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MANUSCRIPT CLUB



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Flowers For Sister Ursula

By PATRICIA A. KEAGLE

"Innery, onnery, ickery Ann
Fillison, follison, nickolas John—"

Rachel sang tunelessly to herself as she walked slowly along the edge of the sidewalk, looking down at the withered grass that grew sparsely on the park-way.

Suddenly she stopped and stooped down to press the flat of her hand against the gritty pavement. Its heat scorched her hand, but she pressed harder, until, when she stood up again, her palm was serrated like the cement.

She stood abstractedly, staring at her hand while the broiling sun sent up wavering rays from the ground—and the hurrying people jostled past her.

Just as quickly she looked up and walked on down the crowded noisy street, humming senseless words under her breath.

Finally she reached the church. It was set even with the pavement, like all the buildings on this block. In the August heat the street was like a canyon of red hot slabs of rock and to Rachel it seemed they were closing rapidly and tumbling in on her. She dashed into the vestibule of the church where it was shaded and protected from the sun.

She stood there, pressed against the wall until the panic faded away and her breathing slowed. Then she relaxed and stepped away from the wall. Tipping her smooth head far back, she spelled out again the inscription above the door, with third-grade slowness.

"Is it nothing to you, Ye that pass by?"

She looked once more at the man and the cross beneath the words, then squatted in a corner and began to pull the petals from a flower in the bouquet she carried in one hand.

The flower was pink, but as she pulled each petal off, it turned to blood-red in her hand, and frightened her. She was usually frightened, and the flower that turned color was just another terrifying thing not to understand. Perhaps it had something to do with the man above her—he was red too—except that this red clotted and dripped down the front of the church. She looked up, to make sure, and it was so, as she had thought. She sighed; sometimes the man was only stone, and sometimes he wasn't. It was another trick.

She looked down at the pile of petals, where they made a crimson pool, and to her surprise saw them begin to increase and spread. She knew that if she kept looking at them they would grow until they smothered her. So she snatched her gaze away, and looked out at the street.

People rushed by; to Rachel they were a sea of legs, flashing

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back and forth at horrifying speed, reflecting the light and thrusting on into shade, moving in some rhythm that she could almost grasp, but not quite. If she could only concentrate on it for a moment she would find the key, and things would be better. But there was always the bear. He climbed out on the roof of Kwiatkowski's and walked back and forth until Peter, the bar-tender came out and got him. She saw him every evening while she was waiting for Mamma and papa to come out. She spent a lot of time in front of Kwiatkowski's, floating chips in the gutter. But that wasn't the only time she saw the bear. He came in the night, or whenever she almost found the answers to some twisted puzzle, he would come around the corner and mumble strange, incomprehensible words.

Once she had told Sister Ursula about the bear, and Sister Ursula was nice; she didn't laugh. Sister Ursula was always nice, except for the Thing that she kept twisted in her rosary, the polished black thing.

Rachel was sorry that Sister Ursula was sick. For a moment she couldn't remember what she was to do. So often she couldn't remember what she must do, or she didn't hear when she was told; then they would be mad. And then the bear laughed at her. But now she remembered. She must take the flowers to Sister Ursula and tell her that the class was sorry she was sick. And the class was sorry, because now Sister Mary Margaret was teaching them, and she was the fourth-grade teacher and the third grade didn't like her.

Suddenly Rachel was pitched forward on her face, for the door behind her opened, and Father Lizer came out. He stopped short in surprise and looked down at the little dark-eyed girl picking herself up from the ground and recognized her. She was Rachel Rabinowitz, one of the quietest children in the school. None of the Sisters ever complained about her, she was hard-working and good. And, they all said, very intelligent for her age. Sister Ursula had been speaking about her just the other day, but he couldn't remember why.

Rachel stared at him, frozen with terror, for she realized suddenly the enormity of what she had done. She had been given the flowers to take to Sister Ursula, and she had torn one of them up. Father Lizer knew it! He knew everything; there was a black thing with wings that was hovering over his head, and it told him everything that happened, even what people were thinking. He knew what she had done, and he would tell Papa! From out of the wall and the ground and the sky, great figures, red and black and blazing yellow, roaring and snarling, converged on the terrified girl standing immobile with her eyes fixed in horror, while the huge red finger on the floor pointed at her accusingly.

When Rachel could think again, she and Father Lizer were walking down the street toward the house where the nuns lived and Sister Ursula was sick. Rachel had caught her breath and realized that the priest was talking to her.

"You must not tire Sister Ursula, but simply give her the flowers and wish her good health. She is very sick, and you know how much we all miss her. I don't know what we will do at the school without her."

He would not have said this much to any of the other children, for he believed in maintaining his dignity. But the little Rabinowitz girl was the smartest in her class, she had almost adult comprehension, though she was absent-minded at times. He must be thinking of entering her into a catechism class soon. With her father and mother the poor mite needed a little good influence in her life.

Rachel amused herself during the short space of the walk by counting the birds that were flying around Father's head. Sometimes they were five and sometimes six, and they were big and black. She was not surprised when they changed to pigeons as they entered the nuns' house. This was because it was so holy.

The entry way was dark and vaulted and smelled faintly of what Rachel believed to be the odor of sanctity. It was rather like damp wool and lilies. In fact, there were lilies growing up from the rug, but Father Lizer stepped on them and they turned to tiger lilies. This seemed very sad to her, and she began to cry.

Father Lizer, thinking she was crying over Sister Ursula, consoled her with assurances that she would see Sister Ursula in heaven. But Rachel, concerned over the tiger-lilies which were rapidly altering to laurel leaves, did not hear him.

Upstairs the room was dark and stuffy, and Sister Ursula wished they would let in a little light and air. It was a pity that she could not even die in comfort. She sighed, and turned toward her rosary that was hanging from the bed-post. Things were either good or bad, and they all passed. If they were good, it was hard to see them go; and if they were bad, then the passing was pleasant. Either way there was some good and some bad.

On the whole, it was good to be finished with living, if it were not for Rachel. She could not die and leave Rachel to destroy herself. She had seen her growing worse for a year now. More withdrawn, more secretive—and those strange figures with which she peopled her world—, every month she had grown further and further from reality. But no one else could see it.

She had talked with Father Lizer about the child, but he had laughed and talked about juvenile imagination. She knew that, but this was different, horribly different, and she was too sick to help.

Rachel was downstairs now; she had heard them come in, and

she would make one last effort to reach the child, to break through the fantasy in which the girl lived, to bring her back to life. It would be the last chance she would have. Wearily she reached for her rosary and slid it through her fingers.

Rachel and Father Lizer came into the room with exaggerated quietness and tip-toed to the foot of the bed. Sister Ursula smiled at them, greeted Father Lizer, and began to talk directly to Rachel. She talked about the fun they had had with the other children playing together at school. She told Rachel how she too had played with her friends, describing the country town where she had lived, with its quiet streets and dusty roads, how the river ran swiftly there and the air smelled of heather and sunshine. How grass was warm and the clouds were white in the sky. Looking into the child's dull black eyes, Sister Ursula felt a surge of triumph, the girl was listening. The first time she had truly listened to anything in almost a year.

The nun was weakening rapidly but she talked on, telling the half-tranced child of the beauty of being whole and alive, living in a world that was real.

Rachel's eyes lit up, her mouth smiled, and she came a step closer to the bed.

Sister Ursula's tired voice coaxed, "How would you like to run in the grass with the other children, to fly kites—"

Father Lizer broke in suddenly "Sister, I should think that at a time like this you would be encouraging the child to think of her eternal welfare, not of frivolous amusements. She is almost grown now. I am thinking of entering her in catechism in the Fall."

The thread was broken, and Sister Ursula sank back exhausted as Rachel laid the bouquet of flowers on the table and parroted the phrases she had been told to say. She had ceased to look at either Sister Ursula or Father Lizer, her eyes were fixed inward on a huge glowing gold and crimson cross; something was hiding behind it and she knew it must be the bear.

Dimly she heard the two talking, until their voices were drowned by a great noise of a ringing bell that filled the whole world with color, rushing and soaring.

Rachel walked down the street, with the great bell tolling in her ears, there was no one on the street or in the world but herself, the great bell, and the bear who knew a secret. In the core of colored sound Rachel walked, a sly smile on her lips, singing to herself:

"Innery, onnery, ickery, Ann
Fillison, follison, Nickolas John—"

After Many Summers

By **PATRICIA A. KEAGLE**

There is not time enough with the yellow-straw grass
And the slight Spring sun cools quickly,
There are no days to watch the clouds pass
And hear the wind in the tall trees.
The hours seem like a poured glass,
Crystal, clear, and few.

The clouds go, the days go, the bubbles float away.

Look down the hill,
Follow the stream
Let not the whippoorwill
Trouble your dream.

The bubbles are not ice, nor will they freeze
For stringing on a silver thread,
Or else with dreaming they will change to tears.

The words not spoken will be never said.
But hold your hand against the grass
And never after turn your head,
For the hours go, the summers go,
Crystal, clear, and few.

Look down the hill,
And trouble not your dream.



The Great Lover

By **C. E. WILDER**

Twice before you've come to me,
To torture, to play the coquette,
To caress me and fill me with longing;
Twice before you've marked me for your own.

Why do you toy with me?
One kiss from you can banish pain,
One embrace, selfish lover, means the
consummation of time.

This time I must go with you,
Through the cool, green door.

Wreck On The Highway

By LITTLETON S. ROBERTS, JR.

The car was lying on its side in the gully and the only way Harry could get out was by climbing over the doc, who was twisted in the wheel. Wriggling up through the opening where the door was half torn off, his shoe caught under the man's neck and he had a bad moment slipping back against the body. But he managed it at last, let himself drop, and landed standing in a puddle in the gloom.

The puddle wasn't mud; it was blood—he could see that even in the dark—and he guessed it was coming from Doris. She'd been riding beside the doc in front, and when it happened she went partly through the windshield. The only one he wasn't sure about was the kid—the merchant marine.

As he stood, feeling the mist fresh on his cheeks and wondering vaguely what to do, he noticed the glow from the rear. It was just then; there wasn't any explosion but the tank must have split and emptied, the way it blazed out all over, and it lighted the sides of the gully up above him. He went around the side and climbed feverishly, clawing loose wet chunks of earth, and when he reached the top he stood in the gravel by the asphalt and tried to catch his breath. The fire was roaring loudly now and he realized suddenly what the odor in his nostrils was. Standing there breathing heavily through the stale taste in his mouth he could look down into the car and see them inside, silhouetted black and formless in the flames. There wasn't any motion. He squatted in the gravel and tried to stop his chest from heaving and slow the spinning wheels inside his brain.

