Manuscript

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Dreams

By JAMES E. CARTER

They told you dreams were foolish?
Do not believe them!
For dreams are the highways on which life travels.
You have a dream!
Then you can travel far.

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The Serpent

By ARTHUR MADSON

Once upon a time, many years ago, there lived a lad by the name of Herbert Olson. Now, this Herbie was a personable fellow, but he had one rather outstanding weakness—he was very impressionable.

One day, as he was paging through a nature magazine, reading beneath all the pictures and laughing at all the jokes, a story title caught his left eye. "How to Make Friends With a Snake" it said. "Aha," thought Herbie, "Herbert Olson, the snake's friend." And forthwith he bent all his energies upon the mastery of the article.

Bright and early the next afternoon, Herbie went out searching for a snake. He wanted to try out his new approach before he forgot it. Seeing a suspicious movement in the grass, Herbie immediately jumped to the conclusion that it betokened the presence of what he was looking for—a snake. And he was right, it was a snake, a little, harmless, 14 incher.

"Let's see, now, I must follow directions exactly," mused Herbie. Thinking hard, he recalled the words of the article. "First you must make yourself as small as the snake. Remember, the poor snake is very close to the ground, and looking up at you as he must makes you seem an enormous giant." So Herbie lay down upon the ground (to make himself small) and stretched out his hand, palm downward, remaining perfectly immobile, as per instructions. According to the article, the snake, after a few minutes, would advance to the outstretched hand and sniff it. Then, after thus ascertaining his safety, the snake might even allow himself to be caressed. But the snake, after coolly surveying Herbie, stuck out his tongue and glided swiftly away.

Herbie was outraged. No snake was going to snub Herbert Olson and live to tell about it. Seizing a stick, he prepared to beat the snake's brains out, but, alas, he couldn't find him.

Poor Herbie. He became quite embittered toward all snakes. His early manhood was spent in the fruitless, neurotic pursuit of snakes. But today Herbert Olson is a happy, well-adjusted, middle-aged member of his community. He is vice-president of the school board and also vice-president of the local chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Offer

By WILLIAM A. LOGAN

He smiled, and offered me death,
I refused, for how could death be best?
With that he nodded and sipped his wine
While I felt the pumping within my breast
Which parted death and life.
I thought of that,—of hate, fear, and war;
I thought of his offer,
And reconsidered once more.
With my last sober reply
He smiled again, satisfied,
And slowly sipped his cold, black wine
As the pumping within me—died.

I Believe In Fairies

By CECILY SHERK

I believe in fairies
For I've been to fairyland
And I've seen the lovely ladies
And their lovers holding hands
About the fairy campfires.
If you think that I am joking
And are calling me a liar . . . .
Then listen to the things
I have to say, for I have seen them
Dancing with grace so wondrous fair,
Their bodies were like phantoms
Afloat upon the air.
And some were dressed in yellows
And some were wearing greens
And their parasols were rainbows
And their hats of minty creams.
And they laughed at cloudy weather
And they smiled at all our fears
And they taught us to remember
That although we have our tears
It's just a way of washing out
Our habits old and worn,

For every tear that's flowing
Brings the freshness of the morn.
Oh, I believe in fairies
For I've been to fairyland,
And if you call me liar
Then I'll take you by the hand
And show you all the lovely
Things. There's a little fairy ocean
And a little fairy sea,
And there's magic and a portion
Of love for you and me
If we learn to see the deepness
And the clearness of that sea.

Yes, I believe in fairies
For I've been to fairyland.
I've seen the common beauties
Of the sun, the trees, the sand,
The ocean, and the sea
Turned golden by the happiness
Of folks like you and me . . .
(Except they're fairies
And they live in fairyland.)
They have a little fairy ocean
And a little fairy sea
And there's magic and a portion
Of love for you and me
If we learn to see the deepness
And the clearness of that sea.

Spring Rain

By VESTA ANNE FELLER

Because it is April and because April comes down the year to be in spring—because it is April and spring—I am thinking these thoughts on paper. I am thinking sad and happy thoughts which, mixed together, leave a dull sensation of half forgotten pain and half remembered happiness.

I see spring come and if I had the power to hold it back I would—to hold the buds from coming green and living into leaves.

Spring is sad and people cry.

Lilacs make them cry—or looking through a soft wind to a sky of stars.

If I could cut a paper April I would cut it out of spring rain and lilacs and grass and then I would cut a star into the sky—an April star that would shine like spring rain.

And Ever More Shall Be

By ALLEN CARTER BROWN

The two ladies entered the church.

"My, ain't it grand," said Mrs. Barks.

"Land, yes. All them colored windows and everything sure is pretty," replied Mrs. Watkins.

The ladies walked down the center aisle. "Sure is crowded this morning," commented Mrs. Barks. "I reckon we'll hafta sit down front." She giggled.

Mrs. Watkins nodded. They walked to the front of the church and settled themselves in the second pew. Mrs. Barks grunted as she pulled off her coat. Then she leaned over to her companion and said, "You must be awful proud of him, Mrs. Watkins."

"Oh, indeed I am. We ain't never had a preacher in the family before now. Johnny'll make a good one." She paused a moment and looked for a familiar face in the congregation. "Gran'maw said she was a comin' today, but I don't see hide nor hair of her yit. Guess it is kinda early, though, the organ ain't started up yit." She folded her blue-boned hands in her lap.

Mrs. Barks whispered hoarsely, "My, you must be awful proud to have 'em make your son a preacher. What all do they do, anyhow?

"I don't know, I'm sure. Johnny never said. He just said they was supposed to do it to him today." Mrs. Watkins primly straightened her narrow, bony shoulders. "I guess I really am mighty proud of him. We ain't never had a preacher in the family before, you know."

"Well, you sure did a good job of raisin' that boy. Not many boys want to be parsons."

"I guess I've answered the Lord's request, all right." Mrs. Watkins bowed her head slightly. "I thank you, Lord, for your help." Then she whispered again to Mrs. Barks. "When Johnny was born, you know, the preacher he come to sit with me. He was awful nice to me; he brung me candy and everything. One day he says to me, 'Minnie,' says he, 'You got a fine boy there. I sure hope you raise him like God says to do.' And I asked him what he meant, and he

says, 'You just raise that boy like he was a goin' to be a parson,' says he. And I heered the Lord's word, and I done it, but of course the Lord's done helped me a lot."

"Why, Mrs. Watkins," exclaimed Mrs. Barks, "I didn't have no idea all that happened."

"Oh, my yes. But I can't take all the credit. The good Lord's done helped me a lot, and Johnny's had to work awful hard, studying and all that."

"You mean the Lord's really come down and helped you?"

"Gracious, yes!"

"How?"

"Why He gave Johnny enough sense to see that I was usually right." Mrs. Watkins turned and looked over the congregation again. "I sure wish Gran'maw would hurry and git here. They's gonna start pretty soon."

"Oh, she'll git here all right." the organ started playing softly. The two ladies listened for a moment before resuming their conversation. Mrs. Barks remarked, "I sure do hope Johnny'll be happy when he's a preacher." She bit her lip. She shouldn't have said that.

