest love,  
Small brown bird  
Looking softly within this deeper voice,  
Asking warmth already given. . .*

But I am done with all birds  
Seen first by traitor night  
Wading carefully in wanting  
Not a little fearful of remembered pools  
Leaning out of no pretended need  
Upon a Father whose eyes were in tomorrow.

Now, loving not a child at all  
But humoring its childlike self  
The bird must fall from branches of memory,  
Drowning happily again, again, and again  
All vision—all tomorrows—  
These windows shuttered for always  
Against too-fragile time.

*montae imbt*



## on modern poetry

*"Poetry gives most pleasure when only generally and not perfectly understood."*

—S. T. COLERIDGE

Not long ago I was talking to a friend about modern poetry when she remarked, "These poets must not have anything important to say or they would have said it so people could understand them." This was an old, familiar refrain. My response to it has been conditioned to the point of being reflex. I try to point out that what the poets are saying *is* important, too important to be put into the old forms and the old words which have lost their vitality, their sharpness of meaning, from much use. These important things have to do with what we might call the poetic criticism of our time. Such a criticism cannot be expected to speak in terms of big business or inadequate motivation or educational deficiencies, although these may figure in it. It speaks rather of the narrowness and conventionality, the loss of human values, the tragedy of human waste which are characteristic of this and many another age.

As for understanding modern poetry, how can you hope to understand if you expect it to read like children's verse? The poet demands that you bring something with you when you come to his poetry. What? . . . well, first, enough time to consider his poem carefully in many readings. Secondly, an open but certainly not empty, mind. Knowledge gleaned from experience and from books must be brought to bear on every word, every line.

Here I stop for breath and pray that my remarks haven't been scrutinized too carefully and that I am not going to be asked to apply them to certain poets or groups of poets. There are two reasons why I do not care to be pushed into a corner on the issue: my own limited and obviously lay-knowledge of the subject and my growing conviction that, knowledge or no knowledge, beyond a certain point modern poetry cannot be defended.

The reaction to the overflow-of-powerful-emotions school has swung, it seems, to the opposite extreme. Much, though certainly not all, of the poetry of today is guilty of excessive intellectualism, and underlying it seems to be a lack of "a sense of community," or, if you will, humanity. The poet sees himself much as others see him, as an isolated segment, a non-functional piece of this thing called society. His isolation, and that of the artist in general, is not only his fault, but also the fault of the society. When society turned its attention from things spiritual to things temporal, the values which the artist believed in became of incidental importance. Art had to have a new set of values, a new justification for existing; and for this new set of values the artist could only look within himself. And so we have all this business about the artist's right to self-expression

independent of communication and "art for art's sake."

This is an outrageous over-simplification of a very complex problem, but despite the why's and wherefore's, were I forced to pass judgment upon the ultimate value of modern poetry I would have to do so on the basis of its worth within the context of the whole. In the final analysis, it is not possible to separate it from the moral and social scheme of things.

*gwen hamer*

True poetry, says Marianne Moore, should present for our inspection "imaginary gardens with real toads in them." The material of poetry is the matter of life: the toad is looked at and felt in a way of its own, under a strong influence, in an imaginary garden. Through poetry the poet resolves the state of tension created by his exposure to the raw edges of experience; poetry is the external action distilled from this exposure by the poet's consciousness. One of the impulses behind his writing of poetry is not only to



*polly swobe*

interpret his experience to others but to clarify and objectify it to himself—to reconcile it to his own spirit which does not exist and function in a vacuum, but in an environment. Whether the quantity and the urgency of the poet's perception of experience becomes available to the reader is determined by his mastery of conveyance—his technique; the important matter in poetry is not the personality of the poet but the personality of

the poem. Thus we stand face to face with an ever-present dilemma—the greatest problem that exists between the artist and his audience: communication. A poet should want, and at any rate he needs, an audience; the relationship which exists between the poet and his audience often affects the use that the poet can make of his own personality. And certainly there is a loneliness tormenting the poets of today. Has there ever been any time in our country—indeed in our world—when poetry has been more severed from all facets of our lives? The extreme self-consciousness of the poet today, with his earnest anxiety to define his reason for existence, is a symptom of this divorced condition. Poets and their poetry are no longer taken for granted. In times past, no matter how much the individual poet was neglected, the careless society at least never questioned the value of poetry itself.

Every poet from Aeschylus to Auden has worked in images, simply because all language is itself meta-

phorical—the alphabet, an abstraction. The spontaneous, intuitive, yet deliberate arrangement and development of original images are the basis of building modern poetry. Because it deals with abstractions, contemporary poetry is often difficult poetry. Perhaps it would be wise to remember, however, that through the abstract we come most nearly to an understanding of the nature of reality; for the abstract is the lowest common denominator of that reality.

Realizing that the poem is the full and unique expression in language of the impact of a piece of experience upon the poet's consciousness, we as readers can make the results of this impact as fully conscious to ourselves by opening ourselves as widely as possible to his medium of word communication. We can try to "live into" the poetry, try to make it live again in us by reading it with as actively docile approach, with an eager patience, by yielding to the breath of its emotion. A poem has a living reality of its own; it is not like life, but it can make and quicken life within us. The poet should make us aware of and give us adequate expression for all that we dimly see and dumbly feel. "The success of poetry can be judged only by its power to reveal and enlarge and intensify all kinds of human experience," says Elizabeth Drew, noted literary critic and author. "If it accomplish this, it does not matter what rules it breaks or means it uses."

*montae imbt*

In making an attempt to state concisely the aims of modern poetry, it is easy to see how perhaps a century's perspective would prove invaluable! We have had explained to us (with every conceivable approach from economic or political to psychological or spiritual) all the difficulties of twentieth-century living. We have triumphantly blamed materialism, atheism, nationalism, etc., etc., etc. *Analysis* and *underlying significance* have become our fetishes. Our own generation has submissively swallowed all its own ills because "we have never known anything but war."

And yet with all our analysis and explanation, why have we arrived at no similarly satisfying answer to the problem of understanding or lack of understanding in modern art? In this connection, certainly contemporary poetry can claim its share of the furor. Having leaned over backward in our analyses of other areas, we have stopped far short of envisioning the poet's position as contributing to his society, or discerning his relation to the complex environment in which he seeks to create. He is seeking to express his own artistic consciousness in terms of an age which he views, just as poets have long viewed

their own times, as an age of unique advancement, surpassing turbulence and uncertainty, a time of necessary re-valuations.

In our own age, the resulting urgency has produced almost universally in the field of the arts violent and extreme revisions and innovations—so extreme that the innovator seemingly becomes an iconoclast: Painting departs from a representation of perceptual reality, music discards the twelve-tone scale, poetry flees the traditional metrical boundaries. Similarly, new experimental forms in poetry emerge; those fulfilling their aim live to become a part of the pattern—from the highly-controlled, intricately organized verse of Emily Dickinson to the initially unintelligible and seemingly formless work of Gertrude Stein.

The artist not only must discover his own medium of self-expression, he must somehow transcend internalized discovery and present his creation in terms translatable to the consciousness of his audience. The two aims, then, expressive form and effective communication, go hand in hand. One critic speaks of '... communication, which is based on analogy . . .' which seems a brief and accurate, if incomplete, description.

Beyond these two basic aims, we can speak with good evidence of the modern poet's search for an enduring faith. The routes are as numerous and as varied as the experimentations with form, ranging from intellectual reasoning to a search for empirical absolutes. James Joyce in his remarkable contribution has forcefully vitalized this aim in his determination to 'forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race'.

And finally, it is necessary to mention the pervading trend toward greater compression *i.e.* the increasing use of 'pure' imagery and symbolism in the conveying of whole ideas. With this development comes a natural presupposition of a certain body of knowledge and core of experience of the reader, demanding that he actually contribute something of himself to derive the full meaning from modern poetry. This the poet has taken as his right; he falls down only when the translation from intensely personal experience or symbol to art form is not accomplished. It becomes then, a two-fold and reciprocal process, and when either poet or reader fails, the Icarian torch flames up and the cries of 'obscurity' again prevail.

