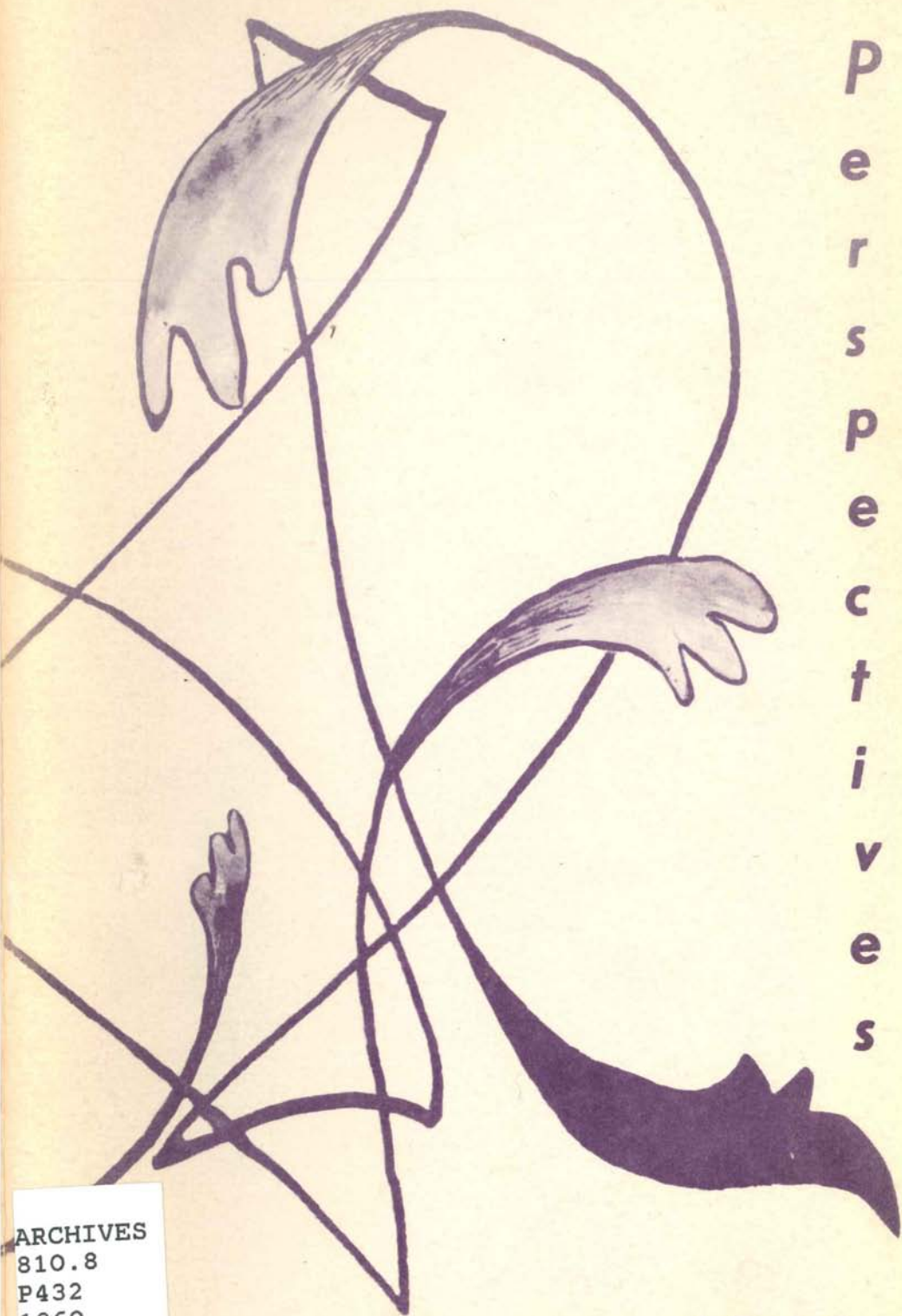


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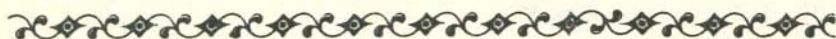


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THE MERRY-GO-ROUND

The little girl had never ridden the merry-go-round without her mother before. She followed the sound of it--tin calliope music--through the dusty carnival crowds, canvas posters waving to her and the cotton candy smelling sweet and sugary and dusty--the dime sweaty and thin and gritty, held tight.

She was not lost but her family was and there was the dime to use up while they looked for her.

Shyly reaching up to push the dime to the ticket seller--the cold dust-and-talcum powdered face looked through the grating at the upturned one. --Little to be buying her own ticket, but no business of a ticket seller's. If she gets hurt she gets hurt. --The ticket pushed out, the little hand reaching blindly higher than her head scrabbling eagerly till the fingers touched the little cardboard, finally closing on it, clutching it tight to the pink cotton dress.

The eyes were wide, bewildered. The fence was as high as her chin. There was a gate-place with a chain across it. --Wait here little lady said the man leaning against the gateway--tall and thin with faded blue-jeans and a dirty shirt. He had black hair that hung around his ears, an old cap, a cigarette drooping from his mouth, His eyes did not smile.

Flick went the long gray ash--gotta wait your turn

The music went round and around, loud and louder, loud and louder. The merry-go-round had fine wooden horses with long manes with ribbons in them and a tall round red tent roof with gilded trim and shiny brass poles and the horses went up and down and up and down and the big seats shaped like swans for the mothers sitting in them with their babies. It was like the one her mother had taken her on last year, it was like the one in the story books. The little girl pushed forward, her stomach against the chain.

Round and round went the merry-go-round down and up went the prancing horses loud and louder went the music and the people were laughing high and low--but something was wrong

--It is upside-down cried the little girl--the merry-go-round is upside-down

--Be quiet kid if you want to ride said the thin man. He lit a new cigarette and shook out the match--There's nothing wrong

But there was--the fine red tent roof went round and round in the carnival dust and the dirty plank floor boards went round and around in the sky and the music was upside down and strange and ugly.

And the people were going round and around with their heads hanging down and it made their smiles all empty and upside down.

--Stop stop cried the little girl--it's all wrong--and the song ended and some of them turned to look at her with puzzled looks on their upside-down faces but the calliope started and its stops start-

ed jiggling and tooting and a new song started. The thin man at the gate pulled his cap down over his eyes, wind flicked away the ashes but the dirty black hair hung limp--his face leering down close to hers brown eyes brown skin brown teeth--Shut up kid!

She dropped the chain and pulled back. The people on the merry-go-round laughed and shouted--they did not know or they did not care--the horses went down and up down and up and the little boys shook the reins on their shiny brown horses with the red ribbons in their manes--down and up down and up hanging helpless from the brown backs while the horses went round and around with their hooves pawing the air and their heads thrown back and laughing.

And the swan seats went round and round on the ceiling with the women clinging to them like desparate spiders while their babies like young monkeys went gaily swinging upside down and they were all laughing and laughing while the red tent roof with gilded trim went dragging around and around in the dust.

The little girl began to cry, hot tears falling--it was all wrong not what she had imagined--under the chain at the gate, the thin man shouting at her--hey you!--and running up to the edge of the merry-go-round--please, please, stop and turn it right-side-up again--

The big man with a cigar and greasy overalls sitting in the hole in the center by the gears standing up to look at her while the horses flashed by laughing--looking slow at her, a little troubled.

--Make it right, make it all right--the big man looked around at the horses prancing in the air and the little boys shaking their useless reins and going down and up down and up and they were laughing and shouting

--Why? said the big man--when they're laughing--

She listened to the thin laughter in the dusty wind and saw the red tent drag round and round in the dust--No no--the shrill little-girl voice--no, no no--and she turned running frightened, blind

The thin black man was behind her and he grabbed her by her wrist till he hurt her--Stop the merry-go-round!--sneered to the big man, twisting the white wrist and he smelled of dust and sweat and tobacco--She'll ride--

It slid to a halt and he dragged her forward and put her on. Eyes frightened saucers she stood on the red tent roof and clung to a brass rod.

--Not like that, kid--the strong dirty hands seizing her legs and turning her, turning her upside down tying her ankles to the brass pole with the leather reins.

She shrieked for terror--help me, mother!--but her mother was long gone

Help me, help me--to the silent spectators standing in the dust under the blue sky--help me--kicking herself raw in despair--help me--turning to look at them for help--

They were all standing on their heads.

—Virginia Bailey

BOY WITH BOAT

"Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies
that matters-----mothers and fathers don't die."

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Warm sand oozed up between Jebbie's sun-browned toes. Several yards in front of him a large sail-boat rose and fell in harmony with the resurging lake waves. The water-soaked string that linked boy and boat was half hidden, half revealed. It drooped down into the water, floated on the surface for a few inches, and then melted out of sight. Seemingly, the two were not connected at all.

"C'mon Jeb, boy, ----it's time to eat." His grandfather's shadow swallowed up the child. Without turning round, the boy pursed his small lips and out came a resigned "Oh...kay." But the resignation was vocal only. He made no effort to retrieve the boat.

"How about some help with pullin' her in?" The old man made a motion towards the string. "I can do it," and Jeb's two small hands clenched the string even tighter and began to ease the boat towards the bank. The boat's bottom scratched against the gravel and then sliced into the wet sand. Wadding the string into a slimy ball, Jeb lifted the boat carefully with both hands and started to march up the bank towards his grandfather's cabin. He looked like a tiny libation bearer.

From the middle of the lake, the Boji Belle sounded her horn and passengers waved towards the shore. Grandfather waved back. "The Boji's a little early today, Jeb. Usually doesn't come by till one o'clock. --.....Say, you do all right carrying that big boat." The old man caught up with his week-end ward, who had stopped to stuff a rock in his pocket.

"Why do I have to always keep it tied on a string?" The two brown eyes looked up into the grey ones.

"Well, for one thing the boat's too big for you, and for another, if you let go of that string...why, the boat'll float clear across the lake and never come back." Puffing he clapped his hand on the youngster's shoulder as if the boy were a walking stick.

Jeb stood back to let his grandfather open the screen door be-

fore he climbed up the porch stairs, boat tightly gripped in both hands. "Better put her down there in the corner, so nobody'll step on it. . . . Then wash your hands." The boy did as he was told, but not without a quick look to see if they really need undergo a washing or not.

The table was set on the porch which overlooked the east end of the lake. Since Jeb's grandmother had died, the old man lived here all year around. His busiest months were the summer ones when he managed the small church camp. He saw all kinds of kids come and go, with their blankets tied neatly in rolls when they came and full of sand and cockleburrs when they left. He always suspected that they got more sunburn and poison ivy than religion. Most of the sessions lasted only a week, but even so an occasional parent would drive twenty or thirty miles to see if his child missed him.

It was late August now and the season's final camp group had left the week before. Jeb was the last child of summer, a kind of transition for the elderly man from the noisy months of splashing youth to the lonely ones of winter.

The two sat down to eat. It was a picnic lunch with Jeb's favorite cherry popsicles for dessert. While the boy still licked his colored ice, George (Jebbie never called him Grandfather, or Grampa, or Gramps----it was always George) brought in a large box. "Here's the box the boat came in, Jeb. Think maybe we'd better take it apart and put it back in here. Then it won't get broken when your Dad takes you home. Let's see. . . . , it shows here how to take it apart. 'First you dismantle the sails, then the rudder. . . .' no wonder this boat's so big for you. Says for 'Children: Ages 12-15!' Your Dad should've known better. Probably bought it for himself!"

"I floated it in the bathtub at home. Without no string. I wanted Mom to come 'n see it, but Dad said she couldn't." Holding up six cherry-stained fingers, Jeb asked, "How old will I be when I'm this many, George?"

The grandfather looked up from the box. "Let's see---you'll be six, you're five now, but you'll be six then."

"Will I be old enough to let go of the string maybe" was the child's next query.