" 'Course he'll be happy. Who says we won't?" Mrs. Watkins' voice trembled and faltered. "There's no reason why he won't be happy. It's the will of the Lord. God done told me Hisself through the parson."

"Now, now, Mrs. Watkins. I wasn't sayin' that he wasn't goin' to be happy. I just heered Amy Castrow sayin' the other day that Johnny was always a talkin' about flying. She says it sounds like Johnny would rather fly than preach."

"Drat that Amy Castrow and her dirty tongue! Tain't none of her business what my Johnny does with hisself."

Mrs. Barks leaned forward eagerly. "Well, is what she says true or hain't it?"

" 'Course it ain't true." Mrs. Watkins calmed her voice. "Johnny **did** have some foolish notions 'bout takin' up flying, but I done showed him that it was the Lord's will that he make hisself a preacher, and that's all there was to it."

"Oh, I see."

Mrs. Watkins elaborated. "This flying business is just like when Johnny wanted to start smoking. 'Johnny,' says I, 'there ain't one good preacher in these parts that smokes.' That's all there was to it.

He quit smokin' because he knowed he was gonna be a preacher."

Mrs. Barks bit her tongue. She had seen Johnny smoking right on Main Street last Saturday night.

"And there was the time when Johnny wanted to marry that Sarah Young, and her pa bein' what he is. I put my foot down. 'Johnny,' I said, 'a girl that comes from blood like that ain't no fittin' wife for a preacher.' So Johnny quit seein' Sarah. He knowed that I was right." Mrs. Watkins bowed her head. "Thanks, Lord, for giving my Johnny such good sense."

The minister stepped behind the lectern and pronounced in solemn tones, "We will rise and sing hymn number one." The organist pumped into the familiar tune of **Holy, Holy, Holy.** The two ladies lifter their squeaky sopranos in song.

Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God Almighty,

"I wonder what's come of Gran'maw!"

"Now, don't you worry about her."

Early in the morning
Our song shall rise to Thee.

There was a commotion in the back of the church. Mrs. Watkins turned and could see that her mother had just come in. Mrs. Watkins waved. Her mother scurried down the aisle. Mrs. Watkins composed herself and found her place in the hymnal.

Falling down before Thee.

Mrs. Watkins' mother squeezed into the pew. "Minnie, oh Minnie, it's terrible. He ain't gonna be a preacher. We ain't gonna have a preacher in the family after all."

"Gran'maw, what on earth you so het up about?"

"Johnny! He ain't gonna make a preacher outa hisself. He's done run away."

Mrs. Watkins sank into her seat. "No. It can't be."

"Yes it is. Him and that Sarah Young done run away together. He left a note, but it didn't say nothin' about where they was a headin'."

Mrs. Watkins stared at the church ceiling. "Lord, you done failed me. You done took away my boy's sense. I ain't got no use for you now, Lord. No use at all."

And ever more shall be.

Amen.

Poochie

By JAMES E. CARTER

We used the nicest box we could find. The lid didn't fit, but the old blanket made it soft inside. The outside of the box was freshly painted black. It wasn't quite dry—but we couldn't wait any longer. It had been a whole day and night.

All arrangements had been made. The flowers were picked and waiting. They were on the porch in a rusty old pail. The grave had been dug. We had taken great pains to make it square. The loose dirt was piled to one side. It made a nice curved mound. We had covered the mound with freshly mown grass. The marker had been cut from an old two by six. We had stuck it in the ground at the head of the grave. It was painted black. It had been lettered with pale green paint, the only kind we could find. The chickens were shut in the hen house. We didn't want them to scratch in the fresh grave.

We backed the coaster wagon up to the garage door. We loaded the box in and pulled it to the porch. Then we placed flowers around the box. We even piled some on the lid. We tied black paper to the wheels. We pulled the wagon to the chicken yard gate. We had to lift it over the board and into the chicken yard. We walked toward the grave. Slowly and carefully we lifted the box from the wagon. We set it down on the boards across the grave. After piling the flowers on it we backed off. We read from the Bible. It didn't matter what. Just so we used the Bible. We wished we had a preacher. The funeral had to be right. Then we sang a song. After the song we took the flowers off the box. We held onto the box while we removed the boards from under it. We lowered it into the grave. Then we broke a clump of dirt on it. We had seen the minister do that. The dirt made a noise as it fell on the box. With a shovel we patted the dirt in a hard mound over the grave. Then we piled flowers on the mound and covered it with a tub, so that the chickens wouldn't scratch. We let the chickens out of the hen house, pulled our wagon to the gate. We lifted it over the board, shut and hooked the gate, left the wagon alongside the garage. Then we walked over to the porch steps and sat down. We were quiet.

Escape

By LITTLETON S. ROBERTS, JR.

It had threatened rain all morning, and there was no one on the grounds to notice him as he sauntered down the hill. He knew the gate was open; he had watched the "wagon" leave earlier and had seen the driver in his haste ignore the lock. He shook with icy anguish, longed to break and run, but he clenched his teeth and forced the slow, deliberate step.

At the gate he stopped. The sickening quiver in his belly mounted, squeezed out in droplets from the rigid muscles of his face and neck. He tried but could not turn his head to look behind him. He stood looking through the bars and then he lost all consciousness as he grasped the handle, swung it back, and stepped outside . . .

He found himself walking briskly down the road. The air was fresh and clean; the city was ahead of him and there was no gate behind. He sang inside himself and listened as he walked to the thud, thud, thud of his shoes upon the road.

At the first bend he halted. His breath had quickened and his heart was beating lightly. A little yellow dog stood ahead in the road—stood and looked at him and grinned knowingly, as though it had been expecting him for some time. He snatched his eyes quickly from the little yellow dog and swung them onto the road beyond. He could see that it curved back farther on, so he struck out directly across the meadow rising to his left.

The meadow blazed with goldenrod and his hands trailing at his sides snatched off their tops as he stumbled along over clumps of weeds. Once his toe caught in the edge of a small hole and nearly tripped him. He stopped to examine it. It was a gopher hole. Or perhaps it had been dug by a mole—he could not be sure. He thought it would be pleasant to live there, to be a tiny, furry thing close to the wet, warm earth, secure beneath the high, wild goldenrod that stretched up to the sky.

At the other end of the meadow he met the road, and he could see the few hundred yards away where the pavement began. He looked about. The little yellow dog was nowhere in sight. It had finally begun to rain; slender needles touched him lightly on his

cheeks. The gray sky hung low, the dirty rolls of cloud turned and twisted as they swept along above him.

On the pavement he walked another ten minutes before he reached a bus stop. Here the world was sliced into huge squares and lots; a few houses squatted uncomfortably in the damp atmosphere. A black car flashed past him; for a moment he thought it was the "wagon" and he shivered, at once remembering the hill and the gate. He pulled the collar of his jacket up around his neck.