The reconciliation can come, but only with the realization of the motivation and necessity for the continuing evolution, not destruction, of poetic expression.

*janet s. fyne*

# The Sword

Doris Waugh Betts

The days fell out of the sick man's life sluggishly, like dead coals slipping finally onto the hearth from an old fire. Every evening when he blew the lamp and raised the shade, Bert would stand in the dark thinking, This is the last one. Tomorrow he will be gone.

But the next morning, when Bert started awake in the leather chair and strained his ears for silence, he could still hear the tired in-and-out of breathing and his arms and legs would loosen in the chair as he listened to it.

Bert was almost never out of the sick man's room, until the smell of it seemed right to him and he could look at the flowers on the wall and not know if they were blue or green.

His mother would enter and leave the room all day long, standing with one hand curled around the bed rail and looking down at the sick man, her face set into awkward squares like blocks heaped up by some clumsy child.

"Is he any better, Bert?"

"No, I think he is about the same. Maybe a little weaker."

Then she would whisper it under her breath as if it hurt her mouth to make the words. "A little weaker . . ."

At first Bert had put out his hand to her, but she had not seemed to notice, and after a while he stood at the window when his mother came in and stared at the leaves that tossed and shifted on the grass when the wind went by. She wanted to be left alone, he supposed. She had been left to herself for a long time now.

Always she would say hopefully, "Lester? How are you today, Lester?" but there was the suck and push of the old man's breathing and nothing else, and she would go away, watching her feet.

He had been sick for three weeks when Bert first came home, and he was still able then to talk a little and smile and look around him.

He had been smiling when Bert came into the room that first day and put his coat on the leather chair and walked over to the bed.

"Hello, Father," Bert said.

The old man said slowly, "It's Bert, isn't it? Have you come home awhile, Bert?"

And he said, "Yes, Father. I've come home a little while."

But there were two more weeks gone now since that day and the old man still lay in bed — no longer smiling — and breathing in and out while Bert watched him.

This morning the doctor had come early, so that Bert was out of his chair before the sun was well into the room.

"Morning, Bert."

"Hello, Dr. Herman. You're early today."

"This is going to be a busy one. Did he rest last night?"

"Yes, sir, he sleeps almost all the time now."

Only once during the examination had the sick man opened his eyes and then he had looked at the doctor without interest and closed them again.

"How is he, Dr. Herman?"

The doctor made a shrugging motion. "Holding his own. We're just waiting, I'm afraid."

Later, putting his things away, he had added, "I'm glad you come home, Bert. Your father was always talking about you. He was very proud."

Was he? thought Bert.

Bert stood by the window and watched the doctor go down the walk, his black bag banging against his knee every other step. We're just waiting, the doctor had said. Once he stopped in the walk to tie his shoe and the wind rose in the oak tree—almost bare now—and came to flap the doctor's coat, impatiently.

After the doctor was out of sight, his mother came and stood by the bed and put her head against the post, as if she were tired of holding it up.

"Does the doctor think he is any better, Bert?" she said.

Bert said, "No, he seems about the same."

She sat down in the leather chair stiffly, leaning her head back, and he saw the hairs springing up from her braid like grass after feet go by.

She said to herself, "At first I thought he would get well. Even after the first week or so I thought he would get well."

"We both thought so," said Bert.

She said, "I wish he knew things. He'd be so glad you were home again. These last years all he could talk about before Christmas was that you would be home awhile. He looked forward to it so."

He looked forward to it, Bert thought. Always forward. What was I expected to do? The sick man moved and coughed and Bert went closer to the bed to see if he was all right. Nothing else was said, and after awhile his mother got up from the chair and went out to the kitchen.

No one else came in the rest of the morning, although Jubah put her head at the door once and smiled at him and Bert sat alone in the room and watched his father's face. He wondered how in five years features he had once known well could fold in upon themselves until the face was strange to him, with its pinched nose and sharp chin, and the cheeks

that looked as if they had been pressed deep inside the mouth.

Sometimes Bert would try to remember how his father had looked a long time ago—when he had driven him to school on winter mornings, or across a hundred dinner-tables, or on those few special times when he had gone hunting with his father and three other men. But all Bert could remember of those times was the bigness of the other hunters, and the early-morning smell of woods and rain, and once his father stopping to put a hand against a poplar tree and smile.

His father had been a very poor hunter; he almost never made a successful shot. But he had been proud when Bert learned to shoot well. And when Bert began bringing home almost all the game he could remember his father coming into the kitchen at dusk and calling, "Ruth? Come see what your son did!" and the rabbits would be spread on the table for his mother to exclaim about, while his father stood quietly at the sink, washing his hands.

After Bert became such a good shot his father complimented and praised him but gradually they went hunting less and less until one Christmas he had given his gun to Bert. "I was never much with guns," he said then. And after that, the two of them never went hunting again, and the gun was finally stacked away in some closet.

The only time Bert could remember his father's face clearly was that time he had come home from the army and they had sat up after the others were in bed—his father oddly expectant, with waiting eyebrows and a half-formed smile, and his own feelings of awkwardness and discomfort, until the two of them had fallen into separate silences and finally gone to bed. He remembered how his father had looked then.

At noon Mother brought the tray and they whispered at the sick man until he lifted his eyelids and looked at them, waiting, expecting nothing and yet seeming to expect anything.

Mother said, "It's lunch time, Lester. Hot soup," and the sick man made a noise in his throat that might have meant yes or no, and might have meant nothing at all. She fed him slowly and all the time he never looked at the soup or the spoon or her hand holding it; he lay there watching her mouth with that funny look on his face.

Bert watched them for awhile, but he could not keep his hands still; they kept plunging into his pockets or picking at each other until he went to the window and made them into fists and leaned them against the glass. Sometimes the wind would catch a leaf and drive it against the glass where it paused and then tumbled off. Bert thought, My father is going to die, but he did not believe it. He believed the wind and the leaves and the window-glass; but he did not believe that about his father.

When the sick man had eaten, Mother came over to the window and touched Bert's arm; it startled him for a minute and he snapped his head over one shoulder and stared at her; then the muscles that had grown tight around his eyes and forehead let themselves go and he smiled.

She said, "He will sleep some more, Bert. Why don't you come sit out front with me?"

"All right," said Bert.

She whispered, "We'll leave the door open."

He took the tray from her and carried it out into the kitchen where he put it down on the table. His mother called, "Can you bring me a glass of water?" and he filled a glass at the sink and carried it into the front room to her.

She had put her feet up into a big chair and rested an arm against her eyes, and fine hairs were standing up out of her braid all over her head. Bert put the glass into her other hand, and she rubbed at her forehead with the arm and thanked him. He sat down opposite her.

She said, "I wish you'd let me stay with him, Bert. You've hardly been out of that room since you came home."

Bert shook his head. He had to stay with his father now. He had to do that much.

For a time, neither of them spoke and he looked thoughtfully around the room. Here he had sat with his father when he came home from the army—his father had been in the big chair smiling, and Bert had sat just where he was now, moving his feet back and forth against the rug and looking now and then at his father thinking, What does he want of me?

His mother said, "At first I thought he would get well, Bert. I thought he would get well at first." For a minute Bert wanted to say, Did you like him? Did you really like my father? Do you know something I don't? But he didn't say anything; he just watched the movement in her face. He thought she was going to shed her first tears then, but she took her feet off the chair and moved around and shifted until the desire for tears went away. She looked suddenly like a brave little girl; a fat girl with chubby features and hair that would not stay in place. Bert wondered what she would do after the sick man died and if it would really mean any change in her life. Sometimes he thought he knew his mother very well and yet this thing he did not know. Does it mean a lot to her? Is there something in me that does not understand him? She'll just have me then, he thought, and he didn't feel quite so helpless for a minute. She's got to prepare herself.