"Look, Jeb, you don't want to let go of that string. The boat'll go clear across the lake and never come back again. See?" He pushed his chair away from the table and started for the corner where the boat rested. Jeb continued to lick the empty popsicle stick.

"Why don't you help me take it apart", the old man was down on his knees, fingering the sails and checking back with the diagrams on the box. "Your Dad can put it back together when you get home." Jeb squatted down on the porch floor beside his grandfather. "I'm going to show it to Mom when I get home."

Without lifting his eyes from the boat, George said quietly, "Jeb, do you know what 'passed-away' means?"

"Unh, unh."

Pursuing the subject no further, the grandfather mumbled something about "I'm not so sure I do either" and continued to dismantle the toy. The two worked over the boat until it was back in its box.

The hoarse honk of the Boji Belle came blasting from across the lake. George checked his watch: "Two-o'clock, right on time!"

Jebbie wondered what kind of a string kept the Boji Belle from floating across the lake and never returning. And who held the string?

—Rosalee J. Sprout

PARADOX

If I were to love you,
Old as you are, and I being young,
The world would laugh.
And when you are there,
Leaving me here,
No one would cry.
But I do not hide my love
From you, from world, from no one's eyes
Because of world's laugh,
Because of no one's cry.
The world does not matter,
No one would care.
But, were you to know,
Your laugh with the world's
Would leave me to cry,
With no one.

—Rosalee J. Sprout

VIDI

If you take a pig, a boat, and a few weeks off, you have a European tour. "What," you may ask, "does a boat have to do with it?" A good question that a thinking man might ask. I got to Europe that way. Obviously the next intelligent question would be, "Why a few weeks off?" Since you're on your toes, I'll tell you that I used the time for the travel. I feel foolish mentioning the obvious about the pig, but since Herman and I were quite close, I feel I should point out his sacrifice. After the Peabody County Fair, the SLOW PACKING COMPANY paid me well for the use of Herman's hip for advertising space. But rather than mourn the ham that isn't, I'll get to the meat of the subject. The point is that after the trip I was changed, the European trip wrought devastating changes. The following exposé is about what the travel folders and John Gunther never talk about.

A whole new life opens up when you mount your ocean going chariot and commence to glide from the harbor. I had expected the tension and strangeness, but I knew that my character and the bolstering of my old buddy, Irv Harper would get me through. Waving an almost jaunty farewell to "old liberty"--or rather in the general direction since visibility was about one foot in the fog--I started a turn around the deck. Man was that fog foggy. Do you realize that I heard a steward whistling the theme from Beethoven's "Fifth", and on investigation it turned out to be a noisy deck ventilator. I learned one thing early, follow the directions of signs. For instance, ignoring a "Restricted Area" sign I meandered up to the base of the towering smokestack. Feeling the warmth of fellowship flowing in my veins, I patted the varicolored side of the stack in a friendly fashion and murmured to it confidentially. Gentle sighs turned to rude noises as the hot metal blistered my pinkies to reddies. Barely restraining myself from kicking the smokestack base I started down the gangway. To add insult to injury, the fog horn (stationed conveniently about twenty feet above and behind me) brayed its message and helped me down the last ten rungs in two giant steps. I hurriedly but awkwardly retreated to the safety of my room.

In a somewhat flustered state I entered my cabin and met for the first time my room-mate. He turned out to be a little Austrian chap of fifty odd, on the dapper side with a lined face and a surprisingly friendly smile. I took to him immediately. That "friendly" smile fooled me when he remarked that he hoped there were some chess players aboard. Confident as I was of my own game (three-time school champion) and in need of an ego boost, I said I'd play. His only remark was to the effect that he thought me quite daring to lead my pawns down the board with my King. Unsuccessful, but daring.

It should be clear by this time that while life must always go on, the conditions need not be so stable. Take the weather: it changed,

the fog left almost immediately. This in itself was wonderful, but the hurricane that blew the fog away was horrible. As I said, life must go on, so whatever entertainment there was went on in spite of the rolling, pitching, floundering, heaving, swaying, shaking, bouncing---if I don't stop I'll be sick. But the point is, a game like ping-pong can get pretty tough. Picture me at a game. See with me the ball flying like a bullet deep to my backhand side. Leap as I do to that side and begin to forcefully return the ball. Feel with me the lurch of the ship that drives me to my knees and sends a tautly packed brown shirt directly in range. Hear with me the solid thunk and the startled yelp that follow. And finally, realize with me that a stranger has been met, edgewise at that. Really, Sue Jane was very nice about it. In fact she even accepted my invitation to the dance for the evening. Her remark to the effect that she was in no shape to sit around her room that night wilted me some, but I was still basically pleased. As three-time waltz champion of my school I felt more than a trifle confident as we stepped on to the floor that night. I was at my shining best. We dipped, glided, pranced, and whirled until the ship went into a little routine that was undoubtedly the beginning of rock and roll. Sue Jane and I bade fond farewell to the dance floor and went flying into the arms of a well upholstered chair nearby. It was doubly embarrassing, since the greater part of the upholstery consisted of Sue Jane's mother. It got a little sticky after the girls were brought back to consciousness, but they quieted down eventually.

And if all these incidents weren't enough, the crusher was the life boat drill. It was the most horribly frightening part of the trip. The nakedness of the doubt that was being expressed---I can't discuss it.

II

Believe it or not, I finally did make it to London. This town is foremost in my mind. Liverpool has the docks, Oxford has the colleges, and Stratford has Avon, but London has "Happiness Tours", by "Blue Cars Ltd." yet. There, I've said it, "Happiness Tours". Even the dullest of you feels smug at this weakness. I'm really getting used to your reaction; it happened all the time. For example, the tour pulled into our Brussels, Belgium, hotel late in the day after a long drive. I was looking and feeling more than a little rugged. On my query as to the room I was to take the desk clerk brightly responded, "Happiness Tours"; Well! Isn't the old formula working today? Ha!"

The fact that the hotel pen leaked all over my finger prompted a nasty comment from me on the inferior product. His two word reply, "American Schaeffer" left me no move but to retire.

But as I said a second ago, London will always have a special meaning to me. There I was on a foggy Monday morning (fortunately hurricanes left the fog there pretty much alone) waiting to meet the rest of the tour members. And then the great moment when the lobby echoed with the call to mount the glass domed bus of the

tour. Breathlessly I climbed the steps of the bus and came face to face with her sitting in the first seat next to the door. I stared directly at brown hair and eyes, a turned up nose, and a wicked smile.

"Hello!" exclaimed wicked smile confidently.

"Heil Hitler", I brightly responded and dropped my light meter. Pick up light meter and drop camera. Pick up camera and drop light meter, pass port, and pen. Drop camera just for the hell of it.

"Well", remarked wicked smile, "you're really a big clumsy elephant, aren't you?"

Craftily I responded with a subtle insult. "Ah ha, that may be so, but if I had your wicked little nose and turned up smile I---" Common sense took over and I retreated.

Her parting remark echoed in my ears. "And I bet your name is Clyde, too."

This somewhat rocky start soured me temporarily on the tour and I decided to skip out and visit on my own. I wanted to see the famous London University and get some information on entrance requirements, and general statistics on the school. My visual and olfactory receptions were staggering. It smelled as if the fog and termites were winning, and the lobby of the main building appeared to have recently sustained a direct hit by something on the order of V-a or a buzz bomb. But with firm resolve I went to the door marked "Admissions" and entered. The cramped dingy office was occupied by what appeared to be an escapee from a very old and seamy Dickens novel.

"Yeth?" he queried.

"No!" I responded and fled.

III

After a day or so in London the tour departed and went to Dover where we took passage on a boat for the Hook of Holland. When the boat started across the channel I felt it was a good time to strike. You see, by this time not only did the whole tour know I was Clyde, but I knew wicked smile was named Mary. Through crafty manipulation, I found myself with Mary and her girl friend Claire in the boat's lounge in pleasant, sophisticated discussion. Things were moving so smoothly that I insisted on ordering the drinks. With Playboy magazine's travelers' refreshment quite in mind I ordered Rhine Beer and Continental Coffee. This was supposed to be a devastating combination for a seasoned traveler, and I stupidly said so. I must admit the girls did look at me with a good deal more respect. I gloried smugly until the waiter came and poured the order. I was barely able to keep a uniquely American expletive under my breath as I gazed at the two black neotors before me. The beer would have made a buttermilk drinker cringe. I turned to the coffee and tilted the cup. My mind screamed in pain as I realized that the fluid was so thick it was barely inching

its way to the lip of the cup. I suddenly realized that a voice in the back of my mind was gleefully yelling "Yeth!" I looked into the unreadable eyes of Mary and Claire, who were watching me. Gently and ever so slightly they smiled. The girls smiled and the voice said, "Yeth."

Don't get the impression I was the only one with troubles. Take, for example, the middle aged Italian plumber, named Tony, from Philadelphia. He's best described as a short, plump, friendly, loud mouth that constantly was shooting motion pictures with his new Kodak. The particular incident happened in Holland. While backing up to get the correct distance for a shot he stepped in front of a speeding motor bike and was promptly and thoroughly run over. The little old gent running the cycle was thrown heavily and seemed quite frightened. Groggily Tony began heaping abuse on him in great quantities. The grey haired cycle owner began to speak quietly in swift foreign tongue. Tony remarked that it was about time he started to apologize. The guide, who was watching all this (and understood seven languages including these particular ones), calmly remarked, "Tony, please shut up. He's swearing at you in three languages." As Tony retreated I smugly whisped, "Yeth."

But a day or so later events took a turn for the worse. We were stopping over in Brussels, and the tour members decided to visit a night club en masse. I cornered Mary for the outing and felt that my stock could be boosted by careful manipulation of the evening. The club turned out to be small and dimly lit, sporting conservative furnishings. The waiters were very quiet and efficient in their serving. When the spotlight flashed on the small eyelevel stage in the center of the floor, I was scarcely prepared for what followed. I dropped the glass I was holding and made a drowning gurgle that sounded so much like a belch that Mary ordered me to excuse myself. All I could think in my frantic consciousness was, "Where are their clothes? Ladies, please, dignity, the Law, decency is outraged! Help!" And as it (the show) got better, I got worse. When the blond hung the nylon around my neck I became incoherent. My jokes about drafts, etc., coupled with critical and discerning comments on the general situation came in an increasingly hysterical fashion. I was so far gone that Mary's remark midway in the show of, "Clyde, you're a real tiger", sounded like a compliment. Not later---then.

Now I wouldn't say that I lack the normal desire for adventure, but I do become rattled under certain circumstances. Take the time we were in Switzerland and the whole tour was being ferried to the top of an alp in a cable car. The car was relatively small and very packed. We stood, packed close together, gazing out the windows and admiring the ride up. That is, you do if you care to admire anything by looking down while hanging from two cables and suspended better than three thousand feet above a rocky gorge. Personally I decided to look elsewhere, in front of me, to be more exact. She was a plump little brunette with rosy cheeks, a soft

round figure, with, with, --easy Clyde. Anyway, there she was in front of me, all of her, so to speak. Why, I could have reached out and touched her if I hadn't had my camera in one hand and the collapsible tripod in the other. It was the tripod that caused the trouble. You see the ride was a little lurchy and I kind of jabbed her, so to speak. Except for a little squeal she ignored me completely. Mortified, I tried to get the tripod out of the firing line and hooked her a good one, instead. No sound this time but her back became perceptively straighter. Almost faint with my blundering I stood rigidly unmoving, which is the reason I was so off balance when we halted at the stopping point with a gigantic lurch. To my horror I had scored again. With the macabre picture of me holding a harpooned salmon over my head on the end of a spear, I waited for the ax to fall. What happened was more terrible than anything I could have imagined. She glanced over her shoulder, gave me a faint little smile, and purred! "Clyde!" my mind screamed, "She purred!, What now Clyde?" "Stop purring you fool, you've been harpooned by Nanook!"

