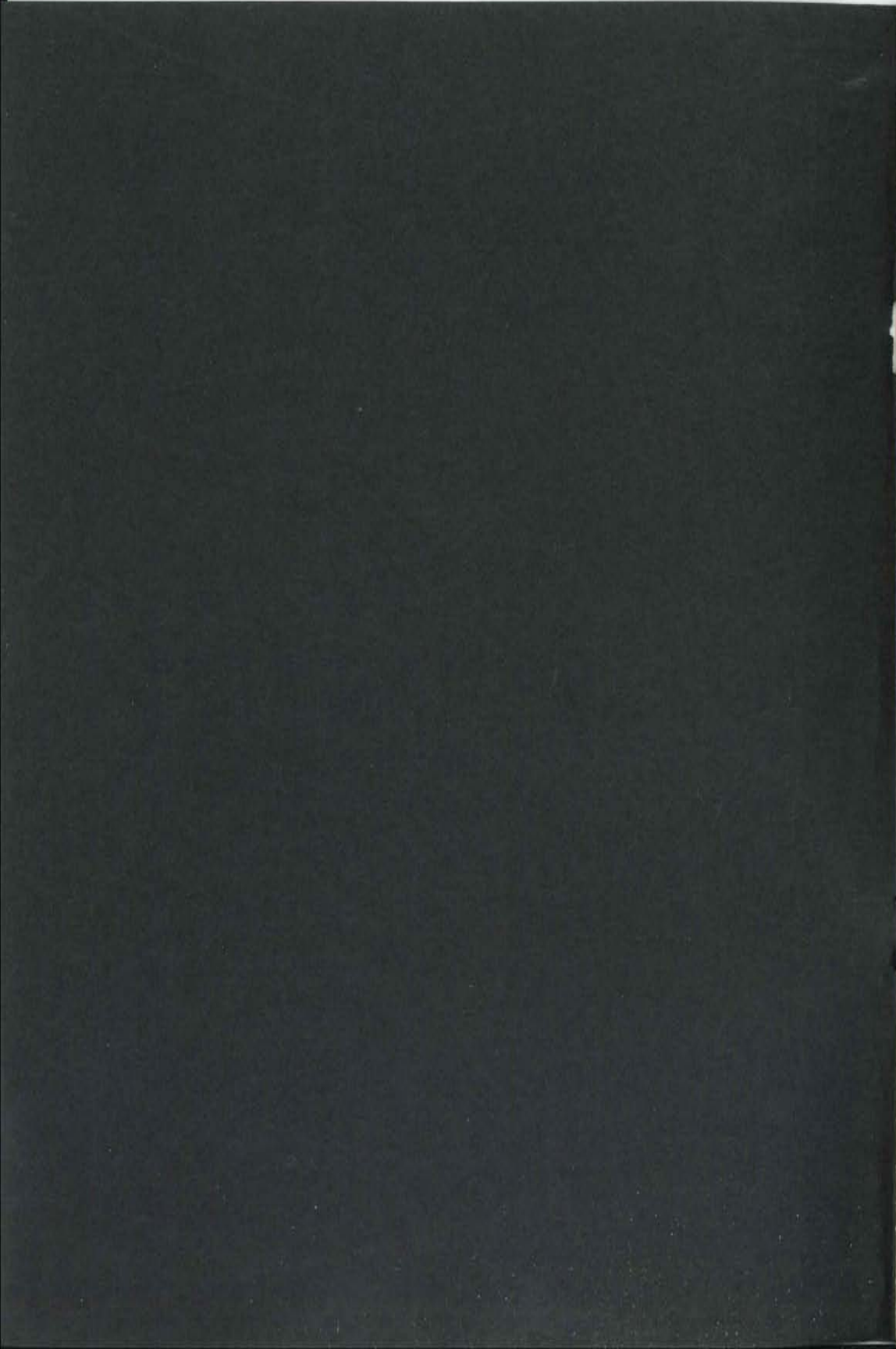




SPRING

— 6559

PERSPECTIVES



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threads

I have been told by many that the line of separation is very fine indeed. In fact, we could compare it to a thin white piece of thread. Obviously, there are hundreds of ways by which this small thread can be broken. If this length of twisted cotton is in an inconspicuous spot, it may remain unnoticed for quite a period of time. Now, I will ask you a simple question, have you noticed any broken threads?