Aloud he said, "Father is very weak now and his age is against him."

She said, "I know now he's not ever going to be well again. I know it and I don't know it all at the same time and that's a queer feeling, Bert, both at the same time."

When she said that, Bert felt his whole body tighten. His mother was right; that's the way it was

for him too, maybe for everybody. Nobody believed it. The one thing that was glaring and obvious and unmistakable in the universe, and nobody really believed it. Bert wondered if his father believed it now, waiting every day in bed to see if it were true.

He said, "Dr. Herman will be back tomorrow." He said it rapidly as if he had just thought of it, but it was because he couldn't think of anything else to tell her. "We're to call him if we need him for anything."

His mother said, "Yes," and drank the water very fast so that it must have hurt her throat to swallow so hard. Bert took the glass back into the kitchen.

He stacked the dishes off the tray into the sink and began to pour water on them from the kettle and then wash them with a soapy rag. He thought, it seems to me now that if it were new again, I would be different than I was; but he didn't know exactly what he meant by that. Jubah came in from the back porch; she stopped in the doorway and stood there straight as a knife-handle and watched him.

"What you doing, Mister Bert?" she said.

He said, "Dishes."

She came on into the kitchen and wiped her hands on a paper towel and threw it away.

"I'll do them," she said. "How's Mr. Lester?"

Bert watched her brown hands go down into the water and slush it up into soapsuds.

He said, "No different, Jubah. He just lies there but there isn't any change."

Jubah shook her head back and forth and made a tut-tut sound with her tongue.

"Sometimes it comes up slow," she said.

When he went back into the front room, his mother looked as if she had been crying, but it was hard to tell. She had not cried before. That night he had come in from the station, she had stood in the hall holding one hand with another, looking something like a queen, he thought. She'd said, "I'm sorry to call you from your business, Bert. But it seemed best . . ."

He'd dropped his bag at the door and come to put his arm around her. "How is he?"

Just for a minute, she'd put her head down on his shoulder and rested it there and then she'd caught his arm in tight fingers and made a little smile. "He'll be glad you're here," she'd said.

Now, coming into the front room, he thought perhaps she had been crying but he could not be sure. He sat down in the chair again and looked at her, trying to decide about it.

His mother said rapidly, "Do you know what Jubah said this morning? I was just walking through the kitchen, and Jubah said—Death comes up slow like an old cat but after she waits a long time she jumps and it's all gone then—I was just walking by her and she looked up from the stove and said that, Bert, and I thought I would fall down right there to hear her say it."

Bert said, "Jubah talks too much," but he turned it over in his mind and looked at it in front and behind and on both sides. Death comes up slow like an old cat but after she waits a long time she jumps and it's all gone then.

He tried to remember what it had been like in the army, but he couldn't remember what he had thought about death then. He and Charlie used to talk about it sometimes, but always in terms of somebody else—the fellow in the next bunk, or the ship that left yesterday, or the list in the paper.

Charlie always said, "I don't believe nothing can hurt you till your times comes." He used to say it over and over, confidently, and Bert had listened just as confidently because both of them knew their time hadn't come.

And it didn't seem to, because they got through all right and Charlie went home to his filling station in Maine and he'd never heard from him.

There'd been another boy, confident as they were, who said that ever since he was a kid he'd known he was going to die during a storm. Every time they had any kind of a storm, he'd walk the floor smoking on a cigar, and jumping at the sound of thunder. They'd laughed at him.

"It's whenever your time comes," Charlie always told him.

But as it turned out Bert and Charlie had come home all right, and the other boy (funny that he couldn't remember his name) had died in Africa, they said, and there wasn't even a cloud in the sky.

But that didn't prove anything about what Charlie had said. It didn't prove anything except what his mother had said, that nobody really believed in it. Bert felt tired.

He frowned. "Sometimes," he began, "sometimes, Mother I wish I could . . ." but he stopped there and didn't know what he wished. It had something to do with the old hunting trips and with his father and with Jubah, but he didn't know what it was. He put his head into his hands and smashed the palms into his eyes. He thought, I have known people and been known by people. That proves something, doesn't it?

His mother was looking at him. She said, "Your father loved you so, Bert." He kept his palms tight against his eyes where the pressure made him see sparks and gray wheels spinning and something like a Roman candle. He wondered, Was that it? Was that all it was all these years? and that made him tired too.

Bert said, "I'll see if he's awake now."

He tiptoed into the room and looked down at the sick man, who was awake—lying there with that look on his face. Bert looked down at him, at his faded eyes on each side of the pinched nose and the mouth, bent in now as if the corners had been tugged from the inside. Slow, he thought, slow like a big

*(Continued on Page 15)*

## *the resolution*

The quietude of certainty  
Is vibrant longitude  
Of single note of violin  
Wending never into utter stillness  
Sostenuto infinite and unresolved.

Sanguine doubt  
But spawns and multiplies itself  
Mechanically amoeboid  
Never learning respite  
From cyclic and malignant slaughter.

And equal stoic measures  
Of certainty and doubt  
Locked in death-struggle  
Of obscene atonality  
Transgress the bevelled edge  
Of possible time-charged progression  
Leaving but pale residual dust  
Which filters easily  
Through tight-clenched fingers.

Yet single note is but removed from symphony—  
Legend and history abound in sanguine cycle. . .

Mechanical futility of struggle  
Smooth-cool, impenetrable as snow,  
When snuffed out like a taper  
Reveals in welcomed darkness  
Familiar legend vivified by well-remembered melody,  
Of fusion into flame.

*janet s. fyne*

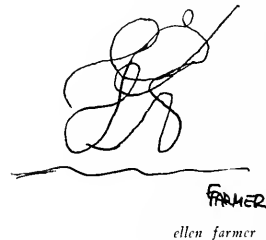
## *american primitive*

Trains are aluminum crank-up toys  
Mountains are cork and mottled plaster  
Hear the stroking wheel-noise  
On pine and moss and alabaster  
Rises  
Geyser-spume below, below  
Marks the crooked mile we go,  
Marks the crooked mile.

Behold the country, pilgrim-yellow  
Ring a hill with trestle-track  
Mark the young, corn-sprung bordello  
Stilted, tilted secret shack  
Gimcrack  
Steeple in a row  
Point the crooked mile we go,  
Point the crooked mile.

O beautiful for spacious skies  
Muralized upon a fable  
Fastened by the past Julys  
With a cotton candy label  
Abel  
Or unable  
The spangled giant from wars ago  
Walks the crooked mile we know,  
Walks the crooked mile.

*arlene croce*



You are the tragedy of the harlequin smile,  
The delightful tune of your being here  
Is like a nostalgic caliope,  
Its tinkling gaiety assimilated with your carnival  
smile.

The room is neon,  
Suddenly like the honkytonk lights  
Of a city I used to know.  
And like that city  
The configuration of your music  
Is kind and turbulent rhythm,  
Classic jazz and the off-beat of bebop.

A guitar vibrates in a darkened corner  
And ballet dancers appear in chartreuse  
Leaping on the stage of your voice.  
Poetry in sounds, not words or pictures  
Stirs my senses.

Your beauty is not serenity at all  
But a wonderful throbbing ecstasy and exhilaration.  
You become life itself  
And in you a lost part of me  
Lives another time.

*phyllis birkby*

When the white wave spewed me out upon the sand  
My farthest reach was my other hand.  
The flat beach baked and charred me black  
Then bleached me white again.  
That was the first hundred years.

The long millennium of a washing shore  
Has cashed its gain of ocean floor.  
Strange sea rhythms wait the lunar change  
While chanting prayers of impossibility.  
My grasp exceeds the sea.

*barbara maclellan*

I was born  
When summer was sinking its last edges  
Into the maidenhood of fall.  
When the grass  
Was parched from lack of water  
And the trees were tall  
And barren-brown because *no one cared*.

The house was red-red-red  
Like the Heat. Hot and cracked-dry.  
The rotted boards shriveled away  
From the infernos of wind to die.