To relieve the tension I went through my little light meter-camera dropping routine and also jabbed a couple old ladies for good measure. I was so far gone I didn't even get out of the car; I just rode back down and sat in the bus.

V

By now you see how the mop flops. I could go on and on with this, and that's probably what you're afraid I'll do. Actually I would like to explain one last situation to you. You more than likely remember I mentioned Tony and his accident. He didn't take kindly to my little jokes about how natural he looked inverted, things on that order. By the time I quit kidding he was pell mell into making me miserable with practical jokes. For example, when we were in Rome he went to a local truck dealer and bought a used garbage truck in my name. They even drove the smelly thing up to the hotel to collect their money. Or the time I answered a knock on my hotel room door to see a toothless old bawd grinning in at me. But the last straw was in Monaco. Tony tipped the security police at the Monte Carlo Casino that I was carrying a gun and I was arrested. Stern measures were certainly in order.

The little party I arranged went something like this. The day we were to drive into Paris I sent a little telegram ahead to our hotel for Tony when we arrived. The next step was to feed him a harmless looking, mild tasting little drink called a Ricardi at every stop we made on the way. By the time we pulled up in front of our Paris hotel Tony didn't step down from the bus, he kind of floated, face first. He was at the stage where I was Clyde and he was Torny and things were great. The telegram at the desk proved impossible for him to read, so I did the honors. In a loud, clear voice I read,

"Tony, I'm pregnant, I must see you
immediately!"

"Signed,
You Know Who"

Tony's great big conscience sobered him up enough for him to say "Gorful" before he passed out. The fact that I didn't let him off the hook (nor did the rest of the tour members) until we reached New York put a great big brake on his activities.

And so, that was Europe and Clyde. You can see by now that John Gunther and the agency travel folders have been holding out. Sometime I hope I have the chance to tell you about some more equally interesting little adventures. Anyway, I'll see you around--probably the horn, if you're anything like me.

—R. Bruce Bedell

"IT'S A THOUGHT"

Were I to die tomorrow
I would not bother with those pretty words
Men mutter each to each
But something within me would cry aloud
Demanding to be heard.
Fear of everlasting dumbness
Might crush all walls of vanity and hate
Which in life enslave me.
I could cry out unashamedly
I would denounce openly
All human pretense, prejudice, and pride.
My death would be a violent one.

But, if I should die
Before I waken
All courage within me,
It will be a quiet death,
Finished while still mumbling childish prayers.
Yet, even then the world shall be a better place
Not for my having lived in it,
But for my dying.
Dying, I leave one less hypocrite,
One less coward,
One less slave.

—Rosalee J. Sprout

PEOPLE IN TWAIN

It was painful to draw away from the insulation of daily routine. Even for these few days, the interruption was difficult.

Maude was always glad when the withdrawal had been made. Once it had, she could go along with the rush of people traveling and feel, for a while, a part of them. This was one of those few times when this sensation was really possible.

It was strange to feel as one of them. First those on the plane, then those on the bus, and now to be a lone passenger again in a taxi.

The trees had just begun to block the view of the interesting areas, as they had also done back in the suburbs and as the signs and confusion had done back in the city.

There were places now between the trees where the water of the lake could be seen even by the dim of dusk.

The taxi driver's remarks seemed to be repetitions of things heard a hundred times before. Each remark he probably repeated to every passenger. If he did, he must be much more bored by them than any of his passengers. But perhaps he and they could be satisfied with the same being constantly mulled over.

The taxi pulled into a familiar lane almost hidden by the thickening trees. Ahead, a large house loomed. Even though Maude was past middle age and she had seen the same house innumerable times, the approach to it always seemed almost melodramatic. She found melodrama a strange sensation to connect with her own family home.

*

*

*

Inside the large house, the atmosphere was different than the outside impression, now as always.

"Was the trip interesting for you, Maude?" This question came from the steaming kitchen.

Mom always steams up the place when she cooks, Maude thought. It's a shame she doesn't read the works of Betty Crocker along with the works of Norman Vincent Peale. Mom is positive enough without consuming that trash.

Suddenly Maude connected some things.

Peale tries to get people to accept what they are. This is in a sense accepting what exists without knowing what is really possible. Mom must accept that herself.

Every thing could at that instant be seen to support this new viewpoint. Edna and Maude were mother and daughter. But, they were completely different people. Maude's mind associated all her past experiences with her mother with relation to this new idea.

Mom.. isolated.. only her world..
selfish.. past and present selfish..

not much future left. . that's selfish
too...
Taxi driver. . Mom's no different. .
must be though. . college. . long life. .
no. . .

The call to the meal temporarily broke the pattern. At the table the usual neatly surface conversation flowed onward toward nothingness. Each was caught up in the glow of being together again. Each fired into the flow of speech bright meaningless sparks which kept the upsurge of verbalizations constant.

Then came the remark. "Maude, one of the cottage renters had a bad fall last night. He might not live."

Back to that pattern of thought about her mother went Maude's consciousness.

How does Mother feel about that? . . can't all
fit neatly. . perhaps, it does. . maybe
that is what makes it all reasonable
to her. . .

If death is ever in her mind, she
wouldn't see the necessity of re-
lations to others.

The whirlpool was started again. Al was seen in relation to this new, now old, idea of her mother. The woman across the table even looked different. She was now not mother. She was all those people that needed a good shock to start them out of their selfish adjusted lives.

The surface conversation, of course, rolled neatly onward! An observer would have noticed no irregularities.

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Edna reached for one of her favorite books. Reading these familiar passages seemed to strengthen Edna. Her life had been one of service to her family. Nothing outside this circle really mattered. Whatever could strengthen her mind and attitudes was all that really mattered.

Now she lived alone. Her role was the same, though. She still was an anchor for what was left of her family. Her life patterns were set. To change, would be to destroy completely.

"Edna!" Maude shouted from the next room. "Where did you find this old Bible of mine? I thought it was lost for good."

Edna replied naturally. She sat, still thinking, into the open book. That Bible means something to Maude. For me it symbolizes what I have always tried to be. It must do the same for her. It's a good feeling to have a woman life Maude come from this house.

Maude was handling the old Bible. It seemed to symbolize to her what she had built her life on. She didn't feel a tie to any church. She couldn't come close to verbalizing why the Bible was

important to her. Vaguely it was everything she was. That seemed strange. Surely so vital an object should have more than a general meaning.

In the next room, Maude could see the form of her mother slightly bent over a book. Maude wondered what she was reading. She pondered how anyone could always be so involved in immediate activities and never evaluate beyond them.

"This is a beautiful old volume, isn't it, Edna?"

After Maude got out with her bag, the taxi pulled away from the bus depot. Edna had enjoyed the ride in to the depot. There was no reason why the drive back home should not also be pleasant. The trees made interesting patterns against the white houses. The suburbs were really fine for those who were used to them.

Soon the trees, with their varied shapes, began to grow close to the road.

The driver of the taxi shortened the ride with his conversation. Edna thought. It was good to feel like an anchor. It was good to feel that even at an advanced age, there was a use for one.

—Dan Lundy

'Twas This and Nothing More'

'Twas the sweetness of the scented summer air.

'Twas the feeling of the wind lifting my hair.

'Twas a moment and a time without a care.

'Twas this and nothing more.

'Twas the twinkle of the stars upon the sea.

'Twas the lapping of the waves caressing me.

'Twas the softness of the shadows I could see.

'Twas this and nothing more.

'Twas the longing of a heart that yearns for peace.

'Twas the company, convenient at least.

'Twas the whole, on which my senses bowed to feast.

'Twas this and nothing more.

—Isobel E. Black

POSTHUMOUS

In the summer Hanna sold watermelons off an old Ford truck and in the winter lived as best she could, generally supporting a drunken husband and an ever growing brood of kids. But that was when she was younger and not really caring so much about anyone or anything. Later she would look back on these as good years, perhaps the best years of her life; but years belonging in the chart of another person's life, for she had changed that much.

Her first loss had been her independence as various necessities forced her into a life of obedience and servitude and gradually she became as an old domesticated animal, completely devoid of spirit seeking only to eat, work and sleep.

"Good evening Doctor Shelder," she said as a tall, stooped scholarly-looking gentleman approached down the hall.

"Good evening, Hanna," he returned looking whimsically through his business-man type glasses, "there's a fellow sitting on the floor down on first who appears to be in pretty bad shape; I think he works around here."

"I'll bet it's Jim again," she muttered half to herself, "I'll go down and see." As the professor continued his course down the hall, Hanna turned and shuffled quickly into a nearby office which she and her husband were in the process of cleaning.

He was, as usual, sitting by a window with a cigarette in his hand. "What the hell you trying to do, keep us here till midnight? Let's get going." He turned his shriveled figure only far enough to spit in a nearby paper can and continued cursing under his breath.

"Oh hush, or the people will hear you," she retorted as a too loving mother to a problem son. "I think Jim's sitting down in the hall drunk. I'm going down and help him to his room."

"The hell with him!" he answered, bringing his constant muttering into the range of audibility once more. "Any man who has to get drunk every week should----"

"Now Papa," she interrupted him, again in her assumed hurt tone, "I remember when---"

"Oh, get the hell going."

"Poor Jim," she whispered in an exhaust of breath as she began lowering her rather plump, short stature from step to step in the descent to first floor. He hadn't been working in the building long--not long as she considered her twenty-year servitude. She didn't really know him well, but had developed some sort of affinity for him which she did not fully understand. Perhaps she felt sorry for him because he was so young or perhaps he represented the type of men she had grown up with, or had at least grown accustomed to. Whatever the reason, she liked Jim and

felt an inward compulsion to help him. She knew she couldn't, really, for there were too many things separating them; time, age, education and personality--yes, personality. She changed her mind in a reflective instant; he was different from the type of men she had known. When sober, a deeper light of another man seemed incessantly lurking in the background; a man too alive for a position such as Jim held, a man perhaps of the type she had worked for twenty years among but had never really seen. Something or someone had shaken him from one caste into another which he did not entirely fit to her knowing eyes. His slavery to alcohol had all but erased the lines.

As Hanna reached first floor, her suspicions were proven correct. Jim sat placidly in the middle of the main hall with his head in his hands. Hanna stood for a moment at the foot of the stairs looking at the spectacle before her with knowing insight, and then moved to a position before and above him before she spoke. "Come on, Jim, I'll help you down to your room."

"I could make it if I could just remember where the stairs are," he answered thickly.

"Sure Jim, sure, I'll help you." She spoke soothingly as she hooked her short stubby arm under his. It was hard work for old Hanna because she was so short and Jim so tall, but she finally managed to half carry him down the stairs to the basement where he slept.

Jim fumbled with his keys and Hanna took them from his none too steady hand, and opened the door. After finding the light switch on the wall, she again turned to Jim, who, without support, was slowly swaying back and forth. As she guided him toward his bed, Hanna began to feel more familiar with Jim than she ever had before; it was as if she had known him all his life without knowing him at all, and confronted him now as a mother meeting her son as he staggered home drunk for the first time. As Jim, half-way under his own power, sprawled onto the bed, Hanna seated herself on one corner and in a sweet-mother-like tone asked, "How old are you, Jim?" She had to repeat the question twice before he aroused himself from his imposed stupor to answer.

"Thirty-four," he answered finally as from a dream.

"Were you ever married?" she continued.

"Yah, I was married once," he began sleepily and then roused himself to near consciousness.

Hanna observed that this was a touchy issue, so spoke pointedly. "Tell me about it, Jim."

"I married this woman before the war," he began abstractedly. "She was an artist--you know, she painted--pictures. All the time she painted pictures and went to club meetings and--and then I went into the airforce and she sent letters all the time telling about her paintings and service club stuff-----"

"Yes, Jim; then what happened?"

"And then I didn't get so many letters until I got a letter from this guy---friend of mine----said she was going out with this guy

I'd never heard of-----going out a lot with this guy, see----and I never saw her again. I guess I showed her she couldn't pull a deal like that on me and get away with it, I'll bet she's really ----
-----"

Under the impact of his soul revealing, Jim broke into a series of agonized sobs, and Hanna, realizing the futility of trying to reason with him in his condition, quietly left.