He was wondering if someone would see the fire, and then he heard the siren; he looked and counted three sets of headlights up the road. When the first pulled up he saw it was the highway patrol, behind it a couple of ordinary cars. He pushed with his palms against the gravel and got onto his legs again.

There were two in the patrol car. One was big and blonde and redfaced, and asked the questions. The rest of them didn't go into the gully; they stood muttering in the road and watched while the blaze was burning out.

He told the blonde cop he wasn't hurt.

"How many was in it?"

"Four—counting me."

The patrolman leaned above him. "Drunk . . . you driving?"

"Not drunk." Thinking you silly ass, he reached wearily for sarcasm: "Doc—that one on the wheel, I mean—he didn't get there after it happened."

The cop just grunted and walked back to the patrol car where

the other one sat with the door open and his feet on the running board. "Stop the wagon," the blonde cop said. "We're gonna have to take it apart to get them out."

Harry stood with his back to the gully and listened to them work the radio. With the palm of his hand he stroked the ache along his temple. He was faintly relieved because they weren't asking him any more questions right away, and he wondered about that, tried to put his finger on it . . . and then he knew what it was: he was going to have to talk about it, about them in the car; he was going to have to talk about them sometime but he didn't want to think about it now and so he kept pushing it behind the wheels inside his brain.

A man from one of the other cars came up to the patrolman and asked, "Want me to take this one in?"

He was thin, hawkfaced. When the cop nodded, the man's hand beckoned lazily and Harry followed him to the last car. When they drove away he looked back once; only the tires were still burning and the frame looked bare and black in the night.

They rode in silence toward the city while streetlights gathered sweeping past, and finally the man spoke, "I guess I oughta take you to the dispensary so's they can look you over. You feel O.K.?"

"Yes."

"Well . . . there's some stuff where we're going you can put on those scratches." The man's right hand came across and flipped open the glove compartment. "There's a little in there if you want it."

Harry took the bottle, and after he had put it back they sat again in silence as they approached the downtown section where the lights threw a glow on the mist. Harry wondered where they were going but didn't say anything because he did not want to start the man talking and asking questions; he didn't want to think about that yet. He closed his eyes, tried to sink farther into the seat, and then he felt the car slow up and stop.

They got out where a pair of pale round lamps on posts stood patiently by a flight of concrete steps. Harry followed the man inside and sat in a thin little chair in a thin little room humiliated by many girls on calendars. When the man took off his coat Harry saw the badge, read the word "Sheriff." The sheriff shuffled forms at a desk, picked up a pencil, licked it, asked questions.

He got Harry's name and then he asked about the others. When they got into that the sheriff stopped; he dropped his pencil on the desk and stared at Harry.

Harry licked his lips and tried to smile. He repeated, "They were the doc, and the kid from the merchant marines, and Doris—that was the woman."

"But . . ."

"But we never got any farther with names than that." Harry

finished and tried again to smile, feeling foolish. The shot he'd taken in the car was exploding in little lights behind his eyeballs and now his stomach was beginning to twist.

"And you weren't just hitchhiking with them? No? But how come . . . What about the kid? What about the 'doc'? You didn't call them just that?"

"That's all, just . . ." His voice trailed off and he stared at his hands. He felt like a needle stuck in a groove and it was beginning to hit him that he couldn't get it across.

"But, Christ, fellow, who were they? I mean, you must've known . . . well, who are you?"

Harry raised his head. "I told you all that." He sucked in his breath and went on. "And that's the address where I lived—you can check it—and they were all from different places and we left Worcester day before yesterday, and . . ."

"But, where . . ."

". . . we just got together." He was started now and he couldn't stop until he was done with it. "We just got together in Worcester and I never saw any of them before that, except in the train out of York where I met her. She was coming up from south somewhere and she was about forty and it was her idea to go up to Massachusetts but it was the doc's car and his idea to come out west because none of us had any other place to go."

The sheriff was nearly shouting. "A bunch of drunks that don't even know each other! And just who in hell do I notify?" His face was red and lined across the eyes and Harry felt almost sorry for him, but he knew he never could explain it now.

"I think the doc had a wife in Washington." He said the words very carefully and as clearly as he could. "I think he was divorced but I'm not sure, and the kid was from New Rochelle, and that's all; that's really all."

The sheriff jumped out of the chair and turned around the room. He stopped by Harry and he spoke fiercely, "What in the name of Christ are you giving me?"

Harry looked at him and tried to say something, but he was through with it; he had got it out and he knew how it sounded but there it was. He was tired and still foggy and he knew he could never explain it; they would trace the doc from the car and the rest from whatever they could find and then it wouldn't matter anyway. But he was through with it.

The sheriff let his breath out slowly and after a moment he got back behind the desk. He licked his pencil and started to sign the paper. "What were you doing around these parts?" he asked quietly.

"I think we were going to stop in Elkhart and buy a trailer—I don't remember now."

The sheriff gave up then. He told Harry, "We don't have to

hold you, but you better stay around tomorrow. If you're broke I can book you or else I'll drive you to a hotel."

As Harry started to answer the door behind him opened and a voice called out, "They got those bodies out of the wreck, Marv. They're in the morgue."

The sheriff got up, looked at Harry. "Maybe you better come along," he said. "It won't take long."

A nerve in Harry's belly jerked, but he got up and followed the sheriff out of the office. The hall was brightly lit and the ache behind his eyes began to throb. They were walking over white and black tile squares that shone with wet mop streaks and Harry tried to concentrate on the pattern. His head had been clearing in the office but now the wheels were there. The thing he kept thinking—the thing he couldn't get across—was that he had never really thought about their having any backgrounds, because all they'd had in common and the only reason they had thrown together was not their backgrounds but their going away from them; that, and their staying boiled almost a week.

They walked into the room and it took Harry back; walking down the hall with his brain wandering, he hadn't anticipated this and made himself ready. The room, too, was brightly lit and the disinfectant odor made his stomach twist. They were there, all three, covered. Harry stood uncertainly by the door until the sheriff beckoned.

They stopped beside each figure, the sheriff lifting the covering a little and letting it drop. Harry looked down and knew he ought to think something, something here for each of them, knew that if he didn't he would lie awake somewhere and think about it, or he would think about it tomorrow and go on thinking about it until it got farther away and came only to bother him when he was drinking or half-awake. So he knew he ought to think about it while it was fresh and get what it was and then not think about it anymore; but his head was muddled and his eyeballs ached and the taste in his mouth and the odor made his belly twist.

The sheriff said, then, "This is the kid—the merchant marine?" His voice was flat, toneless. Harry nodded. The kid. . . He tried to think about the kid. He remembered when the kid came into the bar in Springfield in the morning, came in and sat on a stool and looked at them like . . . well, the doc had gone up to the bar because it was still too early for waitresses, and when he came back the kid was with him. He was just some kid with a leave that wasn't going home with it, and maybe he didn't really belong with them, but he was a nice kid and they let him come, or rather he just stayed . . .

"This 'doc'," said the Sheriff, "was he really a doctor? Skinny one, wasn't he?"

About the doc he remembered most; it was always the doc

talking fast and making jokes without stopping to laugh, trying hardest, the doc getting the crazy ideas like coming out this way, and . . .

The sheriff spoke again, "Funny, this woman . . . what was her angle?"

It was hardest getting focused on her; trying to think about her he recalled the place outside Brookfield after they had started out this way, the place where there were candles on the tables and a charcoal grill and an adagio act. They had watched the adagio team and afterwards danced with Doris, and then he remembered her sitting there and crying without making a sound. She just sat smiling at all of them with the streaks wet down her cheeks and no one spoiled it by saying anything. They stayed in that place a long time and he remembered that it was the best of all.

"Tough," said the sheriff. "You was lucky."

He was lucky. He was standing there feeling the odor bite his nostrils, and he would get them in quick little flashes clearly right up to that highway. They were just some people that wanted to run and they had run good and hard, but now they were here and wouldn't have to run any longer. That hit it, he knew, and then he was shaking all over and the taste in his mouth seemed worse and his stomach twisted harder. He started quickly toward the door, just wanting to feel the mist fresh on his cheeks again, and when he got out in the hall he started to cry but he got sick instead, and he leaned his head against the wall and began throwing up on the floor.



Summer Song

By **PATRICIA A. KEAGLE**

Oh, do not love me very much, I pray,
I would not have your heart too bound in mine,
A little love, a pretty love is fine.
A whisp of song to dance to, and a spray
Of moon-struck sea-foam. Just a pleasant way
Of passing time. I would not have you care
Too much for me. I hope you lightly share
This sweet and foolish fancy of a day.

A smile, a look, three wishes on a star,
A kiss that fades like fog, moon-dazzled eyes,
These things alone are all I gave to you.
You must not think them other than they are.
And surely must you know if you are wise,
Those words I whispered dear, they were not true.

Gloomy Sunday

By **PATRICIA A. KEAGLE**

Beyond all questioning
The end is perfect here
And rushing to a close.
—Last of all . . . Sundays—

The road before us twists and curves
As tortuous as a mad monk's curse
And we—we beat against the rain
That patterns out the night
And flings the pavement
Toward our car in glimmering, reflected light.
I feel that we move on too fast
And yet I can not force my mind to care.
The world is numb and blurred,
And only one thing left, sensation,
Still is there.

Last of all . . . Sundays.

Now is the time,—a slippery road,
Quite late at night,
All sense is tumbled toward the winding light
Without distinction or regret.
This is the time to drive into the night
And not return.

Last of all . . . Sundays.

If it is death or only driving on
Until the furthest light is left behind
And only rain before.
Beyond all questioning this is the perfect hour to die.
This second, now!
And if by some strange chance we live
It does not matter how.
The hour has gone by.

—And last of all . . . Sundays—



Vengeance

By **ELEANOR MOHR**

I would take
A rather malicious pleasure
In burning in hell
If I thought you had blundered
Into the other place.

Alone

By C. E. WILDER

I am a ragged beggar walking down a hot,
dusty road,
I am an old jalopy, rain-beaten and mud-
streaked, standing in an open field,
I am a white brittle bone abandoned by
the hungriest mongrel,
I am the widow who looks, always, for his
face in the crowd,
I am a harlot on clacking heels fading
into the shadows of a moist dawn— —
I am a cancer called loneliness.