That was the hottest summer, they said.

I was married  
When winter closed the door.  
Shut Autumn out completely.  
The snow hung from a single limb,  
And was blown off quite neatly  
Like soggy pieces of unlined paper.

The house was white-white-white  
And bare. Reconciled  
Into bleak austerity by winter,  
Put away and filed.

That was the coldest winter, they said.

She was dead-born  
When life was born. Like the green tassel  
On the pecan tree outside.  
The tassel that did not quite  
Become a part of the tree, even though it tried.  
The branch fell low and was trampled on.

The house is no more. They tore  
It down after we left. Its death  
Went not unnoticed.

Worst eyesore in the community, they said.

*adrienne stubl*

## Book Review

by ROBIE MACAULEY

Random House, 1952

Howard Graeme is a mediocre professor of psychology, bound by old class notes to the routine of teaching a viewpoint no longer his own, no longer interested in his students because they seem like 'small investors . . . who want only a couple of useful shares that will bring in the small but regular dividends.' One September day into Graeme's class walks an almost beautiful girl dressed in green, with fake hornrims and an inkless pen. A few chance meetings and a few planned ones—and Howard is involved in something that seems to him a rediscovery of his very being. The wife (who has become to him less interesting than the morning newspaper) and the son (whose promise of brilliance has not been fulfilled) late in the book acquire new personalities to Howard, then lose them as the disguises the three people feel they must wear become reality to them, and they lose sight of each other.

*The Disguises of Love*, Mr. Macauley's first novel, is unique in that it takes a very usual story, tells the story successfully from three limited points of view, and makes an exploration of the dream-world from it. Each person's story—Howard's, Gordon's (the son), and Helen's (the wife)—supports and further illuminates the others; technically, the three never become confused because each is distinctive and has its own language, and because the transitions are carefully prepared for by the presence of the next person in the imagination of the preceding one.

Howard's experience is the discovery of what he believes to be life's essence; yet the reader sees the affair only through Howard's eyes (we never really meet Frances, the student, and neither of the other two characters meet her), so that the relationship exists only in Howard's mind. This cleverly-handled control allows for the destruction of the dream in the end—Frances's leaving is believable because she has never been a character in the story. The whole relationship is handled in dream language; past and present disappear, time is held still, even trees lose their identities. Only when

## THE DISGUISES OF LOVE

reality interferes—when Howard first sees Frances as ugly and grayly mediocre, when he first knows that the father-son relationship has not grown close as he had imagined—in distrust of the dream—is he 'killed'.

Helen in her own mind is a woman of capabilities that have not been allowed to develop. In her childhood her family knew every action, demanded every thought; in marriage her child was handled as an experimental subject, but the freedom she had acquired was more valuable to her than devoting her life to the son. Now she misunderstands Howard, thinking he, too, treasures the freedom, and she neglects exciting him toward realization of himself. She becomes involved in the shallow faculty-wife life, loses Howard, and takes another woman's advice to win him back—having the sense all the time of being a fake. She comes even to believe in the disguise, however, and she too is 'killed' by the reassertion of reality.

Gordon's disguise is less for his own sake. He fakes a reactionary, against his parents' hopes—yet on his own is developing a sense of perception. He indulges himself in *their* dream for him, and when he is ready to remove the mask to them, the very thing he has hidden has been destroyed for them.

There are elements in the book that make for confusion for the reader. The subtle dream symbolism is consistent, if taken as such. But the symbols verge so closely on reality that one does not know whether or not to accept them. The most striking instance of this is at the very end: Frances is in the plane which already appears as a black swallow in the sky (if symbolized, the dream is no longer, and has become a living thing). A stream of black smoke grows from one of the engines (no longer a swallow). The reader is left in doubt: Is the plane

going to burn? Or is this only an effect of destruction, to be taken literally as the end of the dream exaggeration?

The novel is concerned not simply with the disguises of love, but with the disguises assumed in life

(Continued on Page 22)



jean hollinger



## The Sword

(Continued from Page 11)

cat, and for a minute he hated Jubah for telling his mother about the cat.

The old man closed his eyes, and Bert felt suddenly that two doors had been shut against him and he no longer had anything to do with his father. He came back into the front room and sat down, then he got up and took a magazine and sat again. He thought, I'm trying, damn it. I've always been trying.

Big letters crawling crookedly on the magazine said CHILDBIRTH, IT CAN BE PAINLESS. OUR GROWING TRAFFIC DEATHS. STALIN AND THE ATOM. He leafed through it, not reading anything.

Sometimes since his father had been sick, Bert had tried to remember some vivid detail, some special time, some conversation that had happened when he was a boy that was important. That's where a psychologist began, with the little boy, and he could say, "It is here that it began to go wrong, when you were three, or seven, or nine," but Bert could never find anything.

He remembered the time he came home from the army only because it was so much like everything else that it seemed important in itself.

His father and mother had met him at the train-station; she had hugged him and Father had shaken his hand and stood there smiling, looking at him curiously and—yes, he was sure of it, warmly—until he stammered, "Well, let's go home now." So they had piled into the Ford and gone home, making a lot of noise on the road about souvenirs and about old friends and about what-he-was-going-to-do-now.

And that night, when Mother and Aunt Mary had gone to bed, and Jubah had called goodnight from the back-door and thanked him again for the silk shawl, Bert and his father had sat in this same front room; his father in the big chair, looking expectant, with his eyebrows up and an underdeveloped smile fooling with his mouth. Bert felt then the same way he did when he and his father came in from hunting and put the rabbits down on the kitchen table.

But his father hadn't seemed uncomfortable at all; he just sat across from him smiling, and Bert moved his feet back and forth against the rug thinking, What-is-it-you-want-of-me?

Finally he said, "You know, Father, I brought souvenirs to the others, but I didn't know what to bring you. I didn't know what you would like."

And his father had gone on smiling, looking at him out of a quiet face, his faded eyes making a question and yet not a curious question.

And Bert had said nervously, "So I just thought I'd give you the money, Sir, and let you get something you liked and wanted for yourself," holding out the envelope in a hand that was carved from wood or clay, but was not his hand.

His father had said slowly, "That was nice of you, Bert. Thank you very much," and had taken the envelope and turned it over and over in his hands, not opening it, just turning it over in his fingers.

After that the two of them had sat for a little longer until they fell into separate silences and went to bed.

Sometimes now, when Bert sat in the leather chair and watched his father breathe in and out, he would remember that night and try to think what else he should have done. The pistol? But his father had never been much with guns. Silk shawls or bits of jade? And what would his father have done with a Japanese sword or a rising-sun flag?

When his mother spoke now it frightened him because he had forgotten she was in the room.

She said, "What are you reading, Bert?" and he jumped and his eyes caught at the words in the magazine like fingers.

He said, "Childbirth. Painless Childbirth," and she almost smiled.

She said thoughtfully, "I remember the day you were born," but she didn't say any more. Bert tried to picture his father on that day. Had he been proud? Had he said perhaps, softly and to himself—"My son?"

Jubah called them to supper and Bert ate it automatically, watching Jubah's sharp hipbones shift when she moved about the kitchen. Jubah was very thin. She was almost as old as his father and she had been with them a long time. That was a funny thing, Jubah's loyalty to Mr. Lester. They were often laughing as if old or yellowed secrets were between them. I should have known Jubah better, Bert thought now, watching her go about the kitchen. Perhaps she would have told me.

Jubah said, "I'll stay over tonight, Mister Bert," and he didn't argue with her.

His mother said, "Your bed's fixed, Jubah," and she thanked her.

Later, when Bert blew the lamp and raised the shade in the sick man's room he thought how tired he was, and he went to sleep quickly in the chair.

When he woke again, it was almost day and he heard the old man choking and wheezing on the bed and he knew this was the last day. He called his mother and they lit the lamp and stood by the bed while Jubah telephoned the doctor.