The thin young man opened his eyes. Straight ahead was the pale blue vision which he remembered was the ceiling. As the fog rolled slowly out of his sleep-filled mind, his eyes moved about the room; yes, everything was exactly the same as it had been the night before, the small metal bed table, the chest of drawers with the small bowl of flowers resting on its top, the waste basket, the stacks of magazines and books in the corner, and more close at hand, the white bed which surrounded him. Being sick was a miserable experience, especially when one does not know his illness. No, the doctors had not yet told him exactly what his ailment was. Oh they would buss in and out of the room all day, but every time he would question them, they would only smile and tell him not to worry. Probably it was just another attack of that liver trouble that had bothered him for years. Well, at least here in a hospital this sickness could be cured.

With this problem solved, he rubbed his hands through his deep brown hair and propped his head on his elbow. Through the window he could see many of the works of nature on display. Strange, it looked to him as if spring were almost here. The large tree with its spreading branches seemed to be budding small green buds, and even the grass under the tree was a faint shade of green. Spring certainly looked as if it were on the way, but that was impossible, why he had only entered this hospital a week or two ago, and then the first snow of the winter was just beginning to settle on the ground. Because the problem was really not worth thinking about, and because his head had begun to ache, he sank back into the clean white sea.

Breakfast would probably be coming soon; in fact, he could hear the cart clanging at the end of the hall now. He did enjoy breakfast very much. He couldn't explain why, but breakfast always seemed to be the best meal of the day, or was it lunch? Well, they both were quite nice.

He looked around the room once more, but he could not see her. He remembered that she was probably asleep under the bed so he called softly. With a soft whirring sound, the cat jumped onto the bed and

sat down. He looked at her and smiled; actually she was quite a fine looking cat. He watched her closely as she began to lick her front paws. She glanced up at him and seemed to stare at him. He looked at her and frowned. Now her stare turned into a faint grin, and then into a very wide grin. He sat up in bed and screamed at her to stop grinning. Right now he was very sorry that he had bought a purple cat. He screamed again at the cat, but she jumped to the other side of the bed, still with her haunting grin. His sight grew red with anger and a curse tore from his lungs as he swung his fist at the grinning cat. She jumped and the blow missed its mark. His whole body shook as he screamed and struck again and again at the quick moving enemy. A violent sob twisted his body as it threw him on his back with a horrible convulsion.

Quietly and silently the two white-robed men moved into the room and fastened a small restrictive jacket into place.

—Jack Lamb

wild morning glories

There is a small vine
that my dad used to call
a wild mornin' glory.
These wild mornin' glories seemed
to come from nowhere as most weeds do,
but their vines shunned the earth,
and instead, sank their roots deep
into the sturdy stalks of the corn.
Then they drank the white milky juice
that flowed through the network
of veins in the corn stalk.
they never killed the corn
they only sapped its strength
slightly, during a crucial growth period.
Whenever Dad and I went cockleburring,
through the rustling leaves of corn,
we chopped out the morning glory vines as well.
It seems like no one goes cockleburring anymore.

—Shirley Cox

ball of gold

A man saw a ball of gold in the sky;
He climbed for it,
And eventually he achieved it—
It was clay.
Now this is the strange part:
When the man went to the earth
And looked again,
Lo, there was the ball of gold.
Now this is the strange part:
It was a ball of gold
Ay, by the heavens, it was
A ball of gold.

—Stephen Crane

Manuel closed the door softly as a man does when he is so angry that he is beyond the point of slamming doors. For a long moment he stood there inside the large fashionable study with his eyes closed, still holding the door knob tightly for support. His breathing was perfectly even and the tight knot in his chest could hardly be felt anymore. Was he numb, or was he dying? Manuel found it hard to tell just how he did feel.

When he finally felt calm enough to move, Manuel walked across the room to the only comfortable looking chair and allowed himself to sit stiffly. The shining brass clock on the desk ticked away quietly, relentlessly, and calmly. Soon his anger subsided, and he relaxed into the chair. His first emotion was transformed into a feeling of overwhelming disappointment and great despair, until Manuel Cabot looked like a beaten man sitting there with his arms dangling loosely over the overstuffed arms of the chair.

Manuel was thinking how tired he was. The thought so obsessed him that the terrible gloom was nearly overcome by it—in his body at least. He stretched out his legs and closed his eyes once more. Somehow he hoped that sleep would release his mind from thinking and remembering what had just happened. But his mind would not relax as his body did. It seemed to stand before his eyes so that he could see the misery and loneliness jumbled up inside it.