Other Woman

By ELEANOR MOHR

I wish for you,
Cats and canaries—
A clock's loud ticking,
Your empty stair-case
Creaking in the night,
And for the rest of your days
Never a man in your house.



Songs From The Moon

By MARY LOU BRAND

And you will make music over tiny cities of beaded light.
You will sing cold ancient light-songs through a lattice
Or the fork of a willow or on the mill-pond sweet with cedars,
And you will hum snatches of silver through the bamboo blinds . . .
Songs of shattered light on the parlor rugs . . .
And somehow the song is a benediction to this hilarious world,
One blustering day, and frantic, jabbering, grasping people . . .
Sing the chant, ice-moon, both sharp and cold
And made of light and listless shadows . . . Sing the chant . . .
Sanctus Benedictus Benedictus Amen.

The Time Uncle Laura Died

By ARTHUR MADSON

"Uncle Laura's dead." That's all the telegram said. I read it over and over, letting it sink in. It was hard to realize—Uncle Laura dead—he had been with us so long. Why, the whole family was sort of built around him. And now he was—dead.

"Are you going to the funeral?"

I looked up—it was my roommate, Pat, who had entered without my noticing. I guess I'm pretty lucky having a roommate like Pat. I grew up on a farm and didn't know much about a whole lot of things a person should know about when they come to college, and Pat sort of wised me up. Always thoughtful and considerate and a wheel and sort of letting me in on things without being superior or anything. I mean, college just wouldn't have been much fun for me if it hadn't been for having such a swell roommate. Pat was from Chicago and knew just about everything, I guess.

"Oh, no," I said. How could I explain? I mean, it would sound so stupid.

"You see—" I began, then stopped.

"What an odd name for a man—Laura. Was that really his name?"

"Oh, yes. Uncle Laura Peagreen Glory. He—he wasn't really my uncle. He was—he just sort of—lived with us."

"Oh."

I had a date with Terry that evening and in the excitement forgot all about Uncle Laura. Pat and Terry had gone to the same high school in Chicago and that's how I got to know Terry. They used to go together then, I guess, but now they're just kind of friends. That's real funny, too, because they're so much alike. I mean, interested in the same things and all. I guess maybe that's why I'm so fond of both of them. Terry is small and blonde and has green eyes and is really cute, with just a suspicion of freckles. Well, anyway, we went to see a Bing Crosby picture, a new one, at the State. Bing always has been just about my favorite Hollywood actor and Terry likes him, too. It was a real superior movie, only it didn't last long enough. I mean, Terry and I were in the balcony and things were just getting real cozy and then the movie was over. We went to Pop Myer's to get a cup of coffee and a sandwich—it was Friday night and we had a little time. I was feeling real kind of dreamily happy and wasn't talking much, when I noticed the big sign, "Our Hamburger Freshly Ground." I choked on my sandwich. I'd forgotten all about Uncle Laura. Terry frowned at me, startled. "What's the matter?"

I just looked back, not knowing what to say.

"Is it your uncle?" I nodded. "That's too bad—will you have to go home?"

"Yes. I mean no." I blinked. "How did you know about it?"

"Pat told me."

"Oh."

"Uh—was his name really Laura?"

I nodded and then blushed. I wished Pat hadn't told. "Does anyone else—I mean, uh—I never told you about Uncle Laura, did I Terry?"

"No, you didn't."

"Well, you see, he—he wasn't really my uncle. He was, well, awfully kind of peculiar and—I'll tell you all about him—some-time."

"When is the funeral going to be?"

"Well, it uh—that's what I mean. You see, he—he doesn't—he didn't believe in funerals, for one thing. I—they probably won't have one."

"Well, but they gotta do something with him."

"They will."

"Well—what?"

"Let's go," I said.

"O.K. Hey, aren't you going to finish your hamburger?"

"No." We left.

"What will they do with him?" Terry can be awfully persistent sometimes.

"Please, Terry, I told you I'd tell you all about it—about Uncle Laura—sometime. I'd—rather not talk about it now. You see, he was—well, for one thing, if it wasn't for him I wouldn't be in college. And—well, I don't even know how he died or anything—yet—and—you understand, Terry?"

The next morning I asked Pat just who all knew about Uncle Laura's death. I tried to explain how I was kind of embarrassed about it—his strange name and that's why I had never talked about him.

"Gee, I'm sorry, but Helen Johnson was there when I told Terry and you know how she is. Everybody on campus knows now. You should have told me last night and I wouldn't have mentioned it to a soul." Pat is always real glib.

"What nationality was he?"

"Nationality? You mean like Greek or English or something?"

"Yes. With such an odd name as that you can't tell. He might be most anything."

"Oh. He was—oh, he was Swiss."

"Swiss. And he lived with your folks on their farm?"

"Yes."

"Was he wealthy?"

"Well, in a way. I mean, he had a—well, he had an income

and he used to travel and he's always been real swell to us—he's putting me through college and he's fixed Dad's farm all up and—you know, we had almost lost it in the depression before he came to live with us. Oh, there's the bell—I've gotta go to history. See you, Pat."

Well, it sure was evident that Helen Johnson had spread her little piece of news far and wide. People looked at me and whispered and giggled. School wasn't much fun the next couple of days. I kept telling myself that I shouldn't mind, that I was acting high-schoolish, but it didn't do much good. Even Terry kept asking questions.

"What did he die of?"

"Oh, hell. He died from eating green acorns."

"What?"

"Yes. His teeth weren't very good and he couldn't chew them."

"You're kidding."

"No I'm not. He was real fond of acorns."

"What else did he eat?"

"Oh, just the usual things. But he never drank anything except water."

Well, it kept going on and on like this, getting worse all the time and I finally realized the only thing to do was to simply explain the whole matter, which was harder than it may seem. Of course, looking back on it, it all seems perfectly silly, but at the time it loomed up frighteningly. Anyway, one afternoon at Myer's both Pat and Terry were there and I decided this was the time.

"Look," I said to them, "this Uncle Laura business, well—"

"Yes?" It was Pat, all ears.

"Well," I began again coloring a little, and mad at myself for being embarrassed, "it's kind of hard to explain. I mean, you both come from Chicago and are real sophisticated and all and Uncle Laura—well, he—. What I mean is, it probably—" I gulped my coffee. "All of us, Dad and Mom and my brother are—were—real fond of him. You see, he paid off the mortgage on the farm, and—and he really was kind of lovable and intelligent—lots more than most—at times he seemed almost human." I looked at them squarely. "You see, he was a Brown Swiss."

"Brown Swiss?" echoed Terry.

"You mean they come in colors?" That's Pat, always wise-cracking.

"You don't get it." I said. A Brown Swiss is a breed of cattle. Uncle Laura was a bull, a famous purebred bull."

"Oh."

"He used to win a lot of blue ribbons—was senior grand champion at the National Dairy Cattle Congress twice. So people used to

pay a lot of money for calves of his and—that's all," I finished weakly, "except he's dead now."

Pat burst out laughing. "Uncle Laura Peagreen Glory—a bull!"

Well, it's all in the past now, but I never will forget how foolish I felt at the time. Terry and I have had a lot of laughs over it, but—we're sort of engaged now—I've been wearing his frat pin for a couple of weeks.



Silence

By **ELEANOR MOHR**

He does not tell me truth;
He does not tell me lies.
(I wish he had.)
He only smiles with his eyes,
And drives me mad.



Penitence

By **PATRICIA A. KEAGLE**

This I will grieve for.
This I regret.
One hour lost,
Not to be regained,
Or found,
Ever.

That hour has gone before me,
Which took one dream along.
The wind that blows beside me
Sings a quiet song.
That gate has closed forever
That one time stood ajar.
So now I listen to the wind
That mourns a fallen star.

These I will grieve for,
These I regret.
A forgotten hour
A broken star,
A promise I made a long time ago
And forgot.

The Purple Cow

By LITTLETON S. ROBERTS, JR.

Miss Burnett surveyed her kindergarten class with satisfaction. Her drawings really were successful—she had been sure they would be—and her children had never before been so completely absorbed. She felt immensely pleased; she had spent a lot of time and effort making them up, and it *was* a clever idea. Not really original: she had borrowed from the books that came with little water-color sets, but none of the other teachers had thought of using it in the classroom. She had mimeographed the drawing, her own little drawing of the pasture, with clouds in the sky above, a fence and trees, and a cow in the foreground with even the outline of spots on its side. She had had it mimeographed and had pinned a copy to each small easel, and now the children were filling in the spaces with the various colors; they really did seem to be enjoying the work.

She had thought, at first, of lettering in the proper colors to be used, had decided, no, they were old enough to know which were right. But she stopped now behind the Larson girl, the one with yellow hair in pigtails and vacuous blue eyes. The girl had finished the pasture with short vertical streaks of green like blades of grass—very clever for five—and she had done the cow in brown, ignoring the spots and making it solid. But now she drew a soaking brush across the sky, left watery pools of blue which ran and mingled with the pasture green.

"No, dear," Miss Burnett interrupted. "Here . . ." She took the brush, pressing out the excess water in the glass beside the easel, and with it stroked the tiny cake of blue. She handed the brush back to the girl. "Try it now, Thelma; you don't want your sky to mix in your pasture, do you, dear?"

"No'm," said the girl.

Miss Burnett moved on, circulating among the tables and easels. The girls and, yes, even the boys were so engrossed they hardly noticed her, and this she liked. Here and there she paused, interjected a comment, a bit of praise. The children were doing quite well, she thought; only an occasional pink sky or muddy pasture. Johnny Morris was getting more paint on his hands and face than on his easel; she would have to remember to make him wash before she sent him home.

She had been here just three months, she reflected with a little surprise, yet she couldn't imagine doing anything else. She had always listened to other teachers' complaints with wonder . . . well, it was a strain sometimes, being with children so much, giving herself, being their minds, really. But these moments of exhilaration

were worth the weariness; it gave her something, knowing, though she would never say it to others, that she meant more to the children in a way than their busy parents ever could. She came upon the Myers boy, Raymond, and her train of thought was halted. He was the only one she wasn't sure about; he hadn't been with her as long as the others, and he hardly spoke except in answer to her questions. She leaned above him.