As she ascended the stairs to the second floor, Hanna also began to feel the impact of the foregoing episode, but what had been mere revealing for Jim became cleansing for her. In a crystalizing flash, she pictured Jim's life as her life in reverse ----somewhere they had passed each other going in opposite directions, but both ends were the same end----both roads of life led to slavery. She suddenly lost any sense of pity she might have felt for Jim and began to feel terribly sorry for herself. This soon passed and she began to feel a strange sort of strength flowing into her. Even when she entered the same room she had been cleaning before and saw the same slovenly husband her new series of thoughts stayed with her.

"What the hell were you doing, telling him a bed-time story?" he interrogated with his usual vigor. "You wasted almost an hour."

Hanna abstractedly mumbled assent, but she knew she hadn't wasted the hour---she could lie to her husband, but she could no longer lie to herself. This had been the most profitable hour she had spent in twenty years. For once she felt the urge to quit living in other people and begin living herself. Again grasping her dust-mop she began working with her usual vigor, but her mind was also working, working with more vigor than she could ever have thought possible. As she glanced over at her husband still sitting by the window, she began to feel as though she hated him. For years she had lived for him and then she had lived in him, posthumously in a sense, but now she hated him----yes she knew she really hated him. She again glanced over in his direction to confirm her new-formed thoughts and with a start burst into wild laughter. In that instant she had seen him, not as a man, but as an empty whiskey bottle.

—Gary Gesaman

AD INFINITUM

The mouth of God whispered
and the tree trembled.
The mouth of God spoke
and the tree shook.
The mouth of God shouted
and the tree threw a tiny body to the ground.

This tiny body feared God and burrowed itself
deep into the earth,

Only to find

The earth was God.

In desperation it shot itself upward,
to no avail;

God was everywhere.

And so

It grew,

And

As the mouth of God whispered, it trembled.

—*Sue McMurray*

???

Confusion surrounds us!
Our muddled minds mass
Only to find an empty fruitless grasp.
To escape, we sink into a jelly of unreality
Caught like a summer bug
Attracted to the sweetness of golden honey!

—*Karen Carey*

BE QUIET

Why waste time with thought?
The surface of what you are told
Is enough.
Accept without wonder.

That there is a God,
Don't doubt.
Education should be for all. . . .
Shouldn't it?
Strive for a better end,
Don't ask why.

Filial piety is necessary;
Superiority of the minority
Makes it right.
It's not for us to question.

We must make us rich.

Rich in what?

Hush!!
Be quiet, don't anger--
Appease.
Conform, accept,
Close your mind to thought,
Doubt, uneasiness.
It's easier that way. . . .
Isn't it?

—Diane Huntsinger

THE INTERMINGLING OF TWO SOULS

Let the feelings and overflowing emotions of my soul permeate your own until they intermingle--until they reach the depths of time and fade away into eternity. Let my thoughts be your thoughts, the happy thoughts of youth that course through my very heart of hearts, that become the farthest reaches of life itself. Then, let the feelings of my soul and the thoughts of my mind intertwine with your own as the meeting of two rivers whose combining rhythms and colours become more rhythmic and radiant as they flow farther along their course, until they reach the highest form of fathomless expression found within the depths of the ocean.

Then, let us step out together into the world, that all may see the image we have created. You in me and me in you. That the world may know us both as but a part of that which even we don't understand, whose misunderstanding lies only within the depths of others like us.

—Isobel E. Black

IN THE EVENING OF INHABITING MISTS

In the evening of inhabiting mists
We follow the darkness of lonely trees,
And among the fervent leaves, oiled and evil,
Our spirits move in serenity scanning high
Led in subtle motion
Unaware, but to a cooling earth is touched.

.. And the murmurings around us are the echoings of depths.
But these tones pass on with a wind. .

As we silently walk in gray incense of the night.

—Linda Joy

A CHILD CLOUD - WATCHING

Have you ever watched the clouds
As they go floating by,
When the cherry tree's in blossom
And the plum against the sky?

Ships turn into elephants
And tigers into trains,
While vapor mountains pile on high
Or crumble into plains.

With your back against the earth,
Eyes fixed upon what seems,
Clouds move unending in parade
And perform your childish dreams.

—Rosalee J. Sprout

TWISTED.

Persevere, relax;
Strengthen, weaken;
Love, hate!
All meanings different,
Eons apart. Yet all
Show likeness when they're bent.
Bent as is a child's ball,
When thrown against a wall.
Distorted, twisted, bent,
But bouncing back to life, as
Truth is found, even though spent.
So meaning is given life,
And life given to truth.
Truths eons apart, yet,
In mortal minds combined!

—Jerry Bean

THIEF

The bones lay white beneath the sod
No longer shod in flesh and skin.
The soul alone is raised to God
A pod of goodness doubt and sin.

This is all we carry past
Our last encounter with our kind.
No veil of white to shield our casts
No mast of culture to hide behind.

How then are we the greater race?
White of face but not of soul.
We who live on self-made grace
While neighbors die with the trust we stole.

—Gary Gesaman

... CONFORM, CONFORM, CONFORM ...

I was commanded to kneel.	I obeyed.
I was commanded to rise.	I obeyed.
I was commanded to bow.	I obeyed.
I was commanded to speak.	I obeyed.
I was commanded to love.	I could not.

—Sue McMurray

REFLECTIONS

A warm coat comforts one
On a cold winter's evening!

A warm coat,
A shield from piercing winds,
Protection from the loneliness
Of the endlessness of snowy hills
In the moonlight!

Can a warm coat
So comforting now
Be a ridiculous thing
On a sweltering day of July?

—Karen Carey

THE VOICE

What sweet delights, so great, are found
While hearing words of old with sound
Which, when combined with voices new
Glow forth as fresh as morning dew.

Yet pleasure more, it seems to be,
When foresight deems to show to me
The future greatness of this yet
Unknown delight I'll ne'er forget.

—Isobel E. Black

PEACE

When night enfolds me in its cloak
Of comfort sprinkled peace,
And noises of the busy day
Are smothered 'til they cease;

When stars begin to dazzle me
With diamond tinted light,
And naughty breezes lift my hair
With whispers of delight;

When moonbeams make their merry way
Through cracks in bolted doors,
And paint the ancient mountainsides
O'er shadowing the moors;

My heart begins to burst once more
With unimagined peace,
That neither world nor man may change,
Nor even time can cease.

—*Isobel E. Black*

THE SYMBOL

Degenerate, pretentious, ill-advised--
Convenient confusion thus devised
To satisfy unsettled paths of thought
In which we each are diligently caught.

Unsettledness, transgression, unbelief,
To everyone, in time, a common thief.
On ignorance, presumption, fear and hate,
So carefully we each our symbols rate.

Continuing to breathe this stagnant air
We travel with decreasing sense of care.
Expediency seems the main intent
On which our aims are prominently bent.

With such indoctrination let us cease,
And search for self-awareness, latent peace,
For here we'll find there's greater gain than loss;
And thus, my friend, I give to you the cross.

—*Isobel E. Black*

THE SENSES IN SOLITUDE

I alone:

saw the far off farm reflecting life,
mirroring birth and growth and death
to the distant light of a car, stealing slowly into sight.
to a person with a purpose riding somewhere on a road.

I alone:

felt the breeze against my arm
wafting along the slight scent of a nearby pine
as it softly sang over the cool green earth.

While up above me stretched the coral-colored
cloud-streaked sky.

And each alone:

the bird
a solitary star
and I.

—*Marilyn Gauger*

THE EFFECT OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The spring of each year brings nominating committees and assemblies to order on every college and university campus across the nation. These influential groups nominate slates of candidates for the offices of the student governments.

With these caucuses, there begins an inevitable chain of forces from which none of the participants can be exempt. Each individual is caught up in a certain set of almost predetermined reactions. The effect of these forces on the individual is an extremely urgent if not the singularly important aspect of our student governments. These forces must be recognized, for they will be existent as long as there is the same general framework for student government which exists today. These forces are built into the very organizational patterns which make up the student government process.

The nominating committees and conventions are set up for one reason. This reason is to get the persons whom the group supposedly represents elected. These clusters of minds come together each spring with this aim foremost. They are not brimming over with ideas for improvements and changes that should be made. If these matters ever enter their consciousness, they are thought of only as stepping stones to get their candidates elected. For the most part, however, these things are not even considered by the nominating group.

Those things which are considered by the nominating set are directly understandable considering the reason for their formation. There are certain requirements which the candidates must meet in order to best serve the foremost aim of the nominating group. They must be vote getters.

It is for this reason persons are nominated. The qualifications of the person for the job are considered, if at all, only secondarily. These groups are doing exactly and usually well just what they were intended to do.

The person who is selected has a very different idea of why he was nominated. He usually is naive enough to think that he was selected because of his qualifications for the office or his leadership potential. The workings of the nominating group are understood to be vastly different than they happen to be in practice or even in theory. This is the first major deception to which the would-be leader is subjected. This first delusion is the most inescapable. Even those who are cunningly nominated by a committee of which they are a vocal part, fake themselves into believing that this is a sign of qualification. Regardless of the outcome of the election, all are affected by this nominating farce.

It is after all this manipulation that the time finally comes when those participating are forced to consider some issues.

The personnel running the show has now changed. Those who created false ideas of the nominees, both in the nominee's own mind and in the minds of all observing the procedure, now partly with-

draw. The new show runners, usually made up of a large dose of nominating "ram rods", now go to work. They carefully consider what can be said without hurting their chances for election. The number of issues which can be avoided is also carefully calculated.

It can be clearly seen that the methods of nomination, which were not formed by those now using them, can have a strange effect on the individuals involved.

When the elections are over, there could be said to be three classifications for the persons voted on. There are those who are defeated and qualified. Some are victorious and unqualified. A few are elected though qualified.

Those who are defeated though qualified are struck by two ideas. One idea is that they must not be qualified. This is false in this case. This could be called a false positive conception. They conceive positively that their voting society is correct. This is, of course, false. The other idea which could possess them is that all who are qualified are not elected. They may know that they are the right kind of material for the job and from this take an extremely negative view of society.

Those who find themselves victorious yet are unqualified are in a very peculiar situation. They may gain the misleading notion that they are qualified. This is the false positive concept. This can have a very disastrous effect on the personality. An awakening usually comes, some time. When it does there can be an almost complete personality break down. This person may realize he is not qualified. If he realizes this, his deduction is that the voting society must certainly be fools. This can be labeled this category's possible negative view of society.

There are those who are elected even though qualified. They have somehow chanced through all the various machinery which filters out such foreign invaders. These persons are not exempt from false notions. The logical deduction for these persons, to make is to feel that they were elected because of their qualifications. This is a false view of the situation. These persons may be led to contract, thus, a false positive view of society.

There do exist in the framework of student governments, forces from which none of the participants can be insulated. These forces instill false attitudes about the society and about the self.

False attitudes are damaging to the individual.

Perhaps we should hope for the nomination and further mauling of those persons who will be damaged the least.

—Dan Lundy

ALONE

Harold placed two drinks on the table and stood waiting for the money. Whitey paid him and reached for a cigarette.

"Bring the baseball board", he said as the bartender turned to go.

"Sure thing", said the large, coarse ex-prize fighter. "But you're a damn crook if you win again tomorrow!"

People, mostly men, were starting to fill the small bar as the after-work rush began. Whitey downed his scotch in three quick gulps and looked across the table at Marie.

"Miss Peterson, why don't you marry me?"

The attractive brunette regarded him caustically with her dark brown eyes.

"Mr. Sands, why don't you order another drink?"

Whitey puffed at the filter of his cigarette. He changed the subject.

"The 'old man' really hit the ceiling today. For two cents I'd really tell him how to run a radio station."