A bus was not long in coming. It rolled past his stop and swung about in the intersection. When it pulled up beside him the doors swooshed open punctiliously. He thanked them and climbed inside.

As soon as he sank into the leather seat he knew he was tired. He told himself so—that he was tired. His skin was drying; it stretched tight across his cheeks and itched. He felt his trouser pockets and found the crumpled pack of cigarettes.

But he was out of matches. He felt in all his pockets but there weren't any. The man across the aisle was smoking, and he considered how it might be to ask him for a light.

It was still raining, drizzling lightly against the gray cement. The inside of the bus was warm and the windows foggy. He rubbed a spot on the plate beside his head and watched the houses rumble by.

"MAY I SIT DOWN?" The voice roared loudly against his ear, snapped him suddenly high into the sky, left him abruptly and let him fall, turning and tumbling over and over past great white spires and brilliant flashes of light, and down into the leather seat once more. The big lady sat down, and meeting his eye, mechanically smiled and looked away.

He sat very still, head stiff and throbbing, and stared out the window to stop the rotation of his eyeballs.

After a long time the lady got off the bus. He unfolded slowly, so as not to crack the stiffness, and then he saw the theatre by the sidewalk.

When the bus stopped again he got up swiftly and went out the side. The punctilious doors swooshed shut behind him, and he realized that if he had had a tail they might have cut it off, swooshing like that.

He stood in front of the theatre a long time, studying each poster carefully. They were brightly colored, bearing half-familiar faces, the forms of things forgotten, things unknown. Then he noticed the girl in the booth intently watching him, her eyes growing small and shrewd, and he wheeled about and walked away.

He stopped again before a public library. He was very tired.

The skinny yellow dog stood in the center of the sidewalk looking at him lazily, and almost insolently, its grin a subtle twist in the corner of its mouth. He went inside the library.

The little gray woman behind the desk darted back and forth, back and forth, fluttering and rustling as she moved, her brightly painted mouth blazing from a sea of wrinkles. He looked into the room on the side. There were racks of magazines, and tables, and people sitting quietly about the tables reading magazines from the racks. Young in dazzling sweaters; old in tattered coats and withered faces staring hopelessly and helplessly about the room.

He went around the desk and down along a darkened passage between the shelves of books. At the end he came to a window and he sat on its long, wide ledge. He stared through the window and the drizzle outside at the dirty-wet-metallic-hued bricks in the alley below.

"What shall I do," he wondered; "what shall I ever do? Shall I run into the streets and turn my face up to the sky?"

The rain was coming harder; it splattered and popped on the windowpane; the droplets danced and poked their tongues at him.

The two girls slid softly along the next row over.

"And Bill never even called her up again . . !" Her whispered voice in the library rushed furiously through the shelves shaking the floor until it rolled out in the distance.

"Bill's a louse!" said the other.

A louse. He wondered idly what Bill-the-louse-who-never-called-again was like.

He found his way out and walked along the sloping sidewalk in the rain. The skinny little dog followed him, nuzzling its nose between his ankles as he walked. He turned and with all his might he kicked the little yellow dog in its mouth, bringing his heavy shoe up swiftly and solidly, scattering the broken teeth on the wet cement.

Shaking loosely, he started to walk away, then turned again to look. The little yellow dog was gone and the teeth were gone and there was nothing on the wet cement.

He walked on. A tall, massive church with gothic spires and arches rose slowly and inevitably from the earth beside him in the center of the city. There was a black iron railing all about its tiny court. He heard the wild free crying and looked up to see the pigeons flapping and wheeling dizzily above him, growing larger and shutting out the sky, and he wished, he longed to fly with them, screaming freely and soaring in widening circles, higher and higher, 'till he flew back through the gates and into timelessness once more.

Out of The Past

By MARY LOU BRAND

Beyond remembrance? No.
So stands he in the thick, deep mud
The long-horn's skull half-buried at his feet.
Beyond remembrance? No.

When the lean youth on pinto raced the wind
Within the land of beaver and the Great Spirit,
When the gold and grey of twilight brought
The villagers together in smoke-council,
The eager brave with paint-smeared , sinewed body
Would show his wisdom and his savage grace
In careful words and fiendish fire-dance;
Where the strange, soft chant of a beaded squaw
Drifted in the gliding wind
And brown hard hands offered the feathered pipe
To other brown hard hands before the yellow fire;
The roar of running herds of buffalo
Filled the inky night with rumbling mystery.
And there, in the forest-of-happiness, they met
A foe, ignorant of their simple, young-limbed life—
And flashing down the valleys, revenge-spears hurling,
They thundered to meet a mighty death, and crashed
To the mud, no longer theirs, but alien whites'.

So stands he in the thick, deep mud
The long-horn's skull half-buried at his feet.
Beyond remembrance? No.

Hands

By MERLE WOOD

A hand is a symbol of the soul,
It's deeds are cruel or kind.
A hand is a synopsis of a life,
It is the servant of the mind.

Biology Speciman

By WILLIAM A. LOGAN

When mankind has conquered all,
And no worldly mystery is left to fall
To the relentless searching-out and onslaught
Of merciless scientific thought,
When work is done and man settles back with a sigh,
Will our God then pull back the clouds in the sky,
And say in a voice of hopelessness,
"The experiment has ended. Now clear away this mess?"

Lost: A Badly Used Soul

By MERLE WOOD

She is coming now. I know for I feel no more pain. There's a lightness to my feeling; a certain relief. There'll be no more laughter or joy or happiness; no more struggle or sorrow. There'll be heaven or hell.

Everything is quiet. It's more quiet than I ever thought death could be. She'll soon be here. I think I can hear her light step far away in this oppressive quiet. Yes I'm sure! The noise of those bony feet is coming from no particular direction; rather it's coming from all the deep corners in the vague gloom of my soul. Over there her shining eyes glow like tiny pinpoints of intense fire. I know she's drawing nearer for the glow is becoming brighter.

The sound of her footsteps is growing to a deafening thunder, a haunting roar in the stifling black quiet of death.

Now I feel a gripping fear steal over me. There's no messenger of God with this woman of death, this bride of Satan! No pure angel in effervescent white beside the beast that will claim me. The fear of hell itself is in me.

Like a speedy movie I judge my own life. Many kind deeds pass before the vision of my enraged mind. I know my eyes are hot with hate and fear. My breath is cascading from my pounding breast. My heart beats with a ferocity that makes my veins surge as though to burst.

I remember many kind deeds; but there are the other things

too. Little things I thought I'd forgotten. Little deeds of daring done in a boisterous mood. Thievery and hate; murder and arson. And now hell and damnation! The reward was mine, but this slowly advancing beast would reap the harvest; another inmate for pergatory's flames.

Now she draws close enough for me to see her vicious smile. The loathsome leer is worse than death should be. Her enflamed ruby orbs cast a glow over those appalling features.

The black shroud of her hood frames the face of death. The black cloak of her smock covers ancient bones.

Now the talon of white terror beckons to me. "No! I won't go! No. never!" Does that smile widen on your face witch? Do those phosphorescent teeth part in a gleaming smile of delight?