Raymond was thin, smaller than the rest. The expression around his bottomless brown eyes under messy black hair was wholly concentrated on his work, and . . . Oh Lord! His sky and pasture blended indefinitely with smudges of green and brown all about a cow of violent purple. She recovered, forced a laugh.

"Raymond," she spoke, drawing his attention reluctant from the paper. "Raymond, those aren't the right colors. What are you doing? What kind of a cow looks like that?"

"That's a cow," said Raymond slowly, fastening the bottomless brown eyes on hers. "It's a purple cow."

She laughed again, careful to soften her voice. "No, Raymond, there aren't any cows like that; there aren't any purple cows." It sounded so ridiculous in her ears as she said it that she flushed, felt a hot spurt of exasperation. "Wait a moment," she finished.

She walked quickly back to the desk at the front of the room, yanked open the drawer where she had put the extra water-color sheets. With a clean drawing in her hand she went back to the end of the room where the boy was standing. She removed the tacks with her thumb and fingernails, pulled the old sheet from the easel, smoothed the new one up.

"Now, see," she said, composed again, "We can paint the cow brown with white spots, or yellowish, or black, and the pasture must be green . . ." She took his brush and made little illustrating spots. ". . . and the sky is blue—except where the clouds are, see?" She twisted her head and met the brown eyes, and suddenly struck with the thought that he hadn't listened to her words at all, only her voice, she snapped querulously, "Raymond?"

He dropped his eyes and took the brush she held to him.

"Now, Raymond, you try it again." She straightened and breathed deeply. The rest of the class had apparently paid no attention, were still preoccupied with the paintings. She moved slowly toward the front of the room.

After a while she reached her desk and sank wearily behind it. She looked at her watch—eleven-ten. She could let them go in fifteen minutes, and she was glad; somehow the exhilaration was gone. She craned her neck to see across the room toward Raymond. He was sitting at right angles to her line of vision and she couldn't see his paper, but at the moment he was doing nothing, simply holding his brush and staring at the easel. She resisted an impulse to go back to him; she was still annoyed at the twinge of humiliation

she had felt, and she knew . . . she told herself she would have to be careful with the child.

Before eleven-twenty the more restless of the boys were whispering across to one another; within a minute or two the entire class was fidgeting. Not even her clever drawing, she realized, could hold them through the morning.

"All right, boys and girls," she called out, standing, "we can begin to put our things away. Be sure to wash your brushes and put everything back in its place." She spoke loudly and slowly, emphasized "everything," "back," and "place," but the last of her sentence was drowned in the outbreak of chatter as the class boiled with activity. She began moving about, saw that things were left neatly, sent little Morris to wash his face and hands. She found herself again behind Raymond, and glancing at his easel she froze in astonishment. He had smeared it with a few random streaks, disregarded the pattern of her drawing, and across the middle of the paper he had crudely traced the outline of an airplane.

Busy putting up his paints and brushes, Raymond hadn't noticed her. Stupified, at a loss for the moment, she turned and automatically began directing the children as they got their coats, pulled on their overshoes. She went to the door and stood aside as they filed past her and out of the room. Raymond trudged along at the rear, and impulsively she called him back. When he was again inside the room she closed the door, walked to her desk and sat down.

He came, when she motioned; he stood beside the desk with his hands in the pockets of his trousers. He didn't seem frightened, and the brown eyes rested steadily on her face. She would be so careful, she thought; she would have to be careful now or she would never reach him. And she did not know exactly what it was she wanted to say. She only felt the core of exasperation glowing, and she knew it would have to be settled before she could regain her satisfaction with the day.

"Raymond," she spoke as softly as she could, "is there anything . . . Don't you like the drawing class, dear?"

"Yes," he answered, obviously puzzled.

"Raymond," she changed her tone a little. "You see . . . well, here we must work as a group." She dropped her eyes as she talked, looked at her hands folded on the desk. "When we do something, we all do it together . . . the same thing . . . you see?"

She threw her glance at his face for an instant. The soft brown eyes waited patiently and just a trace of curiosity wrinkled his brow. It wasn't getting across, she knew, and she tried to check a growing irritation; he was, after all, only five.

"You see, Raymond," she tried another tack, "we have to learn things slowly; that's why I gave you the drawing to fill in with the paints—you see, don't you?"

He nodded hesitantly, the wrinkle deepening.

"Well, Raymond," she finished desperately, "why didn't you paint the drawing when I gave you the second one?"

His face lightened with understanding. "I drew a airplane," he blurted.

"I know, but you see we must do what the group is doing, Raymond. I want to help you learn to paint, and today we were supposed to color the drawing . . . with the rest of the group. You see that, don't you?" The involuntary note of pleading in her voice and slight shaking of her fingers and the feeling of absurdity that rushed over her suddenly made her hate the thin little face and the sloppy brown eyes and the uncombed black hair across the forehead.

Raymond said deliberately, "I like to draw airplanes."

Her hand flicked out and caught his cheek with a sharp little crack, and as he still stood, rigid now, mouth open, she brought her palms swiftly to the sides of her face; she leapt from her chair and ran from the room, struggling for breath against the spasms in her bosom, and her eyes stung fiercely as the walls of the hallway spun around her.



Rain On 63rd Street

By **PATRICIA A. KEAGLE**

The sudden dark comes swiftly dropping down
Upon the city streets these rainy nights,
And draws to sharper focus all the lights
That stretch in endless avenues to town.
A bitter wind that whips across the sky
Small tattered rags of cloud, flings up the rain
Against the empty windows of a train
That pauses for a moment, then goes by.
An empty train that stops and moves away,
No passengers to leave and none to go.
No one at all left standing where the low
Lamp burns to see the rain so end the day.

Beyond the wet, black pavement now the train
Is gone, and no one there to watch the rain.

Hot Trumpet

By ARTHUR L. WRIGHT

Don't get me wrong. I ain't sayin' he was and I ain't sayin' he wasn't. But Carrot-top said he had 'em and Carrot-top was plenty scared and I ain't seen Carrot-top scared since the time he got the D.T.'s in Philly. He played real nice that night until he chucked his horn at the pink eagles. Bert is still sore about it. Of course, Bert is sore at everybody all the time but he is always sorer at Carrots than at anybody else. It don't do him no good, though, 'cause he knows that without old Carrots we'd all be playin one-night stands at square dances.

Only one night Bert really got sore. We was playin' the Archer circuit and in Sioux City Carrots takes a powder at intermission. We don't hear from him until the cops call up and tell us they found him in front of the City Hall tryin' to roll up the street-car track.

So me and Bert go down and bail him out. And all the way home in the taxi Bert don't say a word.

When we get to the hotel Bert calls everybody into his room. He stands right up in the middle and looks at us like maybe he is Knute Rockne and we are seven points behind at the half. He taps hissself on the chest.

"I have come to a decision," he says, "I am gettin' sick and tired of bailin' this rummy outa the can every time we take our eyes offa him." Bert is pointin' at Carrots. "I am going to give him his walkin' papers and anyone who thinks we can't make it without him is nuts and can leave with him."

For a minute everybody drops their yaps open and don't say nothin'. Then they all start yellin' at once and you can't hear yourself think.

Bert puts his mitts to his mouth and shouts, "Shut up. Everybody shut up."

When it's quiet again Eddy, the lead 'bone, pipes up.

"Yer looney, Bert," he says. "I am not in a class with Dorsey or Teagarden and I never will be. The rest of this bunch is the same way. Without Carrots we might as well go find a nice short breadline."

"Speak for yourself, Buster," says Fox-nose, who is the piano-player and besides Carrots the best man we got. "I can get along without this AA candidate myself, I'm gettin' a little sick of havin' my three squares depend on a alcoholic trumpet-tooter."

Everybody starts yellin' again and nothin' can stop 'em until Carrots, who has been sittin' in the corner cleanin' his fingernails, stands up and raises his hand.

"I wish to make it known," he says, "that I would not stay

with this fleabitten outfit now if it was playin' for MCA. By myself I hold this bunch of schlemeels together and when I turn my back they plant a shiv in it. You may all go to hell."

And out the door he goes. Nobody follows him because they know he won't change his mind for a couple of hours at least. Fox-nose and Bert tried to keep us cheered up but things were pretty glum. Nobody, not even Fox-nose, really thought we could get along without Carrots. So about five, when we find out Carrots has packed and left, we are lower than a boa-constrictor's abdomen.

We rehearsed for two hours with Windy takin' Carrots' part but it was no good. When we knocked off for chow Windy's lip was shot and Bert was worried half nuts. Fox-nose said he would take Carrots solos on the piano and finally Bert said okay. It was gonna smell, but we had to do something.

We're settin' up when this guy comes in. From the front he looks fine. He's big, with a kisser like a movie star, dark curly hair, and shoulders enough for two guys. But when he was standin' sideways he looked funny. Not hump-backed, more like he had a papoose under his coat. He walks right up to Bert.

"I undestand," he says, his voice is deep and loud, "I understand you need a trumpeter."

Right away Bert gets suspicious. Real sarcastic he says, "Oh you understand we need a trumpeter, do you, who says we need a trumpeter?"

Windy breaks in quick. He's not wantin' to play with that shot lip.

"Wait a minute, Bert, let's not get hasty. Maybe the guy's good."

You can see how desperate we was. In walks this guy we've never seen before and wants to play a part Berrigan woulda had trouble with.

"Okay, okay," says Bert, "let's hear you. I guess we got nothin' to lose." The guy didn't say a word. He just takes this satchel from under his arm and opens it up. I ain't never seen no trumpet like it before. It was so shiny you couldn't tell if it was gold or silver. A little bigger than regulation with no fixin's, just shiny.

"What would you like me to play?" he asks.

Bert smacks a hand to his forehead. "What would you like me to play?" Bert groans. "He walks in here like he was God's youngest son, asks for a job, and then says 'What would you like me to play?'"

"Shhh," says Windy, "take it easy." He drags out a piece of music and puts it on the stand. "Try this."

I got a peek at the music and jumped. It was "Body and Soul" and it was Carrots' own arrangement. Nobody ever tried it but him. Some of the big boys coulda done it. Biederbecke and James and a coupla others but they woulda had to practice. It was no

cinch, believe me. Carrots had worked on it for months before he could play it himself.

The big guy takes a squint at it and raises that beautiful horn to his kisser. I ain't never heard nothin' like it before and I don't ever expect to again. He played sweet and hot and high and low. He played every note that Carrots had written and added some of his own. I heard him play a lot after that and it was always wonderful but that first time—well, if I'da had a hat on I woulda taken it off.