"I couldn't care less," said Marie as she lit her own cigarette.

"Boy, you're really out to win friends and influence people tonite", said Whitey. "If I didn't have to catch up on some work, I'd help you get drunk. We haven't done the town together for over a month. Last time was the Fourth, wasn't it?"

"I left my calendar at home."

"Well, I have work to do. I've got to check the log, then write a report for the 'old man' about why we lost the Chevy account. Boy, could I tell him a thing or two about..."

"Is that all you can talk about?" she interrupted, "Why don't you set up housekeeping at that place? All you would need is a typewriter and a bar!"

Whitey avoided her glance as he paid for another round. The noise level in the bar increased as someone started feeding dimes into the juke-box.

"Well, I'll see you in the morning. Time for all good office managers to come to the aid of their office."

"Hell!"

Whitey got up to leave, adding, "By the way, doll, you'd better get some food, that last one was a double."

"Listen, Whitey, I have enough people telling me how to run my affairs now. Please find another subject for your philanthropy." He shrugged and went in search of Harold and the baseball board.

Marie sighed and ground her cigarette into the ashtray.

"Mind if I sit?" said a tall blond man - the one who had been feeding the juke-box.

"Why not?" Marie replied. "That is, if you just sit and don't talk."

He dropped into his chair and tipsily surveyed his prey.

"My name is John," he said, "and I'm sure your's must be Marsha."

"Guess again, friend," she said, "but don't do it out loud because you'll be talking to yourself."

With that she picked up her bag and left the table. The young man watched her well-formed hips as she walked toward the door.

He scratched his head and moved back to the juke-box.

Marie smoked two cigarettes as she drove home in her ten-year-old Ford. The brakes, she noted, were going almost to the floor. She wished that she could afford a new car, but even this one was almost too much for her salary as a radio commercial writer.

Automatically Marie turned a final corner and braked the vehicle in front of an attractive two-story frame house. The place looked exactly as it had ten years ago when she and her father had come to live with her aunt after her mother left. Popping a stick of gum into her mouth, Marie mounted the steps and entered the hall.

"Is that you, Hans?" asked a too-high voice. "Why are you home so early? It's only five-thirty."

Georgia Peterson entered the hall just as Marie had started for the steps to the upstairs. Her greying black hair was rolled into the customary bun on the back of her head. Gold rimmed eyeglasses gave Georgia a sort of "puritan" appearance. The late middle aged woman was every bit the part of the "maiden aunt".

"Oh, it's you! I thought you had gone for good. Why didn't you come home last night? You might at least have had the courtesy to call. You can thank the Lord that you aren't my daughter, because I wouldn't for a minute let you run around the way you do. As a matter of fact, if it weren't for your father I wouldn't let you live in my house for another minute."

"Let's not go into that again. You know darn well that Grandpa left this house to Dad as much as to you. Anyway, if I get the raise I want I'll be moving out without your help."

The older woman stalked across the hall shaking her finger.

"That's all you need for your complete ruin, young lady. Then you'll be able to come and go all you want with that wild bunch of friends of yours."

Georgia paused for a second, then wrinkled her nose in disgust.

"I smell liquor. Haven't I told you before never to enter this house smelling like a brewery?"

Marie turned without answering and climbed the stairs. Mechanically she shut out the new barrage from her aunt and slammed the bedroom door behind her. She flung herself on the bed and lay for a long time looking at the ceiling.

Downstairs, the front door opened and then closed quietly, announcing the arrival of the man of the house. Hans Peterson, middle aged and balding, uttered a reticent greeting to his sister

and headed for the living room and his evening paper.

"Good evening, Dad," said Marie who had come down from her room. "You look tired."

"Summer inventory, honey," he replied as he looked up from the paper and removed his glasses. "I guess I should have started on the books earlier, I'm kind of behind." Hans spoke in his usual almost apologetic way.

"Dad, I'm sorry I didn't call last nite. I stayed with Betty."

"She's the one who keeps books for the radio station isn't she?"

"No, that's Elsie, I just met Betty a few weeks ago."

"Well, Georgia did raise kind of a fuss, but we'll talk about it later. There is no real..."

"Dinner is ready," called Georgia from the kitchen. Hans obediently arose and went to wash for supper.

Marie shrugged and headed for the kitchen.

Georgia opened the table conversation after a long labored pause.

"Hans, your supper will be in the oven when you get home tomorrow. I'll be at a dinner meeting of the W. C. T. U. And don't forget to call the plumber tomorrow. He doesn't have the hot water heater working right, yet. I'm going to make sure he gets the job done properly before he gets any money from us."

Hans grunted, his attention occupied entirely by the bread he was buttering.

"Hans, do you hear me?"

Hans stopped buttering. "Yes, Georgia, I'll do it as soon as I get time."

Only the occasional sound of a piece of silver hitting a plate broke the silence that followed.

Georgia once again broke the labored quiet.

"Well, has your daughter told you where she was last night? Is she going to live here or not? I know it's none of my business, but if I had any control over her..."

The sharp impact of Marie's knife hitting the table brought the monolog to a sudden stop. Hans watched with concern as the young woman violently slid her chair from the table and stormed out of the kitchen.

Thirty minutes later Georgia's monolog was interrupted by the click of spike heels in the hall and then the slam of the front door.

Marie slipped into the front seat of the Ford wearing her tightest slacks and her most revealing sweater. Her cigarette was covered with the lipstick she had forgotten to blot in her haste.

Betty's apartment house left something to be desired in regard to location. Peoria is not a large city, but like most river towns, it has a wide variety of neighborhoods. The vile smell of cooking cabbage and sour milk blended strangely with Marie's Chanel #5.

The door was never locked, so Marie entered without knocking. Betty (Marie didn't know her last name) sat on a pillow next

to a large red pouf reading a book.

"The ice is in the shower," Betty said without looking up. Marie, by now accustomed to the strange ways of her new friends, selected a not-too-dirty high-ball glass from the stack by the small sink and rinsed it under the tap.

"When you finish," said Betty, "flip the disks on the stereo."

Marie did as she was told and seated herself on a cushion across the pouf from Betty after selecting a book called "Temple of Gold." Ten minutes passed and Marie put down the book in which she could not get absorbed.

She scanned the now familiar room, noticing the cracked walls covered in places with carefully selected surrealist painting. The coffee table was made of white marble, and a yellow shag rug was showing wear and soil. Books on the home-made shelf included everything from "The Organization Man" to "On the Road."

Her gaze shifted to her "hostess." Short-cropped black hair, dark horn-rimmed glasses, and dark green eyes combined with too much make-up to produce the sort of appearance which went well with the room. She, thought Marie, was certainly the picture of la calm and cool femme.

"This is really swinging stuff," said Betty as she put down 'The Way of Zen'. Ever read anything about Zen Buddhism?"

"No," Marie replied thoughtfully, "but it sounds rather beyond me."

"Not at all, it's actually the same sort of thing that Pete talks about when he is on his religious kicks. Zen is a sect which does away almost completely with all of this ritual jazz. Instead of spending all their time worrying about whether they say their prayers right, they try to achieve a direct union with their god. They seem to have some pretty good ideas."

"I'd like to read the book," said Marie.

"Well, are you still worshipping at the shrine of the organization, or have you quit your job?" asked Betty.

"I'd quit tomorrow if I had a job like yours. What exactly does a private secretary do, anyway?"

Betty laughed, showing even white teeth. "That is a professional secret."

"Well, I'd rather slave over a typewriter than over a stove," declared Marie.

"Amen."

"None of the marriage bit for me," continued Marie. "Slave around a dull house all week, scream at the kids, then get beat-up by the old man when you even talk nice to the mail-man."

"Yeah, and you sit home while he is out with the boys," interjected Betty.

"Or with his private secretary!" concluded Marie with a smile.

"Touchee".

Betty lit a cigarette and started weaving her head and shoulders to the saxophone music coming from the stereo. Marie, refilled

both hers and Betty's glass with scotch and resumed the conversation.

"Say, Betty, Pete never has said where he is from."

"And he probably won't either," she replied. "Anyway, what difference does it make where he comes from or even where he is going? The only thing that matters is right now."

"You know," said Marie, "I think I'm beginning to agree."

Footsteps sounded on the stairs and Pete Castle stepped into the room. His wash pants were soiled, and although his shirt was clean it showed traces of paint which hadn't been washed out.

"Hello, Picasso," said Betty. "Flip the disks!"

Pete flipped.

"Sounds like the Bird," Pete said as he stepped from the machine to the bar. "Wait till you see my next canvass. I'm doing it with an eye-dropper and a shovel."

Three more guests arrived and the stereo became louder as the voices became softer. Betty and a man Marie hadn't met were in one corner reading aloud from a book of poetry by Allen Ginsberg. Marie and 'Picasso' were at the bar.

"You haven't seen the mural I did in the bedroom," he said as he handed Marie another scotch.

"That," said Marie, "ish the Truth."

*

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Marie vomited for the fifth consecutive time and then burst into a new fit of crying. Her insides were so sore that she could barely straighten. She rinsed her mouth with water and went back to the bedroom. Cold November air whistled through the partly open window and Marie shivered in misery. Her watch said 6 a. m. She decided that she would call the station and tell them that she was sick again. How long would she be able to work if she didn't do something? But she must do something. - anything. Perhaps if she told her father. Maybe he could suggest something. . . .

Marie was awakened by the sound of Hans's shaver. It was 7:30, according to the clock beside the bed. Her father would have a few minutes before breakfast. Marie got out of bed and almost fell back from dizziness. Regaining her strength she put on her duster and went into the hall. Hans was just going into his bedroom.

He was just tying his tie as she came in and sat on the bed. He seemed surprised by her entry, but smiled pleasantly.

"Why aren't you getting ready for work, Marie?"

"I'm not going in today. I don't feel well,"

"That's too bad. Perhaps if you got more sleep. . ."

"It isn't the lack of sleep, Dad. I went to the doctor last week and had a complete examination. . ."

"Well, there has been a virus going around. Just the other day

a man from. . ."

"Dad, the doctor says I'm pregnant!"

Hans dropped his tie-pin and stared at her in disbelief. After a pause he asked:

"Are you sure? Perhaps another doctor. . ."

"For God's sake, yes, I'm sure. What shall I do? What can I do?"

"I don't know, honey, I just don't know. But - we'll work something out. Maybe Georgia can suggest something. . ."

"No! Leave her out of this."

Hans smiled sympathetically and turned to go. As he walked from the room, Marie noticed that he appeared a bit more stooped and more tired than usual.

Her insides were beginning to turn over again. She wanted to vomit, but knew she couldn't. Shuddering, she dried her eyes and went back to her room.

The only course now would be to get out of this house before she had to put up with another lecture from Georgia. Marie took a couple of suitcases from the closet. As she started filling them with various belongings the same questions posed themselves for the hundredth time in a week.

Where could she go? Maybe she could stay with Betty for a while. Perhaps she could save enough money for an operation. How much would that cost? What if they found out at the station? She refused even to consider a home for unwed mothers. That would be a last resort.

As she continued to pack, Marie began again to castigate herself. Why had she sought escape through excitement and pleasure? Even an unhappy marriage with someone like Whitey would be better than this. . . .

"Who is the man, Marie?" Georgia's voice jolted her back to reality.

Marie whirled defensively. "None of your damn business!"

The young woman was startled to find Georgia's eyes full of sympathy, rather than the expected scorn.

"Hans told me. I want to help you, Marie."

Marie was confused by this entirely new approach on the part of her aunt, but she refused to weaken.

"I am perfectly capable of helping myself! Thanks, but no thanks."

Georgia stepped further into the room.

"I see you're packing to leave. Of course I can't stop you, but I think you will be better off here."

Marie sat dazed and unsure of what to say or do. Could her aunt be sincere?

"Marie, I'm asking you to stay. Go ahead and have your baby. Perhaps we can take care of the child ourselves. Or you can put it up for adoption, whatever you wish."