Now the hand beckons no more. The terror that has been beset upon me moves closer still. Now those same gleaming piercing eyes are but inches away. Is that her hot breath I feel upon my lips? I want to turn and run, but I can't! My muscles are anchored in the vise of her hypnotic gaze! I can't move! I can't get away! The hand of terror reaches for my arm; to lead me away to her inferno. The grasp is strong and cold. My body is like frozen stone. Soon I'll be warm, though, for over her boney shoulder I see her black cloaked assistant. The spear tailed trustee smiles and nods his sneering welcome.

There's nothing to do but submit. As we start off into the void I recall part of a quaint old saying I heard somewhere when I was young and alive. It said something about believing in something and being saved. I wish I could recall the exact words.

To------

By ARTHUR MADSON

An enchanting wraith, swathed
In pure, transcendant white,
Tall, yet not too tall, bathed
In the light of unconscious beauty,
Swaying slightly, blushing brightly,
Golden halo, piled high,
Sky blue eyes that make you sigh,
Regal, ruler of all she surveyed,
Yet, knowing not what havoc she played,
A charming, enduring spectre—
I'd liked to have necked her.

Dirty Nails

By ALLEN CARTER BROWN

Young Jack Saunderson had finished dressing and was ready to leave when he noticed his fingernails. They were dirty. Glancing at his watch, Jack saw that it was already late. But it would be much better to arrive after the party had begun than to arrive with dirt under his fingernails. Jack had made punctuality a habit. If he was tardy his friends joked with him about the long drive he had to make from the farm to town. They kidded him about being a farm boy. Jack didn't like to think what the evening's humor would be if he arrived with dirt under his fingernails. It would be much more humiliating to be questioned about darkened nails than about being late. That settled it. He had to remove the offensive filth.

Jack found his pocketknife beneath an imposing pile of comic books on his old-fashioned, scarfless dresser. Jack enjoyed comic books. He had never told his friends that he read them. A modern boy of seventeen should have outgrown such literature. But, knowing this, Jack nevertheless enjoyed reading them. Captain Marvel gave him power. The Batman gave him courage and assurance. The transformation of meek Clark Kent into the great Superman implied that the same miracle might someday be a reality for meek Jack Saunderson.

Jack extricated the pocketknife from beneath the pile of comics. He yanked out the smallest blade as he walked to the only chair in his room. It was an uncomfortable, ugly, straight-backed, wooden chair. Jack awkwardly draped himself onto it hanging one arm over the high back, embracing the legs of the chair with his own. He brought his left hand around from behind the chair and inserted the knife blade under the long nail of his little finger. He diligently scraped the dirt onto the knife.

Jack stared at the dirt dumbly before moving on to the next

finger. There were all kinds of dirt on the knife: field dirt, tractor dirt, barnyard dirt, kitchen dirt, haymow dirt, dirt, dirt, dirt, dirt! He hated the farm, hated the dirt, hated the work, hated the jests his friends made because he was a farm boy.

Jack looked at his watch and hurried to finish the nails on his left hand. As he passed the knife to the cleaned hand he couldn't help noticing the yellow-black callouses on both palms. He frowned and picked at the hardened bumps with the knife. Impossible. They would not yield to the dull blade. "What's the use? My nails get filthy, and I can clean them. But my palms are dirty and calloused and they'll never be clean until . . . until . . . Oh, well, I probably will never be able to leave the farm." Jack vaguely wondered whether Lucy enjoyed being fondled by such rough, work-ruined dirty hands.

He began cleaning the nails on his other hand. The blade scraped the fingernail so irritatingly that the grating sent nervous chills racing down his backbone and up again. Jack shuddered and paused. It was then that he realized how short, stubby, and ugly his fingers were. Jack had often admired the graceful fingers of the Barrymores, of Clark Gable, and of Loretta Young in motion picture close-ups. He had imagined that his own fingers possessed some of the length, slimness, and grace of those he had noticed on the screen. They didn't. He knew that now more than ever before. He looked again at his fingers with disgust and repulsion. They were stubby, fat, huge-knuckled, and flat on the ends. They were ugly.

Jack quickly finished cleaning the rest of his fingernails. He snapped the blade back into its berth in the knife and tossed it onto the bare dresser top. He unwrapped himself from the chair with unusual agility, stood up, and stretched. "Someday," he mused, "Someday I'll have clean hands all of the time. I'll work in the city and I'll have clean nails and I won't have callouses and I'll get a manicure every other day. Darned if I won't!"

Farthingale

By ARTHUR MADSON

While aimlessly pursuing my thoughts one day—a habit of mine when nothing else presents itself—although something else does present itself usually whenever I have leisure time to spend, such as—but why go into that. Anyway, to get back to the subject in hand, namely: aimlessly pursuing my thoughts one day the word "farthingale" popped into my mind. Whence it came I knew not, rack my brain as hard as I could—its source or its meaning persisted in eluding me. So I said to myself, we must be analytical. Yes. Apply the analytical process. Yes. So I proceeded to take the word apart, as follows: **far**, the first syllable, meaning at a great distance; (see, it's simple, really) then, **thin**, the second syllable, meaning the opposite of fat; then, **gale**, meaning a hard blow; (referring to wind), then I put them together, **far - thin - gale**—meaning, a high wind of small dimensions laterally, at a great distance. But wait, another possibility presented itself, **farthing**, an English term meaning one-half penny, and **ale**, a malt drink, slightly intoxicating (also English) —therefore, the meaning could be a half-penny ale. Arriving at this impasse, I concluded to let the whole matter drop. However, a few days later, happening to be near a dictionary, I thought I might as well look it up. Farthingale means, I found, "a hoop skirt". A great language, the English.

Discovery

ANONYMOUS

How odd, how very odd.
I'm dead—but where is God?
Can this be Paradise?
Could all they told me have been merely lies?
So be it. Here I spend eternity,
In a state of heavenly, horrible immobility.

The Education of Steven Shaw

A Short Story

By LITTLETON S. ROBERTS, JR.

Steve was weary to his bones but he was late. He took the steps to the Municipal Building two at a time and almost ran headlong into Helen Schuman as she escaped the revolving door. She stopped when she recognized Steve; her eyes glowed and a grin spread over her narrow face. She didn't look much like a teacher with that grin—she never did; grinned too much and too easily. It always made Steve vaguely uncomfortable.

The light breeze touched her forelock and she said through her grin, "Going to cover the lynching, Steve?"

Steve nearly laughed despite his annoyance; when he caught his breath he answered, "You aren't being funny. I've chased my tail all day and now this comes up just before I get off."

Helen said with her grin and the light in her eyes, "Poor Steve! But, ah, think of the opportunity, lad! Think of the story you could write——idealogical overtones and all that . . . Why, you can start a real crusade!" She was grinning wider.

"Are you kidding? I like my job . . . "

She almost stopped grinning. "So do a lot of people."

"Well, so what?" She was just needling him and he knew it and he was too tired to do anything about it. "What about you, anyway? If you want a crusade why don't you come up with me and protest? Sure, do that . . . and I'll get some fireworks for the story!"