When he finished nobody said a word. Bert just leads him to Carrots' chair and gets out the first set for him while the rest of us finish settin' up.

I thought those hicks would go wild that night. They never danced a step after the first number. Just crowded around the stand and gaped and clapped themselves silly. Afterwards the manager of the joint goes for Bert. He wants to give us a blank contract with options. He was willin' to do anything. But whatever you say about Bert you can't say he ain't a good manager.

"No, thanks," he says. "With this guy they'll be beggin' for us and I want to spread the word quick."

The next few weeks we started to the top. The crowds knocked themselves out everywhere but even at the biggest joints Bert wouldn't let us stay longer than two weeks. We began to get offers that would make our eyes bug out but Bert said he knew what he was doin'.

"Take it easy," he says, "I know what I'm doin'."

All this time the big guy was acting strange. He wouldn't take a raise although Bert offered him one every time we played. He wouldn't bunk with anyone either—always slept by himself.

But that wasn't the worst part. Seems this guy was a sort of religious guy or something. He didn't like us to smoke and when Bert found out he told us maybe the guy was afraid of his pipes and wouldn't let us smoke around him.

Another funny thing was his name. Bert asked him his name after the job was over that first night.

"You may call me Gabe," he says, and that's all he ever told us. It sounded funny, a guy who talks like a professor and plays the hottest trumpet in the U.S.A. bein' called Gabe.

He didn't like us drinking, either. Never said nothin' about it; it was just the way he acted. So pretty soon, we got to sneakin' off whenever we wanted a bucket of suds. And he'd look so hurt every time we'd swear—well, it got so bad that some of the guys began to wonder whether it was worth it. It was like bein' on a desert island with a million bucks. To me, it was always worth it just to hear him play. I play the clarinet myself, but I know an artist when I hear one.

Everything is goin' smooth and we're headin' right for the top

of the stack. We finally get Bert to tell us what he's plannin' for.

"Carnegie Hall," he says. "W're goin' to give a concert in Carnegie Hall. The way I figure it, after the yokels hear Gabe play once, they don't dance anymore. So why do we play for dances? We give concerts, instead."

It sounded a little goofy to me, but, like I say, Bert always knows what he's doin'.

And then, in Cincinnati, who should show up but Carrots, stewed to the gills. He comes bangin' into my room lookin' mad as hell.

"The guy's a scab," he says. "Don't tell me no different. I've checked every union list from here to St. Louis. I wrote to the main office, too. There's only five Gabriels listed, and he ain't any of 'em."

While Carrots was talkin', the guys had been pourin' into my room. He'd been talkin' so loud that they had heard him and come to see what was up.

Carrots looks around. "You hear me?" he yells. "The guy is a scab."

Nobody knew what to say. We just hadn't thought of it. A guy that plays the horn like that ought naturally to have a union card.

Carrots starts for the door. "No Goddam scab is gonna steal my job," he says. "He better learn to play the guitar because when I finish hittin' him, he ain't gonna have enough mouth left to play the piccolo."

Now Carrots is a rather large guy. Also, he has a rep for bein' handy with his dukes. But the boys weren't gonna let their golden goose get cooked without a struggle. A few of 'em managed to get between Carrots and the door.

"Oh, so that's the way it is, is it?" Carrots growls.

Eddy was the closest one to Carrots so Carrots grabs him by the collar and hits him three or four times quick and shoves him away. After that, Eddy didn't look too good. His nose was bleedin' and he was weavin' and his eyes didn't focus right.

"Who's next?" asks Carrots.

The boys were thinking, I could tell that. They were thinking maybe they wouldn't ever play in Carnegie Hall if Carrots broke Gabe into little pieces, but at least they would be able to play. So nobody says nothin' and Carrots pushes his way to the door and starts down the hall. We all went to the door and watched him head for Gabe's room.

"If we all jump him at once," says Fox-nose, "we can't none of us get hurt too bad."

"That's right," someone says, so we all start down the hall. Not too fast, nobody was anxious, but we was movin'. We was maybe

a first down from Gabe's door when out comes Carrots, runnin'. He's as white as a table-cloth with a ten buck cover charge.

"Jesus," says Carrots, "Jesus Christ."

"What's the matter, Carrots?" says Mac, the drummer. "What's the matter?"

"Wings—the guy had wings—flew right out the window."

Then everybody laughs, because they know Carrots is seein' bottle animals again. But when we take him back to my room he's cold sober and he sticks to his story.

It seems he went in and there stood Gabe in nothin' but his drawers and this pair of flappers. Like swan's wings, only bigger, Carrots said. When Gabe gets a load of Carrots he grabs a sheet off the bed and takes off through the window.

"It wasn't like he was scairt of me," Carrots says, "it was more like he saw I had got a gander at those wings and was afraid I'd report him to Barnum and Bailey."

We all die laughin' and pretty soon Carrots begins to see how screwy it is and he calms down a little. He apologizes to Eddy and the rest of us. "And that's all too, boys," he says holdin' up his hand, swearin', "It's enough for me. I'll never touch another drop as long as I live."

Fox-nose and I got the idea at the same time. The idea was that maybe Gabe had jumped out the window when he saw Carrots comin' after him. Or maybe Carrots had pushed him out. We ran for the door at the same time and beat it down the hall, with Fox-nose ahead by that beak of his, and open Gabe's door.

There was no sign of him—and there never was no sign of him. But the window was open and while I was lookin' out to see if Gabe was distributed on the sidewalk, Fox-nose picks up something offa the floor.

"What ya got there?" I asked him.

Fox-nose didn't say anything—he just handed it to me.

It was a long, white feather.



After The Fire

By **ELEANOR MOHR**

I had one love
When I was young
That seared my soul
And burned my tongue,

But now I live
With gentle folk,
The love I have
Is quiet smoke.

Swamp Song

By MARY LOU BRAND

Maybe it wasn't much the kid's fault. There was somethin' strange about him—the way he walked down the street with a quick, gliding step, like a young panther, eyes ahead but all the time knowin' what was goin' on around him, and his pale blonde hair featherin' out in the breeze. His hair was like his Ma's, but the eyes of him were strong with strange lights behind 'em like Dan Delaney's, his dad's.

Young Pat lived up there in the hills. See, where the road forks off. He lived there with his Ma in a peeling yellow-paint house. The ground around there wasn't much good. Only fertile enough to make 'em a fair livin'. Mrs. Delaney an' Pat kep' up the acreage since Dan left on a trek down in the swamps from which he never returned. Still can see big Dan totin' his twelve-gauge shotgun hard against the blue of his overalls, grinnin' with the ebony pipe he got in Jamaica gritted in his teeth, heelin' it down the trail. He waved goodbye from the edge of the razor grass, Ned, his coon-dog yippin' at Dan's clay-smear'd boots. He set off down into the dark wetness, leavin' only an Irish tune echoing back. He was a wild 'un—had felt the winds of every ocean and still had that salt in his blood. You could see it in his strange eyes. You could hear it in his voice. Yes, could be he . . . , but I don't know. He jes' disappeared that dank summer mornin' an' never came back again.

Mrs. Delaney was awful broke up about it. She sent the sheriff in the swamp a dozen times, even went with the search party once herself, but they didn't find nothin'—not even footprints in the rotting foliage. She didn't say much then but walked up that road to the yellow house an' didn't come down no more. She worked all of the time then. I could see her weedin' the garden at sunrise, the print apron flappin' out around her. Everyday it was the same. She would work in the garden an' Pat would come down into town carryin' a brown reed basket of vegetables to sell at Higgins' Market. He never said nothin', 'cept to Higgins, an' that was about business. Higgins tried to talk to him once, but he turned on his heel, quick-like, and walked out the screened door with that smooth step, and the pale blonde hair shinin' in the sun.

At high school it was the same way too. Miss Fosdick, his teacher, said he was right smart—could get his lessons fast as anyone. He'd finish and then set doin' nothin', not wantin' to read or get acquainted with any of the others. He'd jes' set, an' when classes were over, he'd walk back up the road alone.

Townpeople don't forget fast—things like Dan's disappearance.

At first there was the usual gossip, then it slowed down for awhile, an' then when the heat was heavy, when the flies were thick, an' there was more talkin' than workin', the yarn would revolve again. Somebody would add a little here, someone would put a few new details in the story, an' pretty soon it became sort of a legend in the town. It was that sort of a hot day that Shell Winston was tellin' the story in Higgins' Market. Shell always made it sound new and different. He seemed to get a heap of pleasure out of the yarn, and he could get mighty big audiences at times. Anyway, a newcomer to the town was settin' on the counter listenin' while four or five others stood around to get their two bits' worth in or jes' to have a smoke an' amusement. Shell knew how to hold attention, all right. B'sides, he never did like big Dan, an' that made it all the easier to tell. He really had them strainin' their ears.

"Did they ever find him?"

"Naw. Like as not he's alive, though. He was as wild as they come."

"Well, why did this Delaney run away in the first place?"

"Well, I ain't sayin' he did. 'Course you never can tell for sure. He might still be runnin' around here. Some say the quick-sand got him, an' then again, he coulda run off with another woman. Could be!"

"Could it, Shell Winston?" a clear voice split the silence. Everyone jerked around 'cept Shell. He packed his tobacco in his pipe real hard, thinkin' 'bout what he said. He knew that behind him stood the blonde-haired kid. Shell turned about slowly. Everyone was awful quiet.

"Now lookee here, Pat. I meant no harm. I was just re . . ."

"You was peddlin' filth about my Pa, you damned rat!" The boy's knuckles drained white on the brass door knob.

"Why you lousy little squirt!" Shell dived at the boy suddenly. Pat ducked and jumped out of the door, slammin' it shut with a crack.

"Shet up, Shell! Shet up! You'll regret it if'n you say more!" he shrieked. Then he was gone.

"Never heard no kid carry on so," gasped Shell. He was red an' mad. No one said much. They just walked out of the Market.

The story got 'round town awful fast. First Shell tol' it like he was insulted, an' then he tried to make a joke out of it.