Marie was defeated. She could take no more of the nightmare

she had been living the past week. She could not understand the sudden change in Georgia, but she didn't care any longer. She dropped the blouse she was holding and sat on the bed.

"O. K., aunt Georgia. I'll stay."

White flashes splash against my eyelids as the pain convulses my entire body. A humming fills my ears, not quite drowning the maze of voices somewhere in the white room. The sound of deep breathing comes from far away. A fierce pounding beats somewhere above my left breast. Sharp jolts of pain cut through heavy numbness. Can one be dreaming and still sense the terror of vivid reality?

Acrid odors of alcohol and ether and antiseptic sheets fuse somewhere beyond my nose. I can feel my legs, but can not move them. They are several feet long and far away. Focusing on an individual thought or scene is impossible. The myriad lights in the ceiling suddenly are the stars above the park. The brilliance of the moon washes the universe with white.

Pulsating lips press against my eager mouth and I feel the tear of screaming flesh. A white, mouthless face bends over me and frowns as the ache of loneliness burns through to my very soul. Deep breathing becomes deeper and deeper. A strange fuzziness numbs my senses into oblivion. How can I force this massive weight from my bowels if I can't move?

In the distant reaches of the whiteness a lost child cries in vain to a father running from helpless supplication. Yet the infant pleads knowing the hopelessness. The lights and the whiteness and the moon and the stars spin mercilessly, sending nausea coursing through my system. After an eternity of whiteness and numbness the picture clears and the white figure is back, this time with a mouth. The lips are moving.

"Georgia, your son did not live."

—Al Anderson

INSPIRATION

Inspiration, who rides on purple winds of pitiless force,
Come here this night ere I lose you with the day!
Winds, carry me straight to lands of hinted fairy folk,
That Fancy might be pricked and pulled to form bright images,
--And lift me to air pure, where I thirst for drink of
watersweet
And all that cleans and clears!
Then drop me into anyplace where song and verse are born,
'Til dawn comes claiming with leaden cup of dregs....

—Linda Joy

A SHORT STORY —
OR I SAW MOMMY KISSING SANTA CLAUS

The gray station wagon hummed along the snow patched highway. The humming snow tires were constantly varying the intensity of their hummy recital as they met the alternating stretches of naked cement, then the sound absorbant peculiarity of the powdery snow.

Mark Waneau sat quietly in the rear compartment of the station wagon. He was listening to the abrupt, mysterious silence created by the union of tires with virginal snow. To Mark this silence was the termination of physical reality. Suddenly he was struck with an urge to play pretend; a youthful impulse to alter and redesign the sensations he was experiencing. His uncluttered mind instantly created the circumstance of which he could easily and realistically become a part.

The seats of the station wagon had been removed for the purpose of creating more room. Mark's father had removed them to make room for certain machine parts that he had hauled the day before.

Mark slid from the wooden crate on which he had been sitting and lay flat on his back, his head positioned at the rear of the car. Mark Waneau was in a space ship and was being forced downward, hard pressed by the effects of the unknown of limitless space, black-white space.

The eyes fixed to the windows on the right hand side of the station wagon. Then his boy-sight absorbed the space grey of the motionless sky.

This is Mark Waneau
Jr. Space Explorer

Space vs. Time
Time vs. Space
Space vs. Space

=

space
Space
SPACE

Whump! The station wagon hit a CHUCK hole in the pavement. Mark's head bounced in recoil on the hard cold steel of the wagon's floor. Whump!!!! Again the station wagon rattled on in protest, and the consequences upon the Waneau head were

the same.

The head began to become tender; giving reasons for hurt. But the hurt was not felt. Mark did not move. He was a space explorer and therefore must be expected to endure the hardships.

Suddenly reality entered the circumstance, entered in a sudden deliberate parade of telegraph poles which had joined the shoulder of the highway were now marching by the once imaginary viewing port of Mark Waneau.

Tall, lean, creasote-brown telegraph poles with green glass eyes which quietly, scientifically inspected the validity of the Waneau creation.

Soft were their combined murmuring, their well spaced murmurings of the present past, past present and the quick future.

Union Telegraph

TNX DARLING FOR THE COOKIES-

CAN MAKE IT FOR XMAS-

THINKING ABOUT YOU ALWAYS-

LOVE-

TILL XMAS-

CHUCK

Mark sat up on the worn seat of his corduroy pants. His hand rubbed the back of his head, it was hurting terribly, but the pain soon blended with the involuntary components of his physical body and therefore eventually subsided. Mark Waneau made his way on bended knee to the front of the car and -----

(Mark Waneau speaks)

"Daddy"

"Yes"

"Daddy I want to come up there with you. Can I climb over the seat?"

"Ho ho, I wondered when you'd change your mind about sitting back there. It gets pretty tiresome doesn't it? You told me that you wanted to sit back there when we started out- said you would-

n't sit in front- that it was more fun to sit back there. No much fun, is it?

Well come on over; watch it, OK, Hi ya partner."

Mr. Waneau made a quick sideward glance at this son with dumb blue Father eyes. He was a medium-sized, somewhat over-muscular male with short, curly blond hair, which seemed to cling desparingly to a neanderthal skull. He had a short buffalo-like neck, and hair in his ears.

This was Harold Waneau

Mark looked like his father. He did however have one gift from his mother and this was the green containers for the eyes.

"Would you like to help daddy drive?"

"Yes"

"OK son, do you see this gear shift stick?"

Harold Waneau made an indicating gesture with his brown mottled hand. The gesture was directed at the curved steel rod that came through the center of the hump which was in the middle of the floor.

"It vibrates, daddy"

"Yeah it sort of wiggles around. I want you to hold it still. Keep it from wiggling. You'll have to use both hands, but I'm sure you can do it."

"Will it really help you to drive?"

"I think so. Try it and see."

Mark slid to the center of the seat and grabbed the blue knob at the end of the stick. Daddy was right, thought Mark, it will take both hands.

It was very difficult to stop all movement in the stick, but Mark Waneau tried very hard.

Such a pleasant sensation to grasp the stick with the blue plastic knob. It was as if by grabbing it he had in his control all of the mysterious power of the car. Mark's grip became tighter and more strained, but still his hands were forced to duplicate the persistent vibration of the cold, curved stick.

Mark's palm began to ache where it folded over the edge of the blue flat-topped knob. His mind began to examine a new approach to the situation in hopes of eluding the physical discomfort.

Push down or --pull up, or pull side-ways
....or perhaps I'm squeezing it too tight.

"Is it wiggling too much?"

"It's just fine"

Mark was somewhat relieved, this was so important, it made him feel big, real big. He was far from the land of pretend now, he was a real grown up now; helping daddy drive.

"That's all right now, son."

Mr. Waneau had observed the intent and strained look on his son's face.

"I think I can handle it,
you did a fine job."

Mark released the knob and stick from the grip of his sweating and aching palm. His fingers felt numb, yet they felt as though they were still wrapped around their former captive.

Mark's tensed body relaxed, and he watched his father closely to see how he would hold the shaking knob.

Harold Waneau exhaled air that could have a laugh sound, a crease appeared in the flesh by his nose

and the knob quivered

and the station wagon droned on.

"Like to turn on the radio?"

Mark nodded his approval for the suggestion and hastily turned the main control knob and a strange buzzing sound began to pour forth from somewhere under the dashboard.

"What's that, daddy?"

"It's warming up,
Has to warm up first."

A deep smile wrinkle spread across the face of Harold Waneau. Mark thought it very strange that his father should laugh at something as unfunny as the fact that the radio had to warm up first.

He listened as the radio began belching forth its information. His father quickly reached forward and turned one of the controls labeled "volume".

"You had it up too loud, it blares when you do that."

Mark didn't hear his father, because he was far too concerned with the lyrics of the song coming from the chrome grill of the radio.

Mark gave the song his usual six year old consideration and then said---"I'll bet it would tickle."

"What, son?"

"To kiss Santa Claus."

"I'll bet it'd tickle Santa to kiss mommy."

"Daddy, will Santa come again this year?"

"Why of course, son. Santa comes every year."

Harold Waneau paused. He thought of his new orders, of Christmas of Santa, of his wife Christy-of many things.

"Daddy, has Santa ever kissed mommy?"

"That's a good question son, but I have the answer. Yes, Santa has kissed your mommy, kissed her quite a few times the lucky old---"

Mr. Waneau quickly glanced at his son out of the corner of his eye.

"He's really not deserving of such a treat, always being gone for such long periods of time and everything. But it is a good thing when Santa kisses mommy---perfectly natural."

"And if mommy kisses Santa?"

"That would be even better," replied Harold Waneau as he switched off the noisy radio.

"It's cooling off now."

Only the droning silence prevailed.

The station wagon pulled up in front of Allied School No. 210, deposited one occupant, and then proceeded to deliver its final occupant at Curbly Field, U. S. A. F. B., Ft. Lovet. Last stronghold of General Cook.

A clown jumped and honked.
A buffalo manranted and raved.
And the little peanut was very unhappy.

"Mark" said a voice from the kitchen of the Waneau household. "Don't miss the Dowdy Hoody Show dear, it'll be on in a few minutes."

Mark was busy pushing a large yellow toy dump truck through a wall of a pretend apartment building which was constructed of many colored building blocks.

As the colored sections scattered on the gray wool carpet, Mark made a "Kapooosharash" sound in the back of his throat to better enhance the scene.

The occupants of the apartment house rolled and mixed in bloody confusion. Black and white they rolled and scattered. Mark had used marbles for people. Black and white marbles. He had arranged them according to color and had placed them in the various compartments of his not too complex structure.

Then suddenly, due to one catastrophic happening instigated by one very small boy giant, they rolled, died, scattered and mixed on the sympathetic gray of the carpeted floor. Cold, stone still were the marble people.

To Mark it was all very splendid. He had been in control, he was responsible, he had driven the truck, he would...

"Mark!"

Christy Waneau appeared in the doorway joining the living room with the kitchen. She was drying her hands on a well worn gray linen dishtowel. Christy Waneau was what might be universally labeled as the buxom blonde type. In fact much of the buxomness was overdoing a good thing.

"Mark, why didn't you answer me when I called you?"

"You're getting to be as deaf as that Father of yours." Christy paused and thought----about hair, hair in the ears, no of course not; she dismissed the thought. Mark was her boy; he had her eyes; besides he's only six years old.

"I didn't hear you, mommy," was the non-directed reply. Mark was preoccupied with his marbles; he was dropping them into an empty oatmeal carton.

"Never mind darling, your television program is on now;

don't you want to watch it?"

"I just want to play cars and wait for Santa Claus."

"But dear, what about the funny clown? Don't you want to watch him?"

Christy Waneau's facial muscles produced a well meant, psychologically encouraging smile, but Mark only shook his head. He didn't want to watch the funny people. His mother was laughing, she was a grown-up, she understood the funny people--he wanted to but couldn't; he was only a little boy with father form and mother eyes.

"All right, dear, play with your blocks and Santa will soon be here."

Christy Waneau's vocal projection was almost overpowered by the intentness of her gaze which fell on the tiny gold watch on her left wrist. It was almost as if she were examining the interior workings without removing the coverings.

Christy wound the watch and it made a baby sized grinding sound in the still of the Waneau living room.

"Daddy gave you that watch mommy. He gave it to you when you were married."

Mark's face beamed with pride. He was proud to have been able to repeat facts once related to him.

Harold Waneau had told the story well.

"Yes, dear, when we were married."

Christy Waneau continued drying her hands on the dishtowel. Mark flopped down on his stomach and propped himself up on sore, raw, all-day, play-pretend-gray-wool carpet worn elbows and watched as his mother walked down the long hall--way joining the living room with her bedroom door.

The knob turned, the door opened, the hinges sounded their slight protest, the door closed, and the bolt entered its' place of peace.

The door was locked and Christy Waneau was in her bed room.