The room seemed comfortable—handsome and stylish. Fall had a good start. The fire was blazing cozily. Manuel opened his eyes and stared almost hopefully around the large room at the books—the latest

books, the "best sellers," the long rose-colored brocade drapes, and the shining mahogany furniture. As his gaze lighted on the imported marble fireplace, the man shuddered slightly as if physically chilled and drew farther down into his chair.

That chair was the only thing Manuel had brought with him from Puerto Rico—that, and a few clothes, of course. He had always loved the chair and so had Rosa. It had sat like this, in front of their fireplace, at home. They used to sit for hours just reading, or she would sew, and they would talk over matters of the day.

Sometimes they would hear George swagger up onto the porch with his guitar and the air would ring with songs of prairie riding and cattle rustling. George was a Texan who had come drifting along and had proven himself worthy enough to function as foreman of **Rancho Allegre**. George was cynical about the lower class foreigners, but he had respect for Manuel who had once been poor himself and had accumulated a modest, prosperous ranch and wealth through his own hard work. Nobody quite knew what George was doing in a foreign country when he felt as he did, but George had an air about him—so nobody asked. Anyway, he did good work between the numerous stories he told about Texas to impress his fellow workers.

Manuel hadn't particularly thought of it before, but those stories George told must have had something to do with his waking determination to come to the United States. As he sat there, deep in thought, he almost relived the day of Rosa's funeral.

"Taint thet a'm afraid fer ma job, Senor Cabót," George drawled as they stood out near the coral getting a breath of sunset air, "but when the mistress of sech a big, wonderful household as this is—well—gone, it kinda makes a fella wonder what's gonna come of the situation. 'Specially since you and yer wife was so close 'n all. What I mean is, Sir, in Texas—"

Manuel wondered what strange look had come into his face just then that had made George look so startled. Though he could not remember what George had done at that moment, he could remember his own thoughts—how suddenly he had felt a burning desire to get away mingled with a growing dislike for George and his braggadocio. Determination to go to Texas and beat the "blow-hards" at their own business throbbed at his temples. Dislike and determination welled up so inside Manuel that for a moment he thought he would burst from it. He turned on his heel and headed for the house.

It hadn't been hard to dispose of the old things before he left. Funny too—after the years and years of work that had gone into **Rancho Allegre**. He kept from missing Rosa, though.

Texas had been a different story. Manuel now saw before his eyes

his own relentlessness and the way he'd used money to push people around. But he'd built his ranch. In spite of the coldness of these so-called friendly Texans—the American people. Manuel Cabót had made a name for himself all right. He had made money, bought cattle, bickered over land, and built buildings twice the size of those on his first ranch. Besides that, he had married the most wealthy widow in the territory. Now here he was, forty-five years old—sitting in the old overstuffed chair thinking of his comfortable life at home with Rosa. Suddenly Manuel realized that the challenge he had so coveted had turned to clay in his hands. His life was flat and grey. His wife had just threatened to take her share of money—a great one—out of the estate if Manuel didn't build her a servant's quarters. And Manuel didn't feel like building a servant's quarters. His anger nearly overcame him again and he jumped to his feet. Suddenly Manuel felt a need for a friend in America. But—he had none. Not even his wife.

He walked through the mahogany study into the mahogany bedroom. Manuel took off his clothes and got into bed.

He slept.

Manuel had a dream about his old ranch in Puerto Rico. He saw himself sitting in front of the fireplace with Rosa telling her about the friendliness of the American people. He visualized her smiling as he told her how he had invented a job for a young man who had come past—just married and badly in need of work. Funny how he never thought of Rosa as being dead, only waiting for him back in Puerto Rico at **Rancho Allegre**.

Manuel tossed and turned feverishly on the bed, wildly hoping the alarm clock would go off and he would have completed the long journey back to Rosa and **Rancho Allegre**. He kept trying to put his wife's screaming and his neighbors' coldness out of his mind—but he only tossed and turned in vain. The alarm clock never went off.

—Jane Lockwood

motion

Something moved in the world today:

One steel ball
Rolled on another
In oil,

While the stars marched in white-hot numbers
Of silent, heedless grandeur
Through the sky.

—Merilynn Jordan

the correspondent

Dear Mrs. Strang:

I am Sgt. Markham, and I served in your husband's platoon when he . . .

The letter wasn't going right. Mark looked down at the dirt floor of the bunker. With his head down, he could smell the acrid, sweaty odor of his unwashed body. He began to rub the three day cultivation of a beard and glanced around the small bunker for inspiration; his canteen cup, much of it blackened from open fires and suspended from a nail in the opposing wall, feebly reflected the rays of the candle.