"Thet Delaney kid will be as rotten as his ol' man, jes' watch!" All the time Pat ignored it, walkin' the same swift way into town each mornin'. Shell would stand on the steps of the pool hall, grinnin' slyly. Then when he was sure Pat was in earshot, he'd say in a loud voice,

"There goes Dan Delaney's kid. Has a temper jes' like his Ol' man!" Folks got so they were embarrassed to be standin' next to Shell. Reckon he wasn't as mean as he was a fool. He liked to

taunt, an' he didn't see the danger-spark in Pat's eyes. Once when Pat was walkin' to Higgins', Shell bellowed out somethin' about the 'rotten sailors who settled in town. He was standin' next to the sheriff at the time, an' Pat wheeled 'round, his eyes blazin' Irish, but he held his tongue. I could see him wantin' to grow strong—an' he was, awful fast. But Shell didn't. Pat ws a kid. Why, what could a kid do?

The hot, heavy days passed slowly. Pat came down from the hills more often when the vegetables started to thrive. His ma weeded garden jes' the same every mornin' in a tired, lost way. An' then a whole year was completed. Two months later—that was yesterday—the thing happened. I knew it would, only not quite so soon as it did.

There's a place where the Shade River slows. It's a turn 'afore it glides into the swamps, an there are many fish there. Shell Winston was fishin' there when he heard someone singin' near the swamp. First it didn't seem strange and then Shell sat up sharply from his prone position on the moss bank. The voice was sharp an' sounded like the sweepin' tide, an' it was Irish sweet. It was the same weird tune big Dan Delaney used to sing. When Dan sang, it rolled down from the hills like an avalanche. Everyone knew his voice. Shell trembled. It was like hearin' a ghost. It came from the edge of the pond. Shell jumped up quietly, kicked off his boots, and crept through the wet grass and rotten wood to a hillock. He paused an' looked down, his face drippin' with sweat. Below on a log, sat a man, a tanned man wearing a sailor's cap. The voice was so strong an sweet, it shook the marsh grass. Shell leaned over.

"My God, Dan Delaney!" He exclaimed. The man leaped to his feet, spun 'round, and jerked the hat off'n his head. Then Shell saw the pale blonde hair. The young one advanced.

"What you lissen fer?" It was Pat, all right, only taller an' heavier than ever Shell had thought he was. Pat's eyes were dark, an' Shell began to back off, tryin' to get out of the light in them.

"Now lissen, Pat, can I hep' effen you sing so loud?" He gasped. Pat doubled his fist under Shell's nose.

"What you call me Dan Delaney fer, Shell Winston?" Shell pushed one heel back.

"You looked so much like him. You even sound jes' like 'im."

"Still ain't got that notion outa your head that he's 'round, have you?" Shell had a funny grin on his mouth.

"Wal, isn't he? You know, I'd bet you've heard from that searat. Else why are ya here? Have you heard from him lately?" Pat

pulled in his breath with a snarl. "You have? Own up to it. You heard from Dan, didn't you?"

"I'll kill you for that!" He leaped at Shell, and swung his fist down on top of Shell's head. Shell fell, rolled over and over out of Pat's way and slid up to his feet again. Pat stalked him, slowly.

"I'm still comin'. God, you'll never say anythin' like that agin'!" Shell side-stepped. Pat grabbed his shirt-sleeve. There was a tearing sound. Shell jerked away, and Pat drew back his arm and smashed his fist into Shell's face sharply. He slumped, swinging his arms out desperately. Pat pulled him up by the collar and crashed his fist again into Shell's face—then again—and again. Then Pat released his grip, an' Shell slid down in a heap, blood pourin' over his face. Pat drew the sleeve of his shirt across his upper lip, breathin' sharply, an' then he began to walk wearily away from Shell. We found Shell lyin' where he'd been hit, blood pourin' over his face, his shirt, and all over the ground. He was half-dead. His nose and jaw were both broken.

We followed Pat's footprints up onto the main road, then up to the yellow house off the fork. In the setting sun, the house looked almost painted new. The Sheriff was swearin' in a rage at it. He pounded on the door loudly. There was a long pause, an' then the latch clicked up, an' Mrs. Delaney pulled the door open slowly. Her hair was almost white, an' there were blue veins in around her eyes an' on her hands. Never saw no woman get old so quick. The Sheriff stopped his cussin'.

"We'd like to talk to Pat, Mrs. Delaney." He talked to her respectful like.

"Why do you want him?" she asked softly.

"He jes' near kilt Shell Winston, Ma'm. Is he here?"

"Shell Winston?" She bent her head slightly, like she was thinkin' hard. "Yes, he tol' me about it."

"Tell 'im to make us no trouble. He can't do that . . . hit a man like that. He'll hafta come with us." Mrs. Delaney raised her head.

"I'm sorry, Sheriff, but he can't come with you, not now. He's gone." The Sheriff gripped his hat hard.

"Gone? He's gone? Where?" There were tears in her eyes now.

"I've lost the other one to the swamp too," she whispered. "See?" We followed her gaze down the road. Jes' in time, we saw the pale-blonde-haired boy pause at the edge of the razor grass an' wave. Then he set off down into the darkness, leavin' only that Irish tune echoin' back.

Maybe it wasn't much the kid's fault. There was somethin' strange about 'im.

For Young Apollo Passing By

By **ELEANOR MOHR**

Oh, bitter-dark the way I go
And scarred my face, and sad, and gloomy.
I thank whatever gods that though
You passed this way, you never knew me!



Request

By **PATRICIA A. KEAGLE**

Before I forget, swiftly,
Before I forget the sudden hope,
I ask these favors, wishes if you will.

Not from merit, I have none,
Nor from belief also,
But because my heart is toward
The tall windows
And the light, dying.

First, then.

There is a place where sumac is in the Fall
Between the rain-fall and the dew-fall the moss has time
To grow without disturbance on the stones.
Beside the corn and river bottom there,
The only road is rutted and impassable in Spring
And late Fall.

In the winter, the snow-birds fly above the trees.
If home is anywhere
It is there.

Bear it in mind.

I have also loved stone, rough stone in blocks,
Cool with dew where the lichen grows,
Warm in the sun when it is Spring.

Bear it in mind.

I ask in addition for time.
Not massive slabs of time for great deeds
And mighty thoughts.
But a little space of time to look out of the window,
Turn away—slowly—
And put on the light.

Bear it in mind.

If At First---

By ARTHUR MADSON

Unto them a son was born, and they called him Paul. And he grew straight and tall as a young pine tree, and was good to look upon. When he was of a certain age that it was feasible he married and begat sons. Joshua, James and John. And Roger. Josh got shot, James got drowned, John got lost and never was found. This is a story of Paul and Roger, a father and son relationship. It is neither here nor there, but anywhere.

One day Paul called his young son to him. He called him from his honeyed life of all play and contented sandpiles. Roger was eleven.

"Son," said Paul, "it is time you learned the bitter facts of life. By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn thy bread. That is the bitter facts."

"Yes, Papa," said Roger.

"As you know, Roger, I am a keeper of sheep, vulgarly known as a 'shepherd'."

"Yes, Papa."

"It is customary, you know, for the son to follow in the father's footsteps among our people. Our people are strange. Not until the 20th century do they get rid of this custom. Therefore you are destined to be a keeper of sheep, vulgarly known as a 'shepherd.'"

Tomorrow you will begin your new career. It is also customary to begin at the bottom of the ladder. We will not go against custom. You will be a customary common herd boy with a flock and dogs. Good-night, Roger."

"Yes, Papa."

But little Roger was a boy with ideas. He didn't want to grow up to be keeper of sheep. He wanted to grow up to be a keeper. So that night he crept from his third floor window and morning found him in the metropolis. Morning leads a very interesting life. He's always finding people in the oddest places and seeing the strangest sights. Afternoon, though, is a very dull, prosaic fellow. The best thing ever happens to him is an after dinner nap and a fresh awakening to greet his sister, evening. She, poor girl, is in love with midnight, who spurns her nightly. He only has a moment, so he makes the most of it. He is usually drunk or thereabouts. Evening is a charming girl, invariably dressed in the latest fashionable black satin evening dress. Her pet peeve is double features "Because." She is all in favor of drive-in theatres. Because. Ordinary theatres operate in the afternoon, whom she despises. Because he is an ordinary, dull fellow who either works or at best naps and dreams of her. She also, like morning, often sees

and finds things of oddity or strangeness, or at least curiosity. She found Roger peddling morning papers in the metropolis.

"Wuxtry, wuxtry, read all about it. Payroll bandit saves girl's life. Wuxtry, wuxtry, read all about it."

19 days later evening found Paul finding Roger. From a forward observation post underneath the lamp post by the garden gate across the street he watched Roger the paper boy. He was selling "Times".

"I will make a chip off the old block of him yet," he thought. "But I must be indirect. It is wise in dealing with small boys to not oppose them directly but to lead them in the paths of righteousness and plain dealing by subterfuge. Thus spake Zoroaster. Tomorrow I will call on my old fraternity brother at Yarborough-With-Broad-A prep, Henry Loose. He publishes "Times" and will for me when I ask him, I am sure, do a small favor like firing my son Roger across the street as a paperboy and send him home to me recalcitrant."

Morning found Paul in his hotel bed dreaming of Henry Loose. Morning also found Roger dreaming of Virginia Mayo in his hotel bed. Morning found Henry Loose in his sumptuous bed dreaming of his frat brother from Yarborough-With-Broad-A prep Paul, whom he had not seen since prep days. Morning found Virginia Mayo dreaming of a hotel bed. The hotel bed was dreaming of morning. Morning was disgusted. He turned the whole situation over to afternoon as soon as he could. Afternoon took his nap and everyone else arose and forgot their dreams. Paul went to call on his old fraternity brother from Yarborough-With-Broad-A prep Henry Loose. Roger went to his corner and came out fighting. It's a left by Louis, a left and a right to the midsection, a right to the jaw and Ditzelbaum is down and out. Roger is selling Wednesday morning "Times" on Tuesday night. It is the 20th night since he left home, creeping from his third floor window.

Virginia Mayo went to the studio, jumping from the bed she slept in, to appear in a scene jumping from the bed she's sleeping in.

The hotel bed got made. Afternoon awoke and chortled.

"Henry, old frat brother, old frat brother, how's things and "Times"?"

"Paul, old frat brother, old frat brother, how's things and sheep?"

They shook hands with the secret frat grip.

"Oh, keeping up with the Joneses and "Times"." Paul laughed uproariously at his own joke.

Roger was selling papers right and left for a nickel apiece. "Times" is a morning nickel daily with downtown offices and uptown mannerisms. Its great rival is "News" with uptown offices and downtown mannerisms. It sells 2 for a nickel like any good cigar and is patronized by the same people, usually at the same

time. It doesn't make as much money at "Times" but has more fun like people.