"I have already," said Helen, and she was grinning again. "I resigned. I just came from the Superintendent's office. Well, toodle-oo. Keep your publishers happy." Her skirts swung as she moved off down the steps.

A couple of pigeons flapped about a marble pillar. Steve stood

a moment in surprise, then shrugged it off and glanced at his watch. Judas! Three minutes to go and the board of education was meeting on the fifth floor. He hurried into the building.

But he couldn't shrug it off. The irritation burned in his cheeks —letting her get his goat with her witch's grin! What was wrong with him, anyway? Tired . . yeah . . just tired and sore about hurrying like hell to sit in on this farce. He got inside the self-service elevator and pushed the button. The motor whirred.

Yes, farce. The decision had already been made, and he knew that. Those people who supply the board its decisions don't forget the paper; when the chief talked to him this afternoon he knew the Word had come. The man and his wild-eyed disciples would not get the school auditorium for the rabble that wanted to hear him talk—couldn't. Of course not. And they knew how he would react to their "condition." They were very clever. This formal discussion: as much for the paper's sake as anything, wasn't it? Sure . . the decision would be laid, and it would be a just one—a **justifiable** one; wasn't that the paper's job? The elevator stopped. Damn! The wrong floor! He jabbed the button again.

What the hell was he thinking! Why was he thinking, anyway? That wasn't his job. Listen, you're a feature writer, not an editor. And what's the difference anyway? It's right; it's really right, you know that. The elevator stopped once more and he got out and turned quickly down the corridor.

Yes, you know that. These ideals . . well, you have to swallow generalities with a grain of salt to get along—you know that. Your schools and your church taught you that; your job taught it to you; your clubs and your friends and your fraternity—they all taught it to you. He stopped before the heavy oak doors. Yes, and your mother taught it to you too . . . better than anyone.

He pushed through the doors and walked into the room. The would-be speaker had arrived with his party, but the meeting had not begun. The members of the board were there, were milling about and shaking hands with one another and with the man and his managers. Steve found a straight-back chair near the door as

everyone began to take his place. The councilors grouped themselves about the Superintendent at one end of the table where solidly they faced the visitors. Steve looked them over—the board. Seven heavy, settled men, seven solid citizens . . . seven plump and puffy faces. The meeting was called to order.

Yes, from your mother you learned it best. In little things—her way of living. She knew that for what it was worth, didn't she. Because she knew something of the other way? You guessed that long ago, but you didn't know about it, really; it went back too far, back to the father you couldn't quite remember.

* * * *

Stevie sensed the tension in his parents all through supper. His tiny brain felt it and he reacted by fussing over his food and by resisting his mother when she tried to coax him to eat. His father left the table early and stood silently by the window. Stevie knew intuitively that his mother was there too, with his father, for even the little, meaningless, familiar sounds she made to Stevie were automatic and distraught, and almost void of their usual comfort. As children sometimes will, he became resigned at last, and he allowed himself to be undressed and put to bed without further ado.

But in the dark of his room he lay awake, and listened to the voices of his parents coming muffled through the door. Vaguely he knew them; the words meant nothing but he knew these sounds from another time, knew they forecast much confusion, and being carried about, and a dreadful, thrilling liberty in his set routine.

The voices drifted through the door and little Stevie listened.

"Don't Agnes," his father said once desperately. "It's not so bad there won't be other places, and better ones."

"But John, again . . again! And how many more times?"

"It can't be helped now. And I must at least stand by what I believe." His father's voice had suddenly turned queer and cold and quiet, and Stevie sat up in fascination.

"But John, people simply don't . . Can't you think of me! And your son! Does it matter more than us? Oh, John! We can't go on

like this. All those women in the market staring . . and talking. I wasn't raised to this—being outside! My family . . . "

"Yes, your family! Your noble, self-righteous family! Your blessed, bigoted . . . "

Stevie's mother broke with loud sobs; Stevie's tummy quivered as he himself began to whimper, when something through the window snatched and froze his whole attention. Outside, there in the pool of moonlight among the pines, seven white-robed figures sat on motionless horses. As Stevie stared he heard his father's name called sharply.

Sudden silence in the other room: static, charged whispers through the bedroom door, the latch undone with a click, and his father's clear voice answering. Hypnotized, Stevie began to crawl across the bed when his room exploded violently in light, and he was swept up nearly smothering in his mother's arms.

Afterward, all the town was shocked. Who would have thought a simple lashing could kill a man?

Stevie and his mother went away, and Stevie grew up in the peace and order of her parents' home. His mother never spoke to him of the earlier time, and soon he could no longer recall his father's face. Only sometimes, less frequently as he grew older, he dreamed he stared in frozen terror from a darkened room . . at seven hooded figures sitting silently on their horses in the moonlight.

* * * *

The meeting was almost over. Since the man and his party had left dramatically during the discussion, it remained only for the Superintendent to summarize the action for the minutes and to lay the official statement before the press; this business was dispensed with straightforward. As he finished his notes Steve looked up expectantly for the close.

His nerves twitched violently. For an instant his mind's eye had seen . . Lord, he was tired—brain all muddled. Well, that was it; the board appeared well satisfied as Steve surveyed it: seven satisfied men—seven solid citizens . . seven plump and harmless faces.

Sophie

By ALLEN CARTER BROWN

Sophie, our housekeeper, is "set in her ways." We didn't realize it when we hired her, but she soon told us.

Sophie hadn't been with us more than three weeks when we had to buy a new washing machine. Dad managed to obtain a Bendix Automatic washer, had it installed, and proudly showed it to Sophie. "Oh my," she exclaimed, "I can't no more wash with that thing than nothing!"

Dad was flabbergasted. He had pleaded with every dealer in town before he was allowed to buy the Bendix. "My gosh, Sophie, why not? It's the best machine on the market . . . cuts the heavy work in half."

Sophie shook her head vigorously. "Oh my, no. My oldest brother—he's the one what married the Methodist—he had one of them things, and he just had trouble from it. Oh, I know how them things work. I'm pretty set in my ways and I'm used to doing things in a certain way and I guess I'm too old to change now. Besides, I know that them new-fangled things they just don't work good. Why, this here machine ain't got nothing to beat them clothes with nor no nothing."

It took Dad all of one morning, but he finally persuaded Sophie to give the Bendix a trial. She agreed to use it for two weeks before sending it back. But Dad erred when, by way of convincing her, he remarked that with her Bendix Sophie could eliminate a washday by cleaning a few of the clothes each day.

"Oh my no," said Sophie. "Monday's the only day to wash on. Why, I wouldn't no more think of washing on no other day than nothing. There ain't been many Mondays the last thirty-five years that I ain't done a washing."

Dad was satisfied . . . and convinced. He felt certain that if Sophie gave the Bendix a fair trial on two successive Mondays that she would have changed her mind. He knew the machine would stay.