Mark had given way to silent daydreaming and motionless creating. The game of people and buildings, and catastrophes had become tiring. The plot had become old stuff. He was lying on his right side-right ear cushioned and protected from the irritating surface of the carpet by his right palm. His pensive and perceptive vision was viewing a city. A bustling city, with activity that was really taking place and without his final physical consent. His mind was in control. The marble people were giving, taking, faking, and making. The buzz of the doorbell broke in with truth. Instantly Mark Waneau was looking at a stack of blocks and a blotch of colored marbles.

"Santa Clause is here!" cried Mark as he scrambled to his feet.

He was in a state of panic. Santa was here already, he wasn't even ready for him. Mark ran to the kitchen clock to see what time it had made. He thought hard, he couldn't remember. Oh well, it really didn't matter what time it was, the important thing was that Santa was here, the waiting was over. He was going to see Santa in person. This was the first time that Santa had made a personal appearance. He usually dropped by in the still of the holy night and left his Christmas joys. But this year he was privileged. Santa was going to deliver his presents personally.

"Mommy!! Mommy!! Santa Claus is here! He's ringing our doorbell. Mommy!! Mommy!!!"

Christy Waneau was already hurrying to admit the kindly gent. Mark was afraid to look; he closed his eyes. He knew that when he reopened them he was going to see the funniest, most magical and probably oldest man in the world.

Christy opened the door and in bounded Santa Claus.

Mark opened his eyes. Santa was just like all his pictures, unmistakably the real McCoy.

"HOE

HOE

HOE

Merry

Christmas

everybody. And who have we here?" Santa pointed a red mittened hand directly at Mar.

"I'll just bet that you're Mark Waneau. I've heard some good reports about you; so I have some things for you."

Santa reached behind his well stuffed form and produced a skinny looking sack. Santa delved a mittened hand into the sack and produced a shiny set of "Old West" six guns complete with fast draw holsters. "Shoots real bullets," said Santa matter-of-factly. Most of his matter-of-factness was addressed to Mrs. Waneau.

It was slightly spiced up by a wink of his merry eye.

Santa reached into his bag a second and a third time and presented, respectively, a set of tinker toys and an old fashioned bag of Christmas candy. Then Santa turned to Mrs. Waneau and gave her a bottle of something with the letters T-O-I-L-E-T W-A-T-E-R printed on the label. Mark was surprised and highly unimpressed.

It seemed rude of Santa to give such a common gift to his mother. Mark knew that his mother must have truly appreciated it because she exclaimed aloud---"Oh Marcelle of Paris" and then threw her arms around the baggy red suit which must have contained the rest of Santa. Then she kissed him fully on his bearded lips. How excited mommy must be, thought Mark. She even forgot Santa's name and where he's from but she's kissing him and that's a good thing. Why couldn't daddy be here to see it? He'd be so very happy. Why did he have to be away just now?"

Mark's mother was still kissing and Santa's claws were still

hugging when Mark finished strapping on his new six guns.

This was a very very good thing.

Bang band bang bang bang bang, Mark tested the six-guns

Bang bang bang bang bang bang

Santa and Mrs. Waneau stopped kissing.

"Why don't you play with your new tinker toys dear?"

Mark settled on the floor and opened the chest of tinker toys.

"That's a good boy, Mark. Santa and I are going to have coffee in the kitchen-he told me that he's very tired after his long journey from the North Pole."

Mark watched as Santa and his mother walked to the cozy kitchen.

"Time to go to bed, dear," Mrs. Waneau gently shook his sleep limp arm.

Mark woke up and realized that he had fallen asleep on the living room floor. It must have been an awfully long time.

"Is it still Christmas mommy?"

"Yes dear, it's Christmas morning."

"How can it be morning when it's still dark?"

"It's very early morning dear."

Mark Waneau was too tired to question further. His sleepy eyes made out a man in a red suit in the kitchen.

"Is Santa still here?"

"Yes honey Santa is still here.
He has to rest his reindeer so he'll be staying a little while."

Christy Waneau smiled.

"Now, young man, to bed."

Mark was herded to his bedroom, undressed, dressed in sleepers, told to crawl in, to stretch out between the cool sheets, kissed on the mouth by his only inamorta and told to say his prayers.

Mark was tucked in.

He lay still for several minutes enjoying the coolness of the sheets and the peace of mind that comes from the knowledge of awaiting sleep.

A laugh was heard in the other room, it was his mother's. There was something familiar about Santa Claus. Mark interlaced his once Christmas greedy fingers on his chest and began his prayers.

Dear God,

I had a wonderful Christmas.
I'm so glad you helped me get
what I wanted from
Mr. Claus. The guns are
swell and the candy's real good but
I wonder god,
if you could help
me figure out the tinker toys. And God,
please bless mommy and
daddy and Santa Claus -
And I hope daddy had a nice
Christmas in Germany.
God, I guess we'll be going to
live with him soon.
I wonder if daddy will come
home to get us. I sure
would like for daddy to come
home. I guess we'll
be staying a few years.

TINKERED OUT

Dear TINKERED OUT

Close your eyes and go
to sleep.

And in the distance of darkened space was heard the merry creak
and squeak of the St. Nicholas sleigh.

—Daniel E. Wolff

ONE TO CONQUER

Carla laid Macbeth on the bed beside her and settled back more comfortably on the pillows; stretching her arms, longing to stretch her lifeless legs. Relaxing, she turned her head to the window. School must be out; a few children were straggling by, kicking up the leaves that had been blown against the Comstock's yard fence. Nothing else was stirring in the small town.

Hearing a footstep at the door, she started and looked around to see her tutor, a large woman barely thirty, catching her breath after a brief walk. Carla's eyes passed over the flushed face, the plump hands resting on a painted black cane, the mal-formed foot in its ugly corrective shoe. She winced and fixed her attention on the burnished oak in the yard.

Leaning heavily on her cane with every step, Betty Burlington made her way to the other windows and raised the shades, letting in the brown light of the September afternoon. "Good afternoon, little one," she smiled at the girl in the bed, showing a slight separation between her front teeth. "Your arms are still strong, aren't they? Reach over and pull the lamp cord, child. You don't want a light on when you can have sunlight!"

Carla leaned over, obeying without speaking. Miss Burlington maneuvered her large body into the chair by the bed, her black, glistening hair slipping over her forehead. She brushed the lock away with an automatic gesture and reached for the book lying on the lampstand.

"Well, child, how do you like Macbeth so far?" Now she was looking down, thumbing through the book in her lap, the silken lock in her eyes again.

"I am sixteen," Carla said flatly.

A grin made the woman's healthy cheeks seem fuller. Looking up, she adjusted her dark-framed glasses and brushed back her hair. "So you are. Well, let's go over what you've read and make certain you understand it.

"As you wish, Miss Burlington," with deliberate affectation, thinking, "How obvious can I make it?"

Miss Burlington closed the book on her finger and straightened herself, looking steadily at Carla. "I've been rooming with your family for three weeks now," breaking into a smile. "It would be all right to drop the 'Miss Burlington' formality. Why, when I had your big brother in class, the rogue always called me Betty after school. Arthur had to have extra help," she mused. Then her tone became brisk. "Anyway, I'd rather you called me Betty, too."

"Can't she see I detest her?" Carla thought. Then aloud, "Very well, Miss Burlington." To Carla's disgust, her tutor was merely amused.

Betty re-opened the text and began reading aloud, stopping

frequently to comment or ask questions. Carla, looking across the room into her mirror, smoothed her bands, shook her brown-sugar hair softly against her shoulders. Glancing at Betty's boy's bob, she narrowed her eyes and lifted her chin, smiling smugly. Picking up her anthology, she began leafing through it, snapping the pages, hoping this Betty would take the hint.

The voice droned on, unperturbed. "Carla, what passage of Macbeth appeals most to you?"

"Oho! I'll play your silly game," thought Carla, rapidly turning back the pages. Hoping her smile was devilish, she read:

"When shall we two meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?"

'When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.'

'That will be ere set of sun.'"

"Where the place?" exploded Miss Burlington, catching on,

"In the sickroom.'
'There to meet with Miss B!'"

She paused and then, "I come, brown cat."
Carla sat up, staring, her face suddenly hot. This was war and she fired back, "Black frog calls; --anon!"
Betty only smiled, adjusted her glasses, chimed in calmly,

"Fair is foul and foul is fair.
Hover through the fog and filthy air."

"That's fine!", she said. Then acidly, still mocking Shakespeare, "You have a wondrous quick tongue. As good for cutting teachers as for cutting brothers. I must say you butchered Arthur quite neatly last night."

Carla felt her muscles grow taut. "So he had it coming," she clipped, thinking savagely, "Why can't you keep out of it?"

"No doubt," as if to dismiss the subject. But unexpectedly she grew earnest, "He needs you, Carla." Carla struck those frightful eyes with a bolt of hatred, then looked down again at the book shaking in her hands.

For a moment both were silent. Slowly the woman drew a deep breath, retreated to a safer subject. "If you were to pinpoint just one excellent expression," she began desperately.

"The hurlyburly sentence, Mis Burly-ton." Releasing the book, she grasped the edge of the sheet. "I will hurt her," she cried out to herself fiercely. "She has no right!" A sick feeling came over her, remembering what Betty had witnessed last night. Painful memory crowded in, forcing her to live it again. She

felt that gust of cool air, again heard her mother call out, "Come on in, Miss Burlington, my dear. Well! Aren't you late getting home from classes tonight!"

Not waiting for a reply, she hurried on, "We are so grateful to you for finding time to tutor Carla after your long day at school." Carla had heard her say the same thing every night since the arrangement had been made. "She always was such a good student, you know. She was so afraid she would have to miss school this year after she got polio last summer and couldn't walk. You two just go right ahead. You'll have an hour or more before I call you to dinner. I'll try to keep the boys quiet when they get home." Carla noted a touch of worry in her voice.

Then the large frame of Miss Burlington appeared in the doorway.

"And how is Arthur's little sister today?" she asked pleasantly.

"Oh gad!" Carla thought.

When the tutoring session was over, Ellen Comstock lifted her daughter into the wheel chair and rolled it into the living room. Mrs. Comstock was chattering to the younger woman and Carla wondered with embarrassment if Miss Burlington were even listening. Nine-year-old Mickey was in the old arm chair, his fist against his cheek, his eyes fastened on television. "He looks like an urchin," Carla mused. "Crew cut too long, hands filthy. Must be the oldest shirt he owns. Gad, imagine what Black Eyes thinks of us!"

For the twentieth time Ellen said, "I wonder why Arthur isn't home from college yet. Could he have had a flat tire between here and the city?"

"Oh, Mother. He had to stay late for the play try-outs. Don't get in a sweat."

When they heard his car in the drive, the anxious woman hurried to the back door. "Arthur, honey, it's time you were home. This is the third time this week you've kept supper waiting. Traffic is bad, though, I suppose. Probably takes awhile to drive those twenty miles over such a winding old highway. Carla said there were play tryouts. How did you do? Got the leading part, I'll bet," chuckling. Busy at the stove now, she didn't notice his silence.

Carla caught a glimpse of her brother as he passed through the dining room. "Methinks he hath a mean and angry look," she commented dryly, feeling dread. He seemed to hear neither her remark nor his mother's babble, but slammed his books on the desk.

Ignoring his former teacher, he scowled at Mickey and walked over to him. "Get out of that chair!" he snarled.

"It's not yours!" shrilled Mickey without looking up. His face was tense, his body rigid, his thin arms clung to the chair. Carla started at the crack of a slap, winced to see Mickey's head fly back. Tears of rage ran down the youngster's reddening cheek and he tore into his huge brother with hard little fists.

"Boys, boys," flustered Mrs. Comstock helplessly, from the dining room where she was pouring the milk.

It was soon settled. A grim smile hardened on Carla's face as she studied Arthur, who sat in the chair, glaring at television. "You didn't get the part you were so cocky sure you'd get, did you, Arthur, honey?"