"Cut, cut, cut!" screamed the director. "Silence! Action on the western front. Virginia, dolling, please do not try to act, just be your own, sweet, adorable, lovable, sexy-self."

"But Sam, dolling—"

"I'm telling you who knows best, no acting, dolling, just sex."

Afternoon got fresh with the hotel bed but she was firm and explained she could not be undone until evening.

Roger was mysteriously fired by the circulation manager on direct orders from Henry Loose. Moral: Always remember your secret frat hand shake. Paul when home to prepare the fatted calf. But Roger still had ideas and morning found him blacking shoes on the corner of 8th and Lotus Square.

Paul at home fatted the calf. For 19 days he awaited Roger's coming home, then got mad at the calf and kicked it in the side. The calf looked at him reproachfully, it was a brindle, and Paul lost his temper and blasphemed. Four days later he went back to the metropolis to look for Roger. The intervening four days he spent looking for his temper, which having once escaped from Paul, was enjoying its new found freedom gamboling with the lambs on the green and flitting here and there. Paul finally set a box trap and caught it when he used a handle for bait. Paul knew his temper pretty well. The temper wasn't at all fond of Paul. Paul kept losing him and then trapping him back. One of these days when Paul lost him he was going to skip the country and maybe pick up a little lost mind in Mexico and raise some mempers. Oh, well, even tempers can dream.

Once in Metropolis Paul had to hire a private eye, one Mason Parry, to find Roger. Parry found him blacking boots on the corner of 8th and Lotus Square and reported as much to Paul.

"Let's see, my old frat brother from Smedley U., John L. Loose, controls the bootblacks . . . tomorrow I'll call on him and explain the situation and I'm sure he'll do as I ask, especially for an old frat brother."

But John L. refused to interfere in the matter and advised Paul to go and have a talk with his son. Paul almost lost his temper again, but refrained with difficulty. In the end, however, he followed John L's advice and went down to 8th and Lotus Square and talked with Roger.

"Son," he said, "I have a rather considerable sheep business, it's a good, solid, respectable business, and I want to turn it over to you someday. But I want you to learn the sheep business from the ground up."

"No, Papa, I don't want to be a keeper of sheep, vulgarly known as a shepherd."

"Well, what do you want to be?"

"I want to be a keeper."

"All right, I give up. If I agree to your being a keeper, will you come home with me?"

"Yes, Papa."

Roger spent a very happy four years at Keeper Institute learning all about keeping. He graduated with honors and a degree, B.K., Bachelor of Keeping. After that he went on and got his M.K., Master of Keeping. At present he is working on his thesis to become a Doctor of Keeping. When he has accomplished that he figures he will be kept.

Meanwhile Paul met a girl just like the girl that married dear old dad so he married her and unto them a son was born and they called him Paul, Jr., and he grew straight and tall as a young pine tree and was good to look upon. He was a model son and carried on the traditions and customs of the people nobly and became a keeper of sheep of the first water. He kept the flock up to snuff. Paul Sr., died happy. Roger and Paul Jr., and four other guys were pall bearers.



Infidel At Camp Meeting

By ELEANOR MOHR

All the righteous, godly folk
Bent their knees in prayer,
And shouted while the preacher spoke
To let the Lord know they were there.

Some saw visions; others heard
Voices of their dead,
One listened calmly to the Word,
But he was never saved, they said.



Actions Speak Louder

By ELEANOR MOHR

Oh, do not say that you love me,
And swear it by your faith
(Do you believe in blasphemy?)
For love is but a wraith.

Profane not men of yesterday,
Not holy things, nor birds,
Nor beasts, for all these pass away,
My dear, and so do words.

The Principle Of The Thing

By AL WRIGHT

Sure, you know me. I'm Ed Barren. Everyone around school knows me. Good old Ed, they say. Never find a nicer guy than Ed. You think I don't know what they say about me, but I do. I know what all of them say.

The intellectuals, they say I'm a dumb football player. The football players, they say I'm just an average end—not as good as Wilson. They elected me captain because everybody liked me. And the frat—they ran me for president of the council because they knew I didn't have any enemies. They wanted a Phi Gamma to be president of the council so they ran me. They'd rather have had Samuals or Burns—someone that would push the frat more—but no one could get the votes like I could. Everybody likes good old Ed.

And Myrna—what a swell couple—me and Myrna. She doesn't like me. I'm too dull for her. She wants someone more flashy. You know why Myrna and I go together? Because everybody expected us to. She was the football queen and I was the big catch. So we just started. We don't even like each other. Nothing open, you understand, just plain indifference and boredom. Me, I'd rather go with Louise Monroe. You think that's funny, don't you? Louise isn't a knockout like Myrna. She's not even especially pretty. But I like her. We come from the same town. She's the only girl who ever treated me like I was anything but a halfwit.

I suppose a lot of guys wish they were me. Best-looking girl in school, big wheel, and all that. Well, I'd trade with any of them. I'd trade with that little squirt Joe Barton, because he goes with Louise. They go for walks or sit around and talk. I'd like to do that. I'd like to cuss out a few people I don't like. I'd like to snub a few people I don't care about. I'd like to tell Myrna to go to hell and ask Louise for a date.

And you know why I don't? You know why? Because I'm yellow. No guts. Well, maybe it's not as bad as it sounds. I just don't like scenes. I don't like commotion or arguments or people sore at me. So, I always take the line of least resistance—the easiest way. I've done it all my life. Probably always will. Louise knows it, too. She's the only one that ever spotted it. Other people say I'm good-natured or friendly or easy-going. I say I'm yellow.

You'd think if you knew it you could do something about it. That's what you think. But it isn't like that. I'm scared of arguments and yelling and well—I suppose ridicule, mostly. It's like—take the other day in student council.

You remember the row they had when the Dream Room said we couldn't have our dance there if we let our Negro students come.

It was a rotten deal. I'm not crazy about all of our colored students. Some of them I like and some I don't. But I speak to them all—I speak to everybody—and I could see the principle involved.

You probably think I don't know what a principle is. Well, I do. And I saw that one and when they started the argument at council meeting I could see that it was going to be quite a fight.

You know who's on the council. Naturally, Myrna was there. And Wall Baker, my dear frat brother, and Louise and Barton and Bevins and that jerk Lacy.

They lined up right away. (You can spot the sides from the names.) Wall and Myrna wanted the swank place, the Dream Room, regardless of anything. Louise, she's all for principles, she wanted to boycott the place. Naturally, Bevins, who's going to be a minister, and Barton were with her. Lacy joined the other team, probably because he doesn't like Barton.

They started out easy, but they got hotter and hotter. It was some row. I tried not to pay any attention. I filled in all the o's on the first five pages of my history book. I looked out the window. I did every thing I could, but I couldn't help listening.

"I don't see any sense in arguing. All of them said they didn't want to come anyhow," Wall said. I could tell he was getting sore.

Louise gasped before she could say anything. Her eyes were flashing. "What did you expect them to say? That they didn't want us to have the dance at the Dream Room because they couldn't come? Did you expect them to tell us that?"

Myrna broke in. She was very polite. Cattily polite. "Louise," she said, "they're not the whole student body. There are only—what is it?—six of them. We're supposed to try and please the majority."

"Then let's take a vote," said Louise triumphantly. "Let's let the whole school vote on it."

"We haven't got time for that, Louise," Wally said angrily. "We have to make the decision. We're supposed to represent the student body." He stopped. He was so mad he couldn't talk.

Barton spoke up, talking like he was soothing a lunatic. "Can't you see there's a principle involved? If we have our dance there, regardless of anything else were condoning the fact that they don't allow Negroes."

"Oh, for God's sake," sneered Lacy. "This asinine squabbling about principles. You may as well get used to the fact that principles are seldom practical. Damn seldom."

"All right, Louise," said Myrna wearily, "let's hear about the good old principles of democracy."

"I'm surprised to learn that you've heard of them," smiled Louise sweetly.

"Please," said Lacy, "let's not turn this into a cat fight."

"Use your head, Louise," said Wally, "if we have the dance anywhere, they won't come. They never come to our dances or parties or anything. We might as well have it where we all want it."

It went on like that. You can't argue with a principle. And yet it was practical, a little low, but practical to have the dance at the Dream Room and forget about it.

They never said anything to me, any of them. I think Louise would have, only she was so busy and so mad that she didn't think about it. They just figured—good old Ed—he'll go with the crowd. He wouldn't have any opinions any way.

It made me sore. I wanted to bust in and say something. I wanted to tell them that Louise was right. But then I thought of the way they would all look at me and I just couldn't do it. You don't realize what that is—to be scared to open your mouth—to say what you think. I was sitting there sweating, actually sweating, trying to make myself talk. And then, suddenly, I heard Wally talking to me.

"Well, it's three to three. Ed will have to decide. What do you say, Ed."

They all looked at me. Myrna looked confident and a little contemptuous. Wally was smiling like he knew I was on his side. Lacy looked indifferent, or tried to, and so did Barton. I don't remember Bevins. He was sitting between me and Louise and when I looked at her I couldn't take my eyes away. She was doubtful, or maybe expectant, at first, and then she sort of smiled, encouragingly.

I opened my mouth but I couldn't say anything. I just croaked. This is your chance, Ed, I was thinking. This is your chance to throw it all up—to do what you want—say what you want. This is your chance for freedom. It sounds corny and melodramatic, but that's what I was thinking.

Myrna spoke sharply. I tore my eyes from Louise and looked at her. "Well, come on, Ed. Yes or no. Do we have the dance at the Dream Room? Yes or no, Ed."

That's all I had to say. Just no. Two letters. One syllable. Myrna frowned—she looked mean and threatening. Wally frowned, too, puzzled. They all stared at me waiting. I tried to remember Louise' smile but all I could see was that menacing scowl of Myrna's. I looked out the window at the sunlight and the trees and tried to forget all of them. I gazed at the grass and the cars passing on the street and tried to think of a compromise.

"Come on, Ed," Myrna's voice wavered. "Yes or no."

"Yes," I blurted, "let's get it over with. Yes."

The Trees

By JUNE SALIE

There are many trees—big trees and small, exotic types that people plant with care, whose growth is noted day by day.

The trees I know are very common. They have grown from wet ground, recklessly fighting each other for growth. Storms have come to strip them of their branches, and every winter the long bare arms wrestle with the wind. Some trees fall, and rabbits eat the bark and ants make their home in the dead wood. But this life never dies; for new trees come as ugly as the others, as brutal in strength.