Monday morning Sophie stormed up the stairs from the basement waving a box before her. She planted herself before Dad, shoved her glasses higher on her nose, and handed him the box. It

contained a special detergent to be used in the Bendix. "This here stuff ain't no good," Sophie exclaimed.

"It's not?"

"No, it ain't."

"What's the matter with it?"

"Why, it won't suds. Can't be no good if it don't suds. Why, I can't get them clothes clean without no suds to take the dirt out with." Sophie smiled knowingly and said "Hmph" for emphasis. That settled it. Sophie was right. Sophie must have suds.

Dad did not attempt to explain. It was too early in the morning. Instead, he drove to the store and bought another detergent, Vel, that had an added ingredient which produced mountains of quite useless suds for the benefit of dubious housekeepers.

Sophie decided, at the end of the two week trial, that she would keep the Bendix. She admitted that the machine not only eliminated most of the heavy work connected with washing, but it also saved her hours for other activities.

We like Sophie. We had to get used to her, but we like her. She runs the house. We stay out of her way. We don't interfere because we know now that Sophie is set in her ways.

Don't Blame It All On God

By CECILY SHERK

If you are wise don't blame it all on God!
This love that you have lost, was yours alone
And though you tear your hair and cry and moan,
And tell the ones you love you think it odd
That God with all His grace and strength has sown
Your love on stony ground and then has blown
The newly sprouted seed away. Still God
In all His glory, was but the axone
And you alone have sown your love amiss,
For all who think that God destroys a love
Forget that God did not provoke the kiss
Nor center all love's thoughts on things above.
For the love that lives on earth is ours,
And not controlled by God's great powers.

Home Town

By MERLE WOOD

Back home after almost forty years! Back for two weeks at home. Maybe I'd even bring Sadie and the kids here to the old home town.

Tildon looked just the same as when I had left it. My long years in the city had treated me to every type of squalor but this little town had a clean sort of untidyness all its own. The streets were the same dirt streets I had played on. The houses were the same drab houses I had lived in. I drove slowly along the streets. I wanted to breathe it all in. I wanted to stamp the little town into my mind forever. I never wanted to forget it again.

It was spring and the town was green. The lazy folks sat along the shady main street, in front of the hotel, the cafes, the pool halls as they had years before. The generation had changed twice but I could still see the same people. The ones in front of the hotel were the town's civic leaders, probably the doctor and banker were there. Those that gossiped before the cafe were just working people, the barber, the blacksmith, and such. The pool hall gang had changed least of all. They looked much as their unkempt uncles and fathers had looked when they had sat on the same wooden bench years ago.

I wanted to drive out to the old house where my grandparents had lived. When I saw the place I shuddered. Vacant windows stared through veils of choking vines at me. The old family castle had fallen victim to time. It was something like myself: it was a shell that had once known happy Christmas parties and weddings, but now it could take solace only in the memories it had.

I'd dreamed of this trip for years. I'd always been too busy until now. It wasn't as I had thought it would be. Everything I saw resembled something I had known and loved, but it wasn't the same.

I'd dreamed of going out to the country and poking around the old fishing spots. I knew now that though the banks of the river wouldn't be changed its depth would be. The good spots I had known would be full of snags; they'd be shallow. Even they wouldn't be a familiar friend. They'd be like the town itself, just a bitter, sweet taste of what had once been as dependable as the warm earth itself.

The dream was shattered. I knew that a few miles away the unfamiliar road and the sun would warm the cold that had crept into my heart. I turned the car around and soon left the town a lifetime behind.

The Room

By WILLIAM A. LOGAN

The room was cold
For the last heat-bulb had burned out that day.
The room was cold and very bare
Even with the furniture and the heat—it always had been that way.
The man was but a youth,
Much too young to have witnessed his own ambitions die.
The man was a youth, a knowing youth,
For he knew the destiny of human hopes; he had seen them fall; and he knew that life was its own lie.
The cold lay on the floor
Somehow bringing to the youth the remembrance of a winter's day, a funeral, and an icy tomb.
The cold lay on the dusty floor
And the bright, heatless rays of the sun buried his shadow beneath the cold on the floor of the room.
The youth wondered now
About his lost life, and dead hopes, and shattered ambitions, and stupid joys, and the meaningless things he had learned.
The youth wondered now about the sparrows,
A futile thought, perhaps, but they had once played here on the window sill until they flew away. They had never returned.
The cold was rising now
As steam does, in an almost visible cloud, but the cold was not steam; it was terror and a raw chill.
The cold was rising and swelling now
Filling the little room with its presence and its bleak, inexorable will.
He sat by the window,
And morosely stared at the chaste snow as it fell onto the dirty sinful bed of the city below.
He sat shivering by the window,
Struck dumb by the death of his soul; he had felt it tear loose, and go.
The cold crept within him
And surrounded his heart, and squeezed, but life had already wrung it dry.
The cold crept about within him
It frightened him a bit at first, and then he bowed his head and began to die.

A new tenant came
With the coming of summer and long after the youth's body had been buried and changed to mold.
A new tenant came one warm day
And rented the room and furnished it, but he often wondered why it seemed so bare and so very cold.

War In Wapishpash

By ARTHUR MADSON

Chapter I

Fearless Frank Fripp braced his seven feet of twisted steel and concrete as his buckboard slewed around the 100 degree turn in the dusty, rusty trail, sawing on the reins and shouting, "Whoa, thar, Maud, whoa, thar, Minnie, usn's are lost less'n one of us kin read the road signs."

Fearless Frank Fripp always travelled by buckboard and mule team because no horse could long support his seven feet of twisted steel and concrete, his three 45's, and his fifteen gallon hat.

"Whoa, thar, you Minnie, you Maud, usn's has got to find the way to Wapishpash afore nightfall."

When the intrepid mules had come to a halt, Fripp stepped out and peered long and steadily into the setting sun, then turned around and peered into the rising sun. Suddenly he stiffened, his nostrils quivered, and he whinnied.

"Yup, Maud, yup, Minnie, thar's somthin' over thar yonder looks like smoke."

Springing into the buckboard with the elasticity of a steel spring, he urged his faithful steeds onward.

"Yup, Maud, whar thar's smoke, thar's fire; and whar thar's fire, thar's bound to be somethin' else."

Topping a shallow rise, Tripp came suddenly upon an old man smoking a peace pipe. Since Tripp was a peace officer, he halted, alighted, and exclaimed, "How?" which is the international password of peace officers.

The old man, seeing the large, nickel-plated, prominently displayed five-pointed star on Tripp's vest, said, "They went thet away," pointing over his opposite shoulder with his thumb.

"Thanks" replied Tripp, and immediately set out in pursuit. Hardly had he travelled a hundred yards when he began to think aloud as was his custom when driving.

"Thet sure was a cur'yus old feller. I wonder who it was come this away. Prob'ly some desp'rit crim'nal." And he shook the loose lines over the backs of his swift steeds, urging them onward.

Chapter II

Old Joe Soke had been prospecting in these hills for a long time.