His mother didn't say anything or bend down to touch the sick man; she just stood there listening to him cough and the tears ran out her eyes and down her cheeks and fell off.

Now that it had come, Bert found his hands were trembling, and the lamplight jiggled and splashed against the flowered wall every time his father made a noise with his throat, but even when he squeezed his eyes together they were dry.

Suddenly his father said, "Ruth," and she sat down on the side of the bed and took both his hands in hers and his eyelids flew up and he looked at her, until Bert felt he could not bear that look.

Bert put the lamp on the table and bent over the old man, feeling the hiccupping begin in his throat and the tightness clamp across his chest. He put a hand against the old man's shoulder and said suddenly, "I should have given you the sword," and his voice was too loud.

The sick man's eyes flashed to him once, flicked his face and went away and he gargled a sound in his

throat. His mother frowned at Bert and shook her head sharply.

"Hush," she said sternly. "Hush, he does not know anything," and the old man raised his head off the pillow stiffly and put it down again and was dead.

Bert backed out the door when Jubah came in; his mother had put her head down on the bed and begun to cry with a great sucking sound, and Bert went heavily into the front room and fell into the big chair, saying aloud over and over, "He is dead. He is already dead. He is dead."

He put his forehead down against his arm, but he could not even cry.

## Green Was the Color

*(Continued from Page 5)*

"You look different," he said. She had on city clothes. He had not known that she was going to the city today. He wondered why she did not stay here all the time if she liked it so well.

"These are my working clothes. I don't like them very much." Peter did not like them either. They made him feel small and cold and dirty and like he didn't belong here any more. She hadn't said anything about the bed yet. "Why don't you take these things downstairs while I change into my stay-at-home clothes?"

"Can't I stay here?"

"No, of course not."

"Why not?"

"Because I'm going to change my clothes."

"My mother doesn't mind if I stay with her while she's dressing."

"Well, I'm not your mother. Now downstairs with you. And be careful with that brown bag. It's breakable." She started out the door to get her suitcase.

"What's in it?" He was clutching the bag tightly because he hurt all over and the hurt in his hand made it feel better.

"Whiskey. I'm going to have a drink before I fix us supper."

Peter clutched the bag even tighter then and she came back into the room in time to see him screw up his mouth at the feel of it.

"You don't have to be that careful," she laughed. "It's not that important."

He put one foot very carefully after another as he went down the steps because he was trying to think. He knew that if he thought hard enough the hurt would go away. It was just that everything was different. It was different about staying upstairs because she was not his mother so maybe the whiskey would be different too. He was sure of it. She had said that it was not important. But she had not noticed the bed. He was hungry when he reached the bottom step. He went into the kitchen and began to unwrap the packages to see what they were hav-

ing for dinner. He did not unwrap the brown package.

Tommy stood at the door and watched him go down the steps with almost a sense of loss. She shook her head and picked up the suitcase with heavy arms. Something was wrong but she did not know what. She supposed it did not really matter. She threw the suitcase up on the bed with a conscious effort. She was glad that the bed had come. She could sleep comfortably tonight and be of some use at work tomorrow. She opened the suitcase swiftly and began to unpack. It was not until her eye caught the contrast of her yellow shirt against the green of the spread that Tommy noticed that the bed had been made. For a moment she could push the thought out of her mind. Of course the bed was made, wasn't her bed always made? And then the thought of Peter washed up from the stairs that he had descended so slowly and she was ashamed.

She undressed as quickly as her racing thoughts would permit. While she slipped into the slacks and shirt that she had worn the day before, all the things that had gone wrong clicked into place, her mood, the bed, the whiskey—for some reason the whiskey—and then they were all jumbled together again, as twisted and confused at the pile of clothes she had thrown on the floor because it had not mattered. And the thought made her pick up the clothes and arrange them with gentle hands on the bed because suddenly and with frightening strength it mattered very much.

She went downstairs pausing at the landing to light a cigarette and search the room for the reassurance of Peter's presence. He was in the kitchen. She could see him sitting on the high wooden stool staring without motion at the neat stack of food before him. He was hungry and it was getting dark. He found the lantern and a match and some of the shadows went away. He saw her on the landing and wished that she were not in the dark. It was lonely in the dark.

"I'm hungry. Are we going to have hamburgers for supper?"

She came into the kitchen and turned up the light. "I guess you are hungry. It's late. I'll skip my drink and we'll get to work on this. I hope you can cook as well as you can make a bed. I'm not so good at either one."

Peter laughed then. "I'll bet you're kidding me. I can make a bed good because I do it a lot at home. I don't cook much. Just when mother can't."

"Your mother sick?" She handed him the can opener and the baked beans. He turned away from the light to rest the can on the sink.

"Sort of, sometimes," he said.

"She doesn't mind you staying over here late like this, does she?"

"She doesn't care." He didn't mean to lie. And she really didn't care. She didn't worry about it anyway. She just got mad about it sometimes, like today.

"It's turning cool. The breeze has come up. It was hot in town today." Always talk about the weather, she thought. She wondered if that applied to the case. She could not talk about clothes or whiskey or families. What was there left? And she was surprised at the number of things that there were left to talk about.

"Do you like music, Peter?" He did not know. They would find out tonight. They would play some of her favorite music while they ate.

Peter took the tablecloth and the silver into the other room to set the table while she put the hamburgers on to cook. While they called back and forth about where the card table and the napkins and the record player were, he wondered why cooking dinner at home was not this much fun. Maybe because he was so hungry and the food smelled so good. He went to the dock door and opened it. The sun was almost gone and it made the water a bloody color and it frightened him, but he liked it.

"Tommy, come look." He ran halfway across the room.

"What's the matter?"

"The sun. The sun. It's. . ." He looked back at the doorway. "Come look."

She came and stood beside him at the door and watched the blood drain out of the bay, leaving a cool death.

"I like it too," she said, and then it was time to eat.

After they had eaten they went out on the dock. The music and the licking of the water were one sound and they did not talk because of it. Peter lay on his back and felt the ridges where the boards were and where the boards weren't and watched the small red light of Tommy's cigarette as it shifted out and away and back again to the boat post where she was leaning. The light and the music and the quiet gave him a funny feeling, lonely sort of, but

he did not want to talk. The record ended and Tommy shifted easily to her feet. "I am going to paint the floor green," she said.

He got up and followed her into the house. "When do we start?"

"Next week, when I get back."

"You're going away again?"

"Business."

"Tomorrow?"

"No, Saturday." New York is a wonderful place, she told herself. You like it there. Lots of people. Night life. Gay crowds.

"Business," he said.

They cleared the table and stacked the dishes in the sink. Peter washed and Tommy dried.

"You need some place to put them."

"Can you reach this shelf?"

They measured Peter beside the cabinet and the dishes were put away. The next job was the big room with all the furniture and all the boxes that had to be unpacked and Tommy did not think she could do it tonight.

"Now," he said. When they were through it was not just a room any more. It was theirs and they each chose a chair and sat down to remember the laughter and the dust and the discovery of it all. Tommy was very tired and Peter yawned with his face turned away. But she saw it.

"You've got to go home and go to bed."

"It's too early to go back. Can't I stay awhile longer?"

"No. I'm going to sweep and go to bed myself, unless you want to do it tomorrow when you come."

"Okay." He put on his jacket and took a long time to find the zipper. "Can I play the record?"

"Sure. You know how to work it now. Go on. You need your sleep. You've got a lot of growing to do yet." She put a hand on his shoulder to give him a little push toward the stairs, but the push did not come.

"Well. Goodnight."

"Goodnight. You'll be here tomorrow night." It was not a question. She did not exactly know what it was.

"Yes Ma'am." He went upstairs, wondering why he had not called her Tommy. He had called her Tommy before. He turned on the light so that he could see the bank steps. They were very steep and very long and he was tired. He turned and put his foot back on the top step.

"Goodnight, Tommy." And he shut the door behind him.