Now when I walk under other trees, in the speckled shade of other leaves, I think of the trees I know. How twisted and coarse those trees! Yet every night when light is gone and ugliness unseen, they hold stars in their lean branches.



Forfeit

By ELEANOR MOHR

I must walk, lonely
In the noonday sun,
With my head held high
And my arms swinging—
With the past a thousand leagues behind me.
I must run
Down the solitary paths of the night,
Runs swiftly, and never look back.
And if in some weak moment
Nostalgia overwhelms me,
I will remember that this road
Was my own choosing.



Social Security

By ELEANOR MOHR

Someday when my hair is all silver and white,
Oh, I will come home then and knock,
And sit by the fire in the kitchen and write
Benevolent verses and rock.

Spring Rain

By MERLE WOOD

Joey's freckled nose was flattened against the window pane. The glass had felt cool at first, then it began to feel warmer, then Joey didn't feel it at all.

"Joey, dear," his mother called from the kitchen, but Joey didn't seem to hear.

He was glad the rain had stopped. The green grass was clean and fresh now. Even the air in the dark house smelled damp and sweet. He wished he could go out and walk barefooted on the lawn, across the yard to the white picket fence that surrounded the orchard; the fence that glistened now with the sparkling rain drops that clung to it. He wanted to go out and play tag in the soft wet grass—tag, like he had last spring. Tag with Archie. Even when Archie had won all the games it had been fun. Joey wished he had a younger brother so he could win some games too—or even an older brother again, now that Archie had gone away. A hint of a tear sparkled in Joey's eyes.

"Joey dear," his mother repeated.

"Here," he answered listlessly as he rubbed his pug nose with the sleeve of his sweater. He dug his chubby fists into his eyes and then dropped his hands to the low window sill again.

He knew his mother didn't like his crying about Archie but sometimes he couldn't help it—sometimes he had to cry—just a little bit.

"What are you doing, Joey?"

She had a mother's voice, soft and gentle. Joey liked to hear her talk. It always made him feel safe and warm and wanted.

"Jis' lookin', Mother. Lookin' at the rain an' everything."

"Sure, Joey?" she questioned softly as she dropped to her knees behind him and gently turned him around. "Sure?" She smiled reassuringly and tilted Joey's head up when he lowered it to escape her gaze. "Been crying again, haven't you, Joey?"

He dropped his head again. His mother pulled him close and hugged him briefly. He couldn't see her bite her lip and force back the tears. She pressed her face to his soft brown hair for a moment, then looked up and out the window.

"Joey," she said with mock excitement, "Look at the robin!"

Joey turned slowly until he saw the bird hopping across the lawn in little spasmodic bounces.

"Yes," he said disconsolately.

"Isn't he pretty?"

She rested her chin lightly on his shoulder and pressed her face against his soft cheek.

"Yes, kind of."

"Let's look and see if we can find another one." She could see out of the corner of her eye that Joey wasn't interested. A shock of wavy hair fell across his forehead and he pushed it back with a quick brush of his hand.

"What's'e stop for?"

"Like that?" asked his mother when the robin stopped again.

"Yes."

"Well, see how he tilts his head when he stops—see there!"

"Yes."

"He's listening for worms and . . ."

"Huh?" Joey interrupted as he turned his head around suddenly, his eye brows arched in question.

His mother laughed softly. "Robins have very good ears and . . ."

"I don't see any."

"Well . . ." she hesitated. "Robins have ears inside their heads. They're little tiny ears that you can't see by just looking at them."

"Oh," he answered, trying to understand. "Do worms make noise?"

"I guess they do," she laughed. "See there! He's found one!"

"Look how long it is!" he shouted in disbelief as the bird drew the worm from the ground. Then his voice filled with disappointment. "Oh, he flew away."

"He's taking the worm to his little babies," she explained. "Isn't that nice?"

She felt Joey slump a little. He waited a long moment before he asked, "Do robins have brothers, Mother?"

His mother closed her eyes. Her grip tightened on his shoulders and she forced herself to speak. "Yes, Joey."

"And do they ever go away?"

"Yes." She paused. "They go away, Joey. Everything has brothers; birds and fish and trees and flowers and everything, and they all go away."

She breathed deeply several times before she went on.

"Remember the apple tree that used to be by the gate? Remember when it got sick last year and Daddy had to cut it down? It was some tree's brother; maybe that one over in the corner of the orchard. It misses him, I know. But it will have apples on its limbs this summer even if its brother is gone."

"But they can't play like boys. They don't miss their brothers like boys do," he argued seriously.

"No," she answered, "but they do miss them. Wouldn't it be awful if every tree that lost a brother stopped having fruit and every bird that lost a brother stopped singing?"

Joey didn't answer.

"The trees want their brothers that don't go away to remember them, but they want them to go on living. Everything has to go on.

Even mothers and fathers, when one of their boys goes away."

Joey didn't detect the trace of huskiness in her voice.

"Brothers that go away look down and watch their brothers they leave behind. When trees and boys are sad, then their brothers that are gone are sad too. You wouldn't want Archie to be sad, would you, Joey?"

"Oh! No! Mother," he said as he turned around. "Oh! No! I want him to be happy.

She looked into his large troubled eyes and smiled. "Then you have to be happy. Remember him; but don't be sad when you do. Can you do that, Joey?"

He returned her gaze frankly, then bobbed his head. "I'll try real hard, Mother. I always try but I'll try harder."

She kissed his warm cheek and then drew back. "I know you will, Joey." She laughed softly, "Now you look out the window for more robins. I have to finish dinner before Daddy gets home. If you see any more robins, you watch them closely and then come tell me all about it." She spun him around gently and gave him an affectionate pat as she stood up.

"Oh! Look, Joey. The sun is coming out again. See how everything sparkles. All the trees look so pretty and fresh, and the sky is so blue."

"There's one! There's one!" Joey interrupted as he pointed toward the orchard. "Right by the fence!"

She laughed as she turned away. "You watch him and then come tell me all about it." At the door she stopped and looked back. Joey was busily engaged in watching the bird. His little freckled nose was pressed against the glass, and he was smiling.



March

By C. E. WILDER

A tired old woman in a grey shawl
Creeps down windswept roads;
Small, impatient children shy away
from her cold dark eyes — —
They are eager to meet their smiling
young friend
Who is waiting for them,
Just beyond the curve of the hill,
Plaiting flowers into her lovely
hair.

Lyric

By **ELEANOR MOHR**

Autumn is a gypsy, clutching at my heart,
All the tangled goldenrod would hold me apart,
Would catch me, crush me, and kiss me sweet and clean
While the maples shake a giddy tambourine.
Red-orange oak leaves and swallows winging south,
Cedar smoke and ripening corn I taste on my mouth,
All the lilting gypsies, where the campfire gleams—
Fling their wicked laughter down my favorite dreams.



Choice

By **ELEANOR MOHR**

Oh, tell me truth, or tell me lies,
It matters not if you are wise
Or clever, and you surely know
That nothing is so hot as snow
Upon my numb and frost-bit cheek—
That nothing is so cold and weak
As sunshine when I want the dark
To hide my scar and other mark.
I'd rather have your lies flaunt red
Before me than the white truth, dead.



Lines To A Problematical Daughter

By **PATRICIA A. KEAGLE**

Never love too much my dear;
Never love too much.
Never long for anything,
That your hands can't touch.
Never wish on evening stars;
Wishes don't come true.
You'll wish you'd stayed in from the damp,
Before the night is through.
Never throw your heart away,
You won't get another—
If you heed this good advice,
You're not much like your mother.

Black Boy

By MARY LOU BRAND

Whut you hear, Black Boy?
Whut you hear in the brazen pines?
Ain't no aimless wind a hummin'.
Ain't no song of the wet young leaves.

Whut you see, Black Boy?
Whut you see in the sponge-moss path?
Ain't no marker you're boun' to heed.
Ain't no footsteps for you to foller.

Whut you say, Black Boy?
Whut you say in a high-hush voice?
Ain't loud enough to hear
But it's strong within your brain.

Hit's a curse, Black Boy.
Hit's a curse to the clean grey sky
That you're born in the chain of hate
To die in a sea of sorrow!

Hide it good, Black Boy!
Push it down in your smouldering soul.
Beat it back in your fearsome heart.
Leave it buried deep and well.

Now you know the sound you hear,
An' that path
An' you know whut the path is too.
It's despair an' pain, Black Boy!
It's pain an' cold despair!



By JUNE SALIE

The calf was born in the back of the barn, and stood tottering under the awkward pressure of his mother's tongue. The boy opened the outside door and snow swirled in with him. He stood and looked over the rail at the red rough-haired calf, and smiled. The woman came in a little later and said there was nothing sweeter than a little calf. When the man came to look, he laughed and said it was a fine calf, all right.

That was in winter when roofs were white and wind swept over the plowed fields.

When spring came, the man opened the door of the pen and helped the calf into the yard by straddling hime and half-lifting

him over the door. The sunlight was so bright the calf couldn't see at first, and he stood on trembling legs by the barn. The boy grinned to see how the calf just looked and looked.

Then summer came and boxelder bugs were thick on the screen door. The calf was in the pasture with the other cows, and growing strong and big. Two points of horns were coming on his head. Every night he would come along with the cows at milking time and drink at the tank.

By the time chickens were roosting in the black bare trees, his horns were long and thick, his belly was fat. The man said that the locker was empty and they had to have meat. So men came from town in a truck, and the calf was penned in the barn. Then the truck was backed against the door and they let the chute down into the pen. The calf went up the shaking boards of the chute.

Days later the man brought the meat home in boxes, and the woman filled the boiler on the cookstove and canned some of the meat. The boy helped her carry the filled jars down cellar while they were still warm. Then the woman fried some of the meat for dinner and it sizzled and browned in the frying pan.

That was in winter when snow was falling from a pale sky. And they all sat down at the table and ate.



Alternatives

By **ELEANOR MOHR**

If I should take up swearing
Or the silly wearing
Of French heels,
Or dancing on ice,
And if I stop to bless
A trolley bell's peals,
I confess
It's only because the nice
Women who used to pat my head
When I was one of the little girls
Before my mother cut my curls
(And only part of me was dead)
Did not approve of drowning sorrow,
Or even cats—
But I still have tomorrow,
And that's
All the candle left, although I could
Still say that I am good.

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