Chapter III

The sun was low in the western sky when Fearless Frank Fripp

paused beside a small mountain rivulet, unhitched his team and led them to the water. "We been follerin' this trail for 6 miles, Maud, and ain't seen hide nor hair of thet desprit crimnal. Reckon as how he must have got away. Crime does not pay."

Hitching up Maud and Minnie, Fripp resumed his journey. "Figger as how usn's has got about an hour yet afore it gets too dark to travel. 'Bout time for my last cigarette." So saying, the dauntless cowpoke burst into song.

Refreshed by their draught of cool water and the several mouthfuls of grass they had managed to crop, the muscular mules settled into an easy, mile-eating stride. The last faint rays of the disappearing sun disappeared. On and on into the gathering gloom rushed the fearless mules. Lulled by the rhythmic clop-clop of their shod hoofs, the brave Fripp gradually lapsed into deeper and deeper sleep.

Chapter IV

Fearless Frank Fripp awoke instantly. He always awoke instantly, no matter what time it was. It was part of his training as an alert deputy. The swish of a tail reminded him the poor mules were still hitched to the buckboard. Stepping down over the wheel, Fripp caught his heel in a spoke, and fell flat, stretching his full 7 feet on the ground with a thud.

"Consarn it!" said Fripp, "that's the last time I'll ever do that." Sitting up painfully, he pulled off his boots, pulled out his clasp knife and hacked away until his boots no longer had heels. Fripp was a man of direct action.

"Well, Maud, well, Minnie, I'll have you unhitched in jest a minute now," said Fripp, pulling on his heel-less boots and struggling to his feet.

Crack! the sound of a Winchester 30-30 split the night, followed instantly by the piercing scream of a wounded mule.

"Maud," cried the despairing Fripp, "have they hit you, old girl?" and he rushed to her side. "Where is it, Maud, where'd they hitcha?" Maud flopped her tall left ear, spraying Fripp with frothy blood. Sighting through the 30 calibre hole in her ear, Fripp saw the bushwhacker whacking off into the bush. Drawing his three 45's, Fripp ran forward, blazing away like a one man army, not even pausing to reload. He did it without pausing. The fleeing attacker fell a victim of the unerring accuracy of Fearless Frank Fripp.

Chapter V (the last)

Old Joe Soke struck it rich last week.

Let's Go

By WILLIAM A. LOGAN

"Sound the Horn, Gabriel on high!
Sound the Horn, and clear the sky
For we've finished, here on earth.
We've blown it apart like an eggshell,
And now wait our places in heaven or hell.
"Sound the Horn, Angel of the End
Sound the Horn, and begin to send
Our souls whither thou willst.
We're all through here, and so we say,
Sound that Horn; it's Doomsday!"
But the Horn never blew.

Beyond Our Own

By CECILY SHERK

There's a beauty in life beyond our own,
And it stands at the feet of our Fathers' throne.
And if we are burdened with sorrows or tears
It gives us great hope for all of our fears,
By asking for something beyond our own.

It's a beauty as humble and full of power
As the modest grace of the prairie flower,
For it's able to conquer both pain and grief
And leave in their stead a strong belief
In something beyond our own.

It grows in our hearts, and our minds
And our souls, and it finds
Itself in the humblest home
Of New York, London, Moscow, or Rome . . .
This beauty beyond our own.

The beauty is faith, and hope, and love
For everything on earth and above.
It's a power that comes on the wings of prayer
To the truth seekers everywhere . . .
And it gives them something beyond their own.

Chinese Kimonos

By CECILY SHERK

It's strange how a man staggers when he's drunk. Sometimes his mind doesn't stagger at all. Robert was thinking clearly, yet he stumbled from one side of the street to the other with an ungainly, shambling walk. He was a large man with broad, stooping shoulders, great flabs for hands, and a skin coarsened and yellowed by many months of tropical weather. Still, he had a certain bearing even as he staggered through the streets.

Senora Francesca looked up from her lottery sales at the corner of Ancon boulevard, and smiled a toothless grin to see Señor Robert shuffle by. It didn't matter that he was drunk. He was always drunk, but he bought his lottery tickets regularly and never swore to hit her if he lost.

Old Mr. Chan stopped talking Chinese kimonos to a lady from the American Legation long enough to see Robert's strange walk along the narrow sidewalk. He shook his head sadly, "Robert was such a fine young man."

Johnny Corriago shifted his bundle of papers to the other shoulder and sighed when he saw that Robert was drunk. Johnny had hoped that Robert would hold the papers for a while and maybe give him a stick of gum, or perhaps Robert would only smile. When Robert smiled, everyone was happy.

Senora Francesca, old Mr. Chan, and Johnny Corriago were the only people who really noticed Robert Williams walk along the crooked streets of Panama City. His appearance was not unusual, for the dirty streets and overhanging balconies of Panama City are filled with men who stagger, and with men who cannot walk at all.

Robert was thinking clearly. He remembered boyish dreams when he had thought that he would fight heroic battles in distant lands. He had dreamed of returning to America, and of marrying a wonderful girl. He would have given his children lovely things, much nicer than anything at the Orphan's home. He had gone to war, but he had been stationed in one of the hastily constructed camps in a God-forsaken jungle. There were no movies, no women, no cigarettes, and there was no beer. There was too much heat

and rain, and too many bugs. The regular cry of the tinomou combined with the yell of the parrot, and the scream of the monkeys nearly drove you crazy, and always there was the sun . . . hot and hostile. There were the dirty people living in their dirty huts of mud-packed walls and rough, thatched roofs. It was not very heroic, for there was nothing to do but wait and wait for something to happen or someone to say that the Japs had come.

His transfer had been wonderful. Work with the office in Panama City was too good to be true. There were people, honest to goodness people, living in frame houses. There were children going to school. There was the smell of the sea, and the freedom of bathing in great masses of water. There were pretty girls, and there was dancing and gaiety. There were open spaces, and slender palm trees, and the picturesque old ladies selling lottery tickets. He had loved the quaint Chinese shops, and the old men that sold Chinese kimonos.

He had married Jane; it hadn't mattered that she could speak only a word or two of English, and he less than that of Spanish. They were superlatively happy for awhile. He grinned, and lurched a little, Jane wouldn't like his being drunk again, but she wouldn't be able to say anything. Not many wives would say nothing to a drunk and good for nothing husband!

Robert's last few steps had brought him to the foot of a narrow stairway leading to a tiny flat. When he had bought the place he was going to fix the stairs and paint the rooms, but now it didn't seem to matter, for Jane still kept house like her mother and grandmother before her; the dirt would have covered the paint anyway. If he were in America he'd fix the stairs and paint the rooms.

Robert opened the door and thought how strange it was that anyone could look so lovely amidst so much poverty and dirt. Jane had the beautiful, auburn hair that is quite common to her race, and the dark eyes and olive skin of the pure Spaniard. The birth of their first child had not subtracted from her charms and she was as lovely a creature as any man could wish for. He wanted to tell her how much he loved her, how beautiful she was, and how desperately he wanted to take her with him to America. Instead, he slouched across the room to a discarded army cot.