"Was killed . . . naw, too trite . . . was killed in action is better."

He resumed writing.

"Hey, Sarge"; the corporal displayed excitement as he wriggled through the aperture; his exertions crumbled more dirt from the bottom of the opening and it sifted down the wall to a small pile built from previous passages. The candle, mounted on an improvised desk of boards which was balanced precariously on the sergeant's knees, flickered in the stir caused by his entry; the shadows danced in the semi-gloom.

"We got a new officer in for the platoon. This skin-head looks like a real one . . . I saw him at the C.P." Corporal Shanks pulled his jacket, marked with streaks of aging grime, to a semblance of order and comfort after entering and proceeded to hunch against the back wall of the bunker, seated on the sergeant's rolled-up sleeping bag. The layer of dust on the sleeping bag evinced fresh khaki creases where the corporal's weight pushed the covering into a cavity; the creases, like everything else, soon acquired a fresh coat.

"What's his name . . . did you hear?" The sergeant laid his pen on the forming letter.

"Bannock or maybe Lannock; hell, I don't know . . . he looks like a damn Polack. This champion . . . his pants even got creases . . . and that nice clean . . . green . . . helmet cover." The corporal finished up with a look of utter repugnance. He fumbled in the frayed, dusty jacket for a cigarette; extracting a dented pack, he proceeded to root at the opening in the top with concentrated energy.

"Shank," the sergeant spoke half queringly, half reminiscently; "do you remember Strang? You know . . . that lieutenant who was killed at rest camp last time . . . in the mine field . . . going to take one of his modest dumps or somethin' . . . the one we had before Clark."

"Oh, . . . yeah . . . you mean Villanova, class of 1952." The corporal had a rising gleam of recollection in his eyes.

"Sure I remember the ole canoe-paddler." Shanks jumped erect and screwing his face to a ferocious leer, (which was supposed to represent a terrifying frown), launched himself on an imitation of the deceased lieutenant.

"All right, men; we need a little spirit, some of the old drive. This is war . . . war . . . do you understand, and by God we're going to be first class warriors."

"Okay, Orson Welles . . . I see you remember our hero." The sergeant picked up his literary attempt.

"I'm writing his old lady; that wonderful officer, who passes for our captain, unloaded the job on me . . . can't quite figure out what to write her."

"Hell, that's easy," Shanks retorted. His bearing and speech became infected with a dolorous, officious tone.

"Dear Mrs. Strang: Your husband, out of sheer stupidity and a fright that someone might see his broad, flabby hind-end, went out in a mine-field, one night—brilliant strategy that was—to commit an act of nature and thereby committed suicide. If you don't need Uncle Sam's ten thousand to pay off left over college bills, please . . ."

"You're a great help, Shanks, slightly Asiatic after fourteen months, but . . ."

"You can sign it 'Available Markham,' Sarg."

". . . as each month goes by, your humor becomes less and less appreciated." The sergeant glared owlishly at the corporal in mock anger.

"I know . . . Sarg." Shanks resumed his position on the bed-roll. He spread his hands palms up in front of him and shrugged his shoulders. The smoke from his nearly finished cigarette curled up through and around the fingers of his right hand.

"No whiskey . . . no women . . . no nothing. Just gooks . . . thousands of them yellow bastards. Thousands of C-rations; thousands of these rotten holes; thousands of miles to walk. What the hell am I . . . superman? Wait'll my congressman hears about this! His final words carried with them an assumed whining. He flipped the cigarette to a shower of sparks with an exasperated movement.

"Okay, okay . . . John Wayne; wait'll the beer ration comes . . . besides . . ." the sergeant didn't get a chance to finish.

"Sergeant Markham!" When the lieutenant came through the opening, he lost much of his military dignity; it was very difficult to appear commanding and, simultaneously, be forced to wriggle through a hole in the ground. Upon regaining his feet, dusting off an impeccable set of fatigues and adjusting his helmet back to the angle he considered suitable for officers, he turned a frowning countenance towards the occupants.

"Yessir," Mark replied. He raised himself off the empty ammo case and laid the board desk on the dirt floor. The candle flickered violently for a moment casting even sharper shadows over the interior; the rays high-lighted the iridescent dust which the lieutenant had raised when he entered.

"I'm Lieutenant Hancock." He began on a self-conscious inflection which soon changed to one of irritation; due, no doubt, to his close proximity to the surrounding dirt.