Tommy looked at the tired smile in the mirror in front of her when she heard him call. She must be very tired. She had never seen her smile quite like that before. She turned out the bathroom light and walked in the dark to the patch of grayness that came in the door. I am glad I bought this house, she thought. It is what I have always wanted. There

was something else too, but she shut the door and went upstairs to bed.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was too cold to move down to the shore they had said. Her mother was worried about her catching cold and not eating right and being all alone down there. But the winter had been long and crowded and she did not mind being alone. The house was all green and tan and the summer had made it home to her. She and Peter had worked together to make it exactly what they had wanted it to be. It seemed strange now that there was someone else who wanted the same things that she did. Most of their letters to each other were about the house, about all the things that were left for them to do because the summer had been too short.

She hoped that he would be there tonight. She had written him that she was coming but she could not ask him to come.

It had been a long winter.

The drive was long, too, and it no longer felt familiar to her. The road stretched its length bleakly in the cold gray afternoon and seemed by its very emptiness to challenge her. She had seen it before like this. In the middle of the winter she had gone down to the house for a weekend because she had not had to work. Peter had not been there. He was in school in town. She had not gone again. It was too cold.

She began to look for all the familiar landmarks. The fishhouse where she had gotten bait for the fishing trip when she had gotten so sunburned and Peter had to cook supper and it was good but she could not eat and he understood—it was there but it was closed. The sign was faded and she drove faster because suddenly this drive depressed her.

She tried to remember Peter as she had seen him on the last night in the country but only the colors came through. The brownness of him against the green floor and the white quiet smile when he remembered to smile. It had been a strained evening, their good-by sitting between them muffling into silence all the things they should have said. She had supposed that it was because Peter was too young that he did not talk much. There was no excuse for her. Only that it was too late. They did not have to talk that night to understand. They had both been miserable and they had both known it. Peter had left early with a promise to look after himself and the house and to write. She had not locked the house when she had left the next morning. What was left inside no one could take.

The turnoff surprised her and cut into her thoughts. It had come too soon. She turned the car sharply and kept her hands clenched on the steering wheel. The road held her attention then and it was all green and brown and white. She parked the car and began to unload her bags. She did not look toward the stairway. She wanted him to be there but she could not look for him.

Peter stood at the top of the stairs and watched the car pull to a stop on the road. He saw her get out of the car but she did not look toward him. He started to call out to her and then he didn't. There was no hurry. He had waited here all day yesterday too because she had not known just when she could come. He had started to wait in the house, but it was dark and lonely in the house now, it had been that way all winter. He had not gone there much in the winter. Just to see that everything was all right. He guessed he knew now why they called places like this summer homes. It was because they were only homes in the summer.

She was coming down the road now and he could not wait any longer. He began to run, calling her name over and over again until it did not sound like Tommy any more, but it sounded right.

Tommy heard him call and put down the suitcase that she was carrying before she looked up. Then she started to run too, without thinking about how silly it was and then they were there on the cliff with their arms wrapped around each other.

"You've gotten so tall," she said.

"You should have come back sooner. All your suntan is gone." And he laughed again and buried his head in her coat. She laughed too, because no matter how cold it was, it was summer again.

They carried her things down the steps and into the house. It was stuffy inside and they went from room to room opening the shutters and the windows. Peter went downstairs first and Tommy dumped the last of her packages on the bed and began to throw on the old slacks and shirt that still hung in the corner. She had to hurry because there were so many things that had to be done before it was dark. Everything must be settled by dark so that they could relax after supper.

"Can I go out and look at the boat before supper?" Peter called up the stairwell. "I won't take long."

"Put on something warm. It's getting cold now. And bring in the lantern if it's out there."

"Yes, Ma'am."

Tommy smiled as she poked through the boxes to find their supper and remembered the boat that Peter had wanted and that she had been so convinced that she needed. They would have to scrape it and paint it early so that they could fish on the first good day. She wondered when Peter got out of school. They would have to make some special plan for that day. She picked up the food package and went downstairs.

The dock door was open and the room was cold, but it smelled fresh and briny. She saw that Peter had swept and dusted it so that they would not have to do it tonight. She looked in the corner for the record machine and set it up. She started to leaf through the records when Peter tumbled in the door, laughing and swinging the lantern and bubbling with the news of the boat's condition.

"It needs paint," he said.

"What color?"

"White with green trim."

"We'll have to scrape it, and that's a job. Do you want one hamburger or two?"

"Two. And I'll scrape. It's fun."

"We'll scrape together, my friend. Share and share alike." She ruffled his hair and went into the kitchen. Peter put his favorite record on the machine and turned it up loud so that he could hear it when he was in the kitchen. He had not heard it since the summer, but the tune had run through his head all winter long. He had never remembered a song that well before. He went in to help with supper. He was very hungry.

They ate supper on the little table in the room where the music was. The door was closed, but the wind had risen and it took the place of the water sounds. Peter thought that winter in this house would have been nice too. He did not mind the wind and the dark any more.

"I won't be out of school for a month yet. I wish it was sooner."

"What do you want to do then?"

"Come over here. I've got a lot to do. The boat will have to be first, I guess."

"Won't you have a lot to do at home too?" He did not seem to mind her asking about home any more. He did not say anything about it. He just didn't mind.

"Daddy will be home for awhile. It's his vacation time."

Tommy got up and turned the record over. "Your father will want to see a lot of you won't he? He doesn't get to see much of you when he's working."

"He'll be with mother all the time. He says she needs him." Sometimes he wondered why his mother needed his father around. He wasn't there much and he couldn't cook very well or make a hospital corner, but he was nice and Peter liked it when he was home.

"Would you want to come to town with me the day after you get out of school?" She turned in time to see the light come into his eyes before his nod shook it out.

"Yes," he said. He had not been to town for a long time just for fun. His father had taken him to the dentist once last year, but they had not stayed because his mother was waiting for them to come home. And he wanted to see the store where Tommy worked. He knew all about her work and he wanted

to see the warehouse and the trucks and the people that she talked about.

"There won't be much to do and you'll have to entertain yourself for awhile, but we'll have lunch together and I'll take the afternoon off so we can go to the movies if you want to."

Peter felt the excitement ripple through him and he jumped up from the floor. "Let's go soon," he said.

"The day that you get out of school," she said. She was glad that she had not been sitting down. The idea made her restless too. They would be surprised when she took Peter in to meet them. They did not know about him.

"I'll have to write a note to your mother and ask if you can go."

Peter looked around the room for his sweater. It was cold and he would shiver in a minute and he did not want Tommy to think that he was afraid that his mother would not let him go. She would not care. She just never went because she did not feel like it. He did not mind any more because he would rather go to the store with Tommy.

"We'd better ask if you can spend the night over here that night so we can start early. Can't be late for work."

"Okay. She'll let me."

Tommy found the record that she wanted and held it up.

"This?" she asked.

"Uh-huh."

They listened to the sound of the quiet music and the sound of the wind that was like the water and they did not want to talk. The smoke that curled up from Tommy's cigarette drew the corners of the room in close and Peter was glad the floor was green because he could pretend that it was grass and grass grew in the summer. It was almost summer now. He never felt this way except in the summer.

"Time for you to go home."

"Are you going to be here tomorrow?"

"I'll be here 'til Sunday night."

"Can I come by tomorrow after school?"

"You don't have to ask any more. Just come. We've got lots of planning to do for our day in town."

"The house needs cleaning too."

"Slavedriver," she laughed and put her arm around his shoulders to walk him to the steps.



"Goodnight." He leaned for a minute against her and then went up the steps without looking back. It was a long walk to his house and it was cold and he would have to hurry.

Tommy went into the kitchen and stacked the dishes that they had left because it was a special occasion. Then she put on her jacket and went out on the dock. It was strangely quiet on the water tonight. There were no water sounds and the crickets had not started yet. She did not like it alone here at this time of year. It was too cold to stay long and she went inside where the light was.