When Robert awoke the next morning he was still thinking

about America. He was thinking that they could live in New York City, and he would get a job . . . a good job. Jane was intelligent; she and the children would learn English together. With a glance at his sleeping family Robert hastened down the broken stairs knowing that he never would fix them. Robert worked that day from morning until night, and the next day, and the next day for many weeks. Everyone noticed the large man with the spring in his walk and the glow on his face. Finally the day came when there was enough money for Robert and his family to sail for America.

The Atlantic was calm for five long days. Robert did a good deal of thinking. He thought of how lovely their home would be; anyone could get a job in America. When he had saved some money he and Jane could go back to Panama for a visit. She would be able to visit her mother and they would stay in an expensive room at the Tivoli Hotel. He would visit his old friends and the lovely shops, and boast about the opportunities of America. On the morning of the sixth day the Statue of liberty stood against the sky line. Robert tried to tell Jane about the little Jewish girl who had written a poem about the statue and had said that America had a golden shore. He tried to tell her something of the hope and dream of America, but Jane could not understand.

Many weeks have elapsed, the boat trip has been over for nearly six months. In those six months a great many things have changed for Robert. You know, it's strange but New York's Chinatown could be in Chicago, or San Francisco, or Panama. The streets are dirty and always there are the shuffling, shambling walkers. Someone is coming toward us now. He is a large man with broad and very stooping shoulders, and a face hardened and sallowed by many disappointments, and he staggers through the streets.

Old Mrs. O'Rourke, in passing across Chinatown with her basket of laundry meets Robert Williams as he staggers from the Alpaps Taverns. Her lips curl contemptuously, "These people who expect opportunities to present themselves. You have to work for everything you get!"

Emanuel Ung notices Robert's lowered head and stumbling walk, "Perhaps Robert will come to work tomorrow," he says. "There are some shirts, and kimonos, and things for him to iron; if Robert is going to drink he has to work." But now he simply struggles through the early dusk of the streets toward the broken stairs.

Revelation

By ARTHUR MADSON

Everybody in town knows Joe Trulson. Lived here all his life. Runs the Standard Station across from the Ford garage. His kids are mostly grown now, the youngest, Joe, Jr., was confirmed just last week. He's the only one still at home. Yes, you might say Joe's getting old.

Joe was born just before the turn of the century. He was no ordinary boy, his father always said proudly, even though he was often exasperated by Joe's inattention and seeming lack of interest in the farm. You see, Joe was blessed, or cursed, with a lively, inquiring mind, but how he hated work! He was constantly devising schemes for shirking, but when it came right down to it, he lacked the fortitude to carry out his schemes.

It often took him hours to walk the mile back and forth from the one-room school house, so engrossed would he become in his magnificent dreams of what he would do when he was rich. In the mornings and evenings, instead of worrying why Bessie didn't fill the pail with milk, he would puzzle over such questions as: how come we get white milk from red cows, or, why his sister was afraid of frogs and he wasn't.

When they drove to church on Sunday, Joe would put up the team, then sneak out back and listen to the marvelous tales the older boys told, dreaming of when he would be old enough to have his own buggy and driving horse and go to town on Saturday nights. On Sunday afternoons, Joe, instead of playing with the other kids, would hang around his Dad and listen to him discuss crops and stock and weather with the neighbors.

Joe's parents were Lutherans and brought up all their children in accordance with their belief and faith. But by the time he was 14, Joe had begun to have a few doubts, although he hadn't told anyone about them yet. One day that spring, Joe had been harrowing, walking barefooted behind the horses in the loose, freshly plowed ground, and by four o'clock was tired and desperate. Ab-

sent-mindedly he mouthed a brief supplication. "Please, God, I'm awful tired . . . I wanta go home." Joe didn't know what he had in mind, perhaps a rain storm would come up suddenly, or something. Just then, the horses broke from his loose grasp, dashed across the field, out the gate, and up the road, smashing the harrow to bits, not stopping until they reached Hans Thompson's place, two miles north.

Joe walked slowly home, told his mother the team had run away, then went up to his room, knelt, and gave thanks to the Almighty.

No, Joe Trulson was not an ordinary boy.

Sand Circles

By WILLIAM A. LOGAN

O Progress,
Why rear ye from out the ocean's slime
But to trace circles upon the sands of time?
From cave-man with club of wood, once supreme,
Yet who cowered before arrow and bow, and called them but a dream,
To us of modern day, who'd thought we'd mastered destruction's lore.
And, thereby, forever ended all strife and war,
Only to find that in the brief space of a breath
You had drawn another circle of death
And created a weapon more powerful than the rest.
An atom bomb shall now be crowned the "Greatest."
How long, O Progress, before that, too, will shrivel and die
And seek out a lonely grave in which to lie
As your gory crown of supremacy
Is torn from head after head, until the world itself lies dead before thee
Burned out with the horror of your new plaything of destruction?
Are these not circles? Or shall we call it evolution?
Yea, laughing beast, we bow our heads before thy might
And yet we wonder whether you are the wrong or the right.
Must all your circles, powerful and never-ending though they be,
Be only to destroy and obliviate life on land and sea?
O Progress, is there no higher thing for man to aspire to on earth,
Or must we forever submit to the unholy mirth
And follow, puppet-like, the mad doodlings of your shaking hand
As it traces circles on the sand?

Conclusive Death

By SHIRLEY MENAGE

I fear death; its solitude holds thoughts for me
Too deep to comprehend. When life ends it must be
As one act completed, no recompense—eternity.

Why live to die as now we do? Unconscious of a plan
We turn away from earthly things that God placed here for man.
Nature is for each to see if he be fool or sage.
Beauty stands to warm the heart regardless of the age.

Is living just a borrowed day that passes?
Then go pleasure's way and find a lone security.

Unchallenged death is common. It merits not acclaim.
Live in life; enjoy God's earth, forgetting whence birth came.
Take advantage of your dreams; escape your fear.
Time passes once, no more; embrace it here.

Then let death come with quickened pace
And take life's breath, for rather would I face
This termination than let my soul be cast in unknown space.

Ambition

ANONYMOUS

I am going to be a beach-comber. I shall lie upon the warm, sandy beach of Tahiti or Barfandulan and watch the wavelets lap at my toes. I shall gaze at the blue horizon and watch the native fishing boats wafting in on the cool breeze, while the wives gather at the hand-built docks and scream their welcomes in a polyglot of tongues. Yes, by day I shall lie, and dream, and sip milk from a coconut that has fallen by my side, and as cool evening drifts in I shall gather milky moonstones along the shoreline. I shall gather moonstones and whatever else the gods of the tides care to send me. and then I shall sell my loot and purchase my evening meal in some tropical bar. I shall sit until early morning and drink beer which is like champagne in the Tropics. When my money has gone I shall stagger to my palm-leaf hut and sleep the night away. And I shall rise again at noon. Thus I shall live, dreaming, sleeping and eating,—until, mayhap, one day I shall find my gift of ambergris, and then I shall be very rich and never have to work at gathering moonstones again.

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