"I'm your new platoon leader." Though he didn't offer to shake hands, Mark kept alert for an attempt on the lieutenant's part; it was awful easy to miss an extended hand down here, he thought.

"I find there is no place for me to bunk, . . . yet."

"No sir; Lieutenant Clark was wounded and evacuated before we set up this position. If the Lieutenant wouldn't mind staying . . ."

"I want a working party to construct some sort of lodging, Sergeant." The lieutenant cut off the sergeant's offer. He looked with distaste around the bunker, which had, to a person coming from the open air, an undeniably repelling smell from the dwellers therein. He returned his eyes to the sergeant with a level stare. This was to emphasize his commanding nature; a trick he had picked up in R.O.T.C.

"Shanks!"

Hearing his name, the corporal reluctantly relinquished his comfortable chair, and moving towards the sergeant, extricated himself from the gloom of the back wall.

"This is Corporal Shanks, sir. He is squad leader of the third squad." Not waiting for a reply, though a frown of a deeper nature occupied the smooth brow of the young lieutenant, Sergeant Markham turned to Shanks, continued.

"Tell each squad leader to send over two men for a working party."

"Okay, Sarg."

"On the double, Corporal." As the lieutenant spoke, he was fast forming a conviction that there was going to be a lot of "correcting" to do in this platoon.

"Yessir." Shanks lacked enthusiasm in his salutation. As the corporal headed towards the opening, he paused a moment looking down at the unfinished letter.

"You know, Mark . . . by the time this police action is over, you ought to be a hell of a good correspondent; in fact . . . THE correspondent, you might say." Without turning to catch the effect of his words, he scrambled out of the opening to execute the orders received; the dirt crumbled onto the conical pile. The trickle that rattled down heightened the lieutenant's feeling of uncleanness and added to his growing irritation.

—Leonard Miller

buddies in the mire

Unknowing, yet portraying, they met
On the same bleak hill, muddy road, unnamed beach,
Where death, despair tried hope and cause;
And they were cautious . . . buddies in the mire.
Materialism stood without, a world of wants and wishes.
Comradeship, fellowship, the natural truths,
Were given rare pre-eminence;
And they were complete . . . buddies in the mire.
The greedy cannon ate its fill,
The small arms spat man's vain folly;
Behind an air-cooled eighty-eight, hypocrisy laughed,
And they were dead . . . buddies in the mire.

—Roger Erickson

moment

Janny sat in the dormer window seat with her back against one wall and her toes pushing the other. The top half of the window was open just far enough to let the white organdy curtains billow out over Janny's head. Outside, through the shiny leaves of the old oak tree, she could see the powdery blueness of the cool spring day. This was a quiet, comfortable Saturday afternoon. Janny's reading of a short story from a recent **Ladies Home Journal** was occasionally interrupted by the shouts of a nearby neighborhood baseball game. She would look up, already forgetting the cause of the interruption, and dream of meeting her own future lover, a meeting which would be even more wonderful than the one described in the magazine. During one of these dreams Janny was further interrupted. Someone was calling her.

"Hey, Janny!" the voice repeated. There, on the sidewalk below her, stood Terry Jenson. "Hey, open the window!" Terry called as he saw Janny look down.

This was not exactly the type of romance of which Janny had been dreaming but Terry was a nice guy and Janny liked him. They had several classes together at school, had met each other at the show last

Saturday to sit together, and last night they dated for the canteen dance. Janny opened the window and called "Hi" back.

"Doin' anything?" Terry asked.

"No, just reading. Why?"

"Jim Baron's dad got a new boat yesterday. Want to go see it?"

"Golly! Sure would!" Janny exclaimed. "Be right down."

She closed the window, put a piece of paper in the magazine so that she would not lose her place, and went to the closet for her jacket. While running down the stairs, she called to her mother that she was going out with Terry for awhile, and got the usual answer to not be gone very long. Outside, she met Terry on the sidewalk where he was watching the baseball game.

"Tommy's getting to be a pretty good second baseman," Terry said.

"Yah; he's not bad for a kid brother. He plays so often you'd think that he's trying to be a pro."

As they passed the game, Tommy yelled to Terry to join them but Terry answered only, "Later." All the kids knew that Terry played for the Kiwanis Juniors and somehow the ball was rather casually tossed about and the players stood around in a kind of reverence until Terry and Janny had gone farther down the block.

"Get in on time last night?" Terry again began the conversation.

"Oh, sure," Janny replied. "Dad had fallen asleep in his chair but he woke up when I came in, asked me if we had a good time, and went on to bed. Didn't see Mom until this morning. She put me through the usual questioning but all was Ok."