\* \* \* \* \*

Tommy got no answer from the note that she had written to Mrs. Johnston. She had not really expected any. She wondered if Peter's mother was as bad as the people around here had told her. Or maybe she didn't care. Anyway, Peter came. He had just appeared with his toothbrush in his hand. He said that he could stay the night.

"We're still going tomorrow, aren't we?"

"Sure. Put your toothbrush in the bathroom. You can sleep down here if you like."

Peter had never slept in a room with a green floor before, or in a bed that was over the water. He wondered if it would rock like a boat. But Tommy would have told him if it did. After she left him he waited until it was quiet upstairs and then he opened the dock door softly. He would sit awhile and watch the water. That's what Tommy did when she was here alone. She had told him about the cricket sounds and the fireflies and the way the water sound was different when you were alone. He watched the fireflies and played catch with them. He closed his eyes very hard and then opened them in time to see the next blink. Sometimes he missed and he was getting sleepy and his eyes would not open fast enough and there weren't enough fireflies anyway. He thought about tomorrow and went to bed.

Tommy did not talk much to him as they drove into town, but he did not mind. She drove fast and he liked that. He would just catch a glimpse at something or someplace he liked and then it would be gone, but there was always something better coming toward them. Sometimes he pointed things out to Tommy, and she said yes she knew and somehow he knew that she did, so it did not matter that she didn't have time to look.

"Have you got the list?"

"I haven't got to get much." His mother had not wanted anything. She had sounded funny when she had said that she didn't want him to get her anything. He guessed he wouldn't. He knew what he was going to get for Tommy though. But it was a secret and he must not think about it or he would say it out loud.

"I've got some shopping that you can do for me. Do you think that you can get around all right? I'll be a little busy this morning."

"I can ask somebody."

She parked the car and they walked through the alley to the store. He had never seen a store so empty. It was quiet, a busy kind of quiet with people saying good morning with serious faces and looking at papers and sometimes laughing, but not out loud. They went up to the second floor. This was Tommy's floor. He wanted to know every corner of it, but he didn't have time to ask her about what things were before the others were there.

"Hi, boss. Is this it?" That must be Mary Jane. She was blond and pretty. Tommy had told him about her and about the little French girl.

"This is Peter, girls. Peter, this is the crew. They don't work hard and they're not very smart, but they are fairly nice people."

They all laughed and Peter did not feel shy any more. Maybe it was because he was wearing his blue suit. He always felt good in his blue suit. And besides these were Tommy's friends and he was not shy with her.

Peter did not know who the man was who came up to them then. He started talking to Tommy, only he called her Miss Thompson and he had a funny smile. Peter did not like him.

"And who is this little man? I didn't know you had a son, Miss Thompson." Tommy smiled but it was a funny smile too.

"You know I'm not married Mr. Judson. Isn't that someone over there who wants you?"

"Oh, then it's not your son."

"No, Peter isn't my son." Peter wished that she had said something else. What he was, not just what he wasn't. She didn't look at him when she introduced him to someone else. He did not hear the name. He only heard her say, "My friend Peter." And that didn't sound right either. It was cold on the second floor. It must be the air conditioning that Tommy had told him about. It was not warm like it was outside.

"Well, here's my list and some money. The market is the place we passed on the way down. Get what you want for supper." She had to get to work. She really should have had better sense than to bring him to town on one of her busy days. She would have to make time to do something with him this afternoon. She hoped that he would be all right. This should be a holiday for him. She wanted to ruffle his hair and tell him that she would have more time for him later, but she couldn't do that. She had said that he was not her son. She could not remember ever having said that before. She told one of the girls to show him how to get out of the store and went back to her office. She wished that Mr. Judson would turn on the lights earlier in this place. It was too dark. That was his job anyway.

Peter felt very important shopping for Tommy and the house in the market. He had shopped for his mother plenty of times but that was over the phone. This way made him feel like they belonged to him. Like it was his house too. He got cold cuts for supper

because Tommy had made potato salad. He got salami, too. He did not like salami, but she did, and he could eat the cheese.

It took him a long time to find the present for Tommy. There were so many scarves and so many stores, but he knew that he would know when he saw it. It was almost lunch time when he found it. It was green, the color of the floor and there were white and tan things in it. He did not know what they were but they were the right color and the scarf was soft and slippery. He felt it a long time before he bought it, just to make sure. Then he was late and he had to run back to the store. Tommy was putting on her hat when he went into the office. He giggled a little because he had never seen her in a hat before.

"Well, you just made it. You got everything you wanted?"

"Everything," he said. And he could not help smiling and then he made himself stop because it was still a secret.

"Good. Let's go."

"Where are we going to eat?"

"Upstairs in the restaurant. At the buyer's table. They are all women and they all want to meet you. Don't be shy. They just sound like they bite."

She wished that she hadn't said that. He would think that she was nervous about taking him up there. As if she wasn't proud of him. It wasn't that. She didn't know what it was. Everything would be all right. She was just tired.

They were all there when they got upstairs. Peter stood on one foot as he was introduced halfway around the table, and then he shifted because that foot was tired. They sat down and the others started to ask him questions. Like how old he was and what grade was he in at school and where did he live and all those things. He was glad that Tommy had told him that they did not bite.

"Tommy, he's the spittin' image of you. Where on earth did you find him?"

"He found me." She looked at the menu but she wasn't very hungry. Just a sandwich.

"You mean he isn't your son?" She had forgotten that they knew so little about her. They all laughed. They knew that much anyway.

"Do I look like a mother?"

They laughed again and it was too loud. They were saying no. There was so much noise at the table and Peter knew that she would not hear him even if he was saying yes.

Tommy asked him what he wanted to eat. He was not hungry any more.

After lunch they went to the movies. It was Peter's favorite comic team and he laughed a lot when he thought about it. Tommy did not laugh much. She had said that she liked Abbot and Costello, too, but he guessed she didn't after all. He was glad when the movie was over. He was tired of

sitting. It was sort of like sitting alone in the dark only he didn't like to do that here. It wasn't the same as at the house.

He told her what he had gotten for supper and she said that was all right. He was worried. Maybe she didn't like salami any more.

"And I've got a surprise for you, too."

"That's nice. What is it?"

"After supper."

"All right."

He wished that she had asked him about it some more. It was not as much fun to have a secret when nobody wanted to know it. They didn't talk any

more on the way home. When Peter got out of the car he looked down at his suit to make sure that he had not spilled anything on it. There was nothing there. He had thought maybe that was what was wrong, but there was nothing there.

"Did you make your bed this morning?"

"Un-unh."

"Well, you do that and I'm going to fix a drink."

"Aren't you going to change your clothes?"

"No. I guess not."

Peter took off his coat and straightened the room and then went in to help with supper. Tommy hadn't started yet. She was just sitting on the little stool with a glass in her hand staring at it. He started to leave. There was something he had forgotten upstairs.

"You hungry?"

"Some."

"Let's eat." She was in a hurry then. She must want to know what the surprise is after all.

He had been right about the salami. She did not eat any.

"Do you want to put on some music?" It was the right time. It was getting dark and cool and he wanted to have the music playing when he gave her the scarf. All of the best times had music.

"If you want to."

He put on his favorite record. The one that sounded like the water.

"Are you ready for your surprise?"

"What is this great surprise anyhow?"

"You'll see. Wait a minute." He ran up the stairs and got the scarf out of his pocket. He wished that he had gotten it wrapped up with a bow, but there hadn't been time. He looked at it slowly before he folded it again. She would like to have it. It was green. He ran down the steps too, and did not stop running until he had put it in her hands.

"Here it is."

She unfolded the scarf and saw the green and the white and the tan and then they were all one color.



*polly swope*

"It's lovely, Peter. Your mother will like it, I know."

He thought, I do not understand. This has been a long day and I have done a lot of things and I do not understand. But he did. She did not like the scarf. She thought he had bought it for his mother.

"But it's not for my mother. It's for you. See the color. It's green. I thought green was your favorite color."

I've hurt him, she thought. I didn't ever want to hurt him and I have. It will never be right again after today.