He looked up quickly, pain flashing in his blue eyes. She felt it stab her own breast. Crushing softness, she went on resolutely. "The drama department didn't think you were so great for the role as you said they would, did they, sweet?"

Mrs. Comstock came from the kitchen, carrying a dish of steaming boiled cabbage. "Why Carla, honey. . . ."

Arthur bellowed something half articulately that silenced even Mrs. Comstock. Then, "You common witch! You. . . ." His face was livid and he fairly sputtered, lacking a word strong enough.

Carla held his eye, feeling cold satisfaction. "Swear," she thought. "Show us how vile and wicked you are, strong man. Let Betty know what gentility she has fallen in with."

Feverishly she went on probing and slashing. "Even your blue-eyed, sandy-haired, outdoorsy look didn't persuade them you were the hero type, huh? Probably because your teeth are crooked. Or maybe they wanted a he-man without pimples!"

Carla snapped back to the present, aware of the wrinkled hem of the sheet in her perspiring hands, aware of Betty's voice. The memory of that scene last night made an eddy of her mind; she could not listen. Rage and hurt and shame churned and soured within her. She stared at Betty's short, thick hair as her head was still bent over Macbeth. The voice was calm and very low, each word distinct, forceful. Carla heard the voice, the words didn't make sense. For a brief moment she was conscious of a searching glance. In a daze she saw the black hair and penetrating eyes and remembered the controlled voice saying, "He needs you, Carla." Then the voice was screaming, "He needs you, Carla! He needs you!"

Carla felt a surge of hatred for the woman. What right had she to condemn? "I hate you!" she cried out. Her face was hot and perspiring; she felt that her blood would break out of her veins. The wilted, damp sheet that she gripped was an intolerable bond and she flung back the bedding.

Miss Burlington, caught in mid-sentence, closed her mouth without finishing. She made a face, "Hush, child. Do you want your mother to be upset?"

"I'm not a child!" Carla hissed. Her throat felt enormous; the swelling was squeezing her breath, blocking a deluge of abuse seething within. Betty was quiet until Carla felt the tension ease, then began deliberately, provokingly.

"How would a woman have reacted to Arthur's mood?"

A dam broke in Carla's throat. "I suppose you consider your-

self a woman? I suppose you want everyone to be like you? I don't want to be you; I want to be me. What I did was me; it's the way I want to be."

Betty leaned forward. "You're afraid, chi . . . Carla. You're afraid to let anyone into your soul. You're even afraid to go in yourself and look around. What would happen if you allowed your true nature to guide you?"

How dare she speak like that? Carla wanted to run away, inwardly cursing her helpless legs. "You're ugly," she said thickly. "Leave me alone, you gap-toothed Wife of Bath! You ogre! Take that monstrous twisted foot and get out of here!"

The fiery energy deserted her, the weakness of her legs pervaded her whole body. With tightened throat and strained voice, "Go away!" Tears broke loose and could not be stopped.

She felt one side of the bed sink as the large woman seated herself on its edge. She let the extra pillows be removed, let herself be settled down into the bed as sobs jarred her chest and tears blurred her vision. A cool hand was smoothing back her fine hair and firmly massaging her neck and shoulders. Drawing deep breaths, she closed her eyes until the sobbing stopped. When she opened them, the dark eyes were there, relaxing her.

"You must see what you're doing," Betty spoke gently. "You are too bright to deceive yourself long. Don't you know that it is wrong to let anyone destroy you? No one can if you are big enough. You must, you will dare open your soul to suffering that people like Arthur will bring you."

Carla raised herself to her elbows, curling her lip in the very face of this self-appointed redeemer. "Oh no I won't! You can keep your darling man-baby in your own soul. He's not stepping a foot into mine!"

Betty struggled with a grin, became serious when Carla sat upright and demanded, "Why do you pick on me? Why can't you see Art's faults? Go reform him and leave me alone! You're his friend, not mine. You've no business talking to me as you do."

Neither spoke for a long moment, the woman seeming to be organizing her ideas. She sat on the edge of the bed, looking out the window. Her hands lay motionless in her lap.

"We almost need a light now," she said at last. "I like dusk; can you see the sky from there, child? It's serene, isn't it? Majestic, quietly magnificent, as big as God himself."

She turned to Carla, who was sitting stiffly irate. "Lie back down, child, and I'll tell you why I pick on you." Carla hesitated, then yielded.

"I pick on you because you can help Arthur grow, and he is hardly able to help himself." The voice was slow, the words carefully chosen. "He doesn't analyze his problems or his attitudes. I can't even head him to understand himself. If he would discover his abilities and limitations, make his plans accordingly, but," she sighed.

"Arthur has little insight. He isn't introspective or perceptive. You are. I knew that when I heard you deftly feel out his sore spots and thrust knives into them," smiling a little.

"He believes he's doomed to failure," she went on feelingly, "and he refuses to change his fate. Sometimes I'm sure he's one of those who revel in misery, feeding on self-scorn. I get so frustrated I could cry when I see how blindly he fights his way through life. You know how moody and savage he gets at times. Why can't you understand what he's going through instead of biting him back? What can I do for him without your help?"

"Well, what do you expect me to do?" curtly.

"I don't know exactly. Try to help him mature a little, I guess. Learn to overlook his childishness." Betty was looking again at the portion of sky visible from the window. "See it change? The hues are deeper and richer. Look, the sweeping vastness of it!"

Carla closed her eyes in comfort. But then a frown crossed her forehead and she looked up. "It's no good. He's mean and . . . and hard. He isn't like he was when I was little. I used to almost worship Art." Her face grew pleasant with memories.

"He was lots of fun sometimes. One winter when I was eight and he was thirteen, we went ice skating on Center River a mile west of town. It was beautiful and still land white. Art was in a good mood. He didn't let anything worry him that day. We skated and talked and I felt very close to him. He used to be like that. He was more open, and warm, and, . . . and, sincere."

"He still is, beneath his bluff," Miss Burlington interjected.

"I can even hear his laugh," Carla went on. "We were skating together and suddenly from pure joy, he lifted me off the ground and whirled me around. He was husky and big even then. His voice had changed, too. His laugh was deep, charged with power and emotion."

Slowly the elation faded from Carla's face. "But he was gloomy lots of times. I remember how he came home mad the day he failed tenth grade history. He went into his room and didn't see me trail him in. He put his head on the desk and somehow I knew he was afraid of being no-good."

She paused, disgusted with the tear that rolled off her cheek, dropping softly into the pillow. "I wanted to help, so I said, 'Arthur, I love you anyway.' He swore and yelled, 'Get out of here!'" Her face flamed. "I felt so dumb, so awful!"

"He doesn't want my understanding. He's scornful and rude. He won't appreciate it."

Betty was looking at Carla with a tired smile. "No, I suppose not." She reached for her cane, getting heavily to her feet. "No more appreciative than you are of me."

As Carla watched her leave the room, a strangeness crept through her, making her confused, shaken. Then with a violent toss of her head, she stifled the disturbing emotion and cried, "I won't be nice to him. I'll be hanged if I will, do you hear?"

Several days passed during which neither of them re-opened hostilities. Betty seemed not to recall their conversation and Carla maintained a lifeless civility that discouraged further intimacy. Though Mrs. Comstock had heard Carla's sharp voice, she received only evasive answers to her queries. When nothing came of it she thought all was well, until one evening of the following week turbulence again upset the household.

Carla looked around the table at her family. Mr Comstock at the head of the table was intent upon his own thoughts and almost unaware of Mrs. Comstock's rambling on and on about something. Mickey was seated by Betty, looking nervous and uncomfortable. "He can't wait to get away from the table," Carla thought.

"Pass the butter," Arthur grumbled

Carla lifted the butter plate as if to hand it to him. Giving him a poisoned-sugar smile, she said sweetly, "Please?"

He shot her an angry side-glance, but did not attempt to stare down those calm hazel eyes. Defiantly, he bit off a good fourth of his bread, unbuttered. He glanced across the table at Betty, hoping for sympathy.

She was intent upon her plate.

Carla took the platter which her father handed her, looked with distaste at the liver. There were two pieces left, one very large, the other small.

"Carla," said Ellen Comstock quickly, "I fixed a little piece for you. Please try to eat it; you know how rich it is in iron. Why, look how strong it has made our Arthur, here," fondly. "I fried an extra big piece for him, he likes it so well."

Suddenly compressing her lips, Carla took the huge slice, and handed the tidbit to her brother. Arthur was enraged, but facing her triumphant smile, he contented himself with a breathy oath. Only Mickey seemed to notice, giving his siblings a troubled look.

"Why try to understand him?" Carla was thinking. "I can't even respect him. Why, the time Kathy Bealle flushed him he was so wild, he drove down the highway like a madman. Flipped our car into the ditch and broke his leg." She grimaced, "Why didn't we shoot him?"

Slowly Carla cut off a small bit of liver and measured it with her eye against the whole piece. "Oh gad! There must be about fifty bites." With a resigned sigh, she popped it into her mouth, chewed it quickly, washed it down with half a glass of mild. Awfully high price to pay," she thought ruefully.

Arthur was watching her, almost amused. Determinedly she attacked the detested meat again. "I won't give in! He thinks I will, but I won't!"

Taking time out with a carrot stick, she crunched it thoughtfully. "Once before I decided to try again to help him. Was it three years ago? Yes, it must have been. He had a mid-term to study for in freshman history.

"It's a wonder he let me help him study, but I guess he must've

been desperate. Man, how I drilled him on that stuff! It was late when we gave it up for the night. I was so tired. I remember saying, 'Well, at least you should get a D this time.' The look he gave me! I didn't know eyes could show so much hate!

"I'll never forget how limp inside I felt when he told me later that he had marked squares at random in that test. He failed it and did it to spite me!"

She took another piece of liver and chewed vigorously. "I decided once and for all that that was the end."

Suddenly a deep, throbbing pain went through her chest. She had made a chart. Last spring she had made a chart. It was a beautiful thing, for she had ruled the lines in ink and painted the embellished lettering in water color. There were four columns, Arthur's courses, then his grades, all C's or below, her own corresponding courses followed by an unbroken column of A's.

"I placed my chart on his desk and followed him to his door to watch him find it. I remember how he frowned and picked it up, reading. Then he looked at me, and his eyes, oh my God, his eyes!

"I turned around and ran to my room. I wanted to cry, but I couldn't because of that strangling pain." She realized that she was clutching the edge of the table cloth in her lap. "It's hot in here. I can't breathe." The tears rising in her eyes alarmed her,

With a look of loathing at the liver, she said again to herself, "It's an awfully high price to pay."

The tear dander over, Carla quietly lifted the remaining liver from her plate and transferred it to Arthur's. His blue eyes flashed with victory and his smile was cruel.

Carla colored with anger. She flung an I-told-you-so look across at Betty, who was looking at Arthur with an amused tolerance. Immediately the stink of defeat vanished. "I'm as much a baby as he is to let it bother me," Carla thought. "It's time we grew up, Art. Since you won't I guess I'll have to lead the way." She looked at Betty and hesitated. "It's bad enough to be trodden on by that clunk of a brother, but to bow to such a prying, fire-eyed do-good!"

Then, vibrating, searing her soul, that strangeness swept over her again. Her heart pummeled her ribs, her lungs ached for a deeper breath. With growing helplessness, she floundered to regain her own will. For an instant terrified to be in the hands of chance, she was stinging with electric power and energy that burst through her. She caught the sparkling black eyes of her partner across the table and smiled back. The fair head and the dark turned as one to look at Arthur, still gloating over his little victory.

—Carole Oleson

THOUGHTS OF ONE INSENSIBLE TODAY

The day is subtle, and you, dear friend, turn contrary,
Different from the flowing mood of things.

Today was meant for communication felt, uncensored
But you have ruined this as well.

How? Oh, in several little ways,

But most of all--

--Your eyes forgot to speak. . . .

—*Linda Joy*