"Guess parents are silly that way," Terry said. "Mom always wants to know about everything; then she sorta gets in a huff when I just say that we had a good time."

Farther down the street they could see the tall fir trees that grew around the lake.

"I'd race you to Jim's house," Terry laughingly challenged, "But I'd hate to wait for you to catch up."

"Course, you might be afraid I'd get ahead," Janny countered, "Then you'd look kinda silly."

"Guess it would look funny. Somethin' like 'boy chases girl'; but don't worry, I'd be ahead."

"Oh, we know, Mr. Athletics." But Janny did quiet at the thought. She realized that Terry was good. "What are you doing in track," she continued.

"I'm working on the hundred yard dash and high jumping," Terry replied. Then he changed the subject as they neared the Baron's. "Jim had to go to town with his mom but he said that we could go ahead and look at the boat. His dad doesn't want us to run it, but we can get an idea of what it can do."

They hurried through the coolness of the trees, passed the house, and started down the hill. Below, tied close to the dock, they could see the new boat. It was a sixteen-footer with a twenty-five horse Johnson. Janny and Terry looked it over carefully, exclaiming over its streamlining, sitting on the deck and in the seats, and estimating the pickup and speed of the motor. They could imagine the boat skipping across the water and banking for the turns. Soon they began exaggerating and, realizing it, they laughed and thought of starting back home. Terry climbed out of the boat, turned, grabbed Janny's hand to help her out, and they started up the hill, somehow forgetting to let go of each other's hand. They still talked about the boat and its potentialities. Terry thought that he would try water skiing this summer. Jim had said something about it. Janny suggested the possibility of a beach party and they both agreed that summer could come anytime now; they were ready for it.

They had much to talk about but suddenly the conversation lagged for no apparent reason. They were nearing Janny's house. As they passed the now empty baseball lot, each felt a strong consciousness of the other's hand and their steps slowed. It seemed as though the last, silent half-block was twice as long as the whole walk from the lake. As they almost reached the door, they interrupted each other trying to overcome the silence. They both laughed, then Janny asked rather quietly, "Want to come in?"

"No," was the equally quiet reply. "I might call after dinner or somethin'. Mom's expecting me home soon. Thanks, anyhow."

"Well, thanks for stopping for me."

"Yah."

Their hands became untangled and each muffled a goodbye.

In the house, Janny bumped into Tommy who was jabbering something about Terry not coming back to play baseball but Janny ignored him and climbed the stairs to take off her jacket. After studying herself in the mirror for a minute, she went to the landing and called to her mother, "Do you want the table set for dinner?"

Her mother laughingly replied, "It's only four-thirty, Janny. We don't usually eat until six. You can put it off for awhile, if you want. Have a good time?"

"Oh," Janny said to herself and then out loud, "Yah. Ok."

She returned to her room, picked up the magazine and sat in the window seat. She found her place and started to read. Her eyes had passed over only two or three sentences when she began to stare through the limbs of the oak. The magazine lover no longer held Janny's thought. Such a man was too romantic for this afternoon, this quiet, comfortable Saturday afternoon.

—Kay Zurcher

different?

Kittens in my father's
Barn. Quick they are,
Much smarter too, than the clumsy
Cow which, unknowingly, crushes each
Tiny body found within the tread of its
Clumsy hoof.
Kittens die so easily,
Why not I?

A Rabbit, running the course
Of the timber of its home,
Knows not the weapon of its own
Sudden death nor that
It is to serve as food for
Some unneedy family.
Rabbits often thusly die,
Why then should not I?

Men at Pearl Harbor,
Each a life.
Twenty thousand died within
The space of one short
Day. Died so fast they could not
Know the cause of sudden
Agony and endless silence.
They died,
Why not I?

Human am I, but difference
There is none. A speeding
Auto easily becomes a skidding,
Crashing grave.
Common people also often
Swiftly die,
But not I!

—Ronald Haddock

misfit

"It was pale yellow, with lots of lace . . ."

"Now Martha, what do you want with a dress like that?" George Benton regarded his daughter with kind eyes. Martha knew he was only being practical.

"I just thought maybe it would . . . look nice."

Martha's big body slumped as she moved awkwardly out of the room. Once she reached the darkness of her bedroom she could release the day's hurts in silent weeping. Even the crying was ungraceful; her face screwed up and the tears ran off the end of her nose or into her dull brown hair.

"Well, if there's