"I'm sorry, Peter. I didn't understand. Thank you, and you were right, green is my favorite color. What did you get for your mother?"

"Nothing. She said she didn't want anything, so I didn't get her anything."

"You shouldn't have gotten something for me and not for your mother."

"Why? You're different. I wanted to get you the scarf. I wanted to." He did not want to cry. She thought he was a grown up boy and he could not cry.

"She's your mother, Peter. It's because she's your mother."

"But how about you?"

Tommy put the scarf very carefully in his hand. She did not want to look at it any more. It was green.

"I'm not your mother."

He took the scarf. Not because he wanted to, but if that was what she wanted, he would take it back.

She wanted him to give it to his mother, but he could not. His mother did not like green.

Tommy watched him put the scarf into his pocket and felt bare and cold as if she should be wearing it in this room. She should be able to explain to him. She should tell him that she did not want him to give it to his mother, but she could not. Because she was not his mother.

"I'd better go now. She'll be waiting to see if I'm home."

"All right."

"I had a nice time. Thank you for taking me."

"You're welcome, Peter. I enjoyed it."

The record was finished and it made a rough sound over and over until he turned it off.

"I won't be here tomorrow. I have to stay in town for supper."

"All right." He guessed it was all right. He didn't know. He did not understand, but it was all right. He went upstairs and said goodnight from there. She had not moved from the center of the floor and she did not answer him. She probably hadn't heard. He wondered where he should put the scarf. His mother didn't like green.

Tommy heard the call and the slam of the door and did not move. She wanted a cigarette but the pack was upstairs. She went out on the dock and stood by the boat post. It was getting cold. She should get a sweater, but she did not move. It did not matter really.

## Book Review

(Continued from Page 14)

which destroy our knowledge of each other—and death is the inacceptance of the masks. It is not the people who kill each other; it is the instability that comes from assuming the masks. Mr. Macauley has precluded the book with a quotation from St. Albans, ending: 'Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds, vaine opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a num-

ber of men poore shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves?' This is the book's question—and there is given no answer. It is a frighteningly perceptive study that has grown out of our society, where there is prevalent the shaky belief in the disguise—retreating from that which the day's light reveals.

—TERRILL SCHUKRAFT

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## from the editor's desk . . .

. . . we are clearing away the debris—the dozens of galleys, the dummy copy, the make-up notes—that goes into the making of another CORADDI. We *thought* we had trouble with the fall issue. Remember those hand-corrected copies and those missing lines from one of the poems? But we feel even more as if we should border this issue in black. From it is missing one of the finest stories we have encountered in many years of CORADDI experience, Arlene Croce's "The Tender Grapes." Make-up difficulties kept it out of this edition, but we promise that you will be seeing it in one of the next two issues of the magazine. Putting our disappointment at not being able to give you all of the material chosen for this issue aside, we can take pride in sending you this blue, black and white valentine.

We are publishing a number of old and familiar CORADDI contributors in the Winter issue—Jarrad Denhard, a sophomore, makes her third appearance in the magazine with "Green Was the Color." As always, we find that Denhard sensitivity underscoring every word. This new story concerns the relationship between a woman and a child, and the conflicts which marred it. Doris Waugh Bett's story, "The Sword," is also a CORADDI third. "A Crepe for Her Brother" of Arts Forum fame last year was followed by the appearance of "Yesterday Was the Last Time" in the summer issue. "The Sword" is about a father and a son and the tragedy of their inability to reach and understand each other. Doris, a junior, tells the story from the son's point of view.

In "Without Wings" Montae Imbt, who has been publishing in CORADDI for three years, gives us a trilogy of poems unified by a central theme and a central image. "The Resolution," Janet Fyne's first CORADDI poem . . . we do remember her story of two years ago . . . is a difficult but masterful presentation of the "death-struggle" between certainty and doubt, and the poet's resolution of that conflict. Arlene Croce's unforgettable poems in the fall issue find a worthy successor in the poem we publish in this issue, "American Primitive."

Phyllis Birkby follows up her fall issue contribution with a poem of vivid, imaginative imagery. Barbara Maclellan, another CORADDI old-timer, adds one of her poems, and Adrienne Stuhl, a newcomer, presents one of hers to help us complete our poetry section.

Again we are indebted to Terry Schukraft for services beyond the call of duty. Her review of Mr. Robie Macauley's new novel, *The Disguises of Love*, will, in case you have missed the many reviews in newspapers and magazines, awaken you to the talent and renown which abounds on our campus. *Totem Pole's* three blocks have ceased traveling, criticising, and preaching long enough to adjust their various pairs of hornrims and consider the problem of modern poetry. We enjoyed doing the feature, and we hope it will answer one of two of those questions which raise your eyebrows when you view CORADDI's center section.

And now we unofficially say farewell. Although we do not formally turn CORADDI over to the new staff until after the Arts Forum edition has gone to press, this will be our last chance to chat with you about the magazine from behind the editor's desk. At Pre-School Conference last fall, we spoke to the faculty and students assembled there about our plans for CORADDI and about how we hoped to make it "a magazine of which Woman's College could be proud." As we look back on the past three issues, we honestly cannot estimate to what extent that goal has been achieved. Perhaps the very fact that we have tried to make CORADDI a praise-worthy part of this campus constitutes our real claim to achievement.

G. H.



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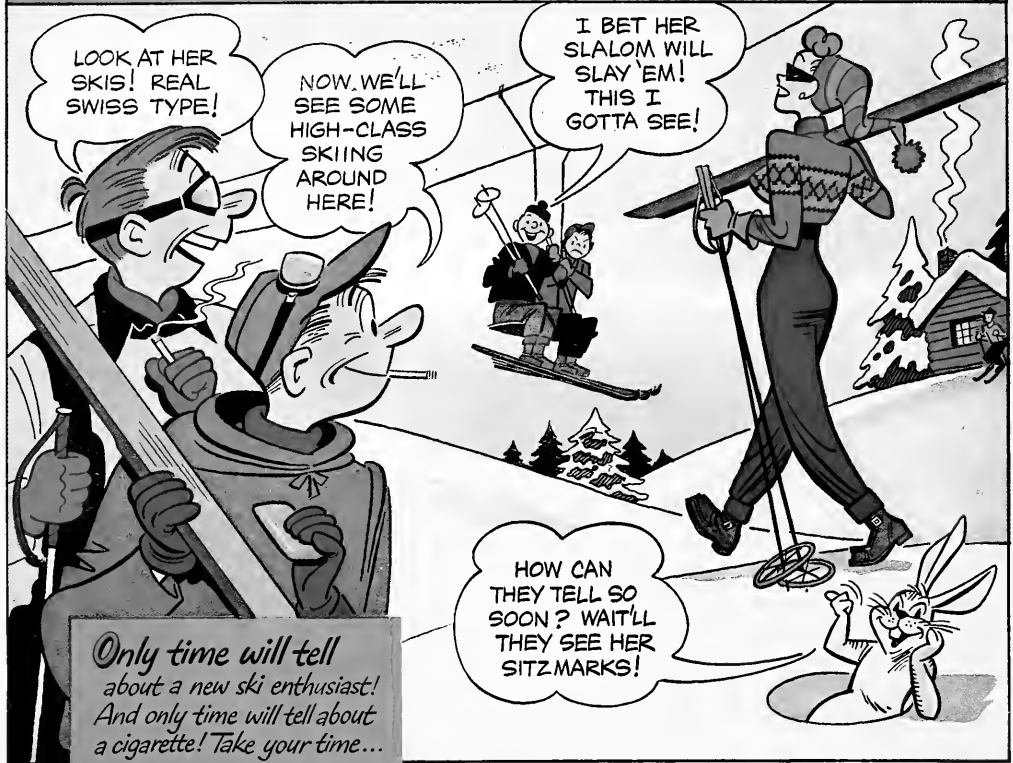
## The Corner

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...*But only Time will Tell*.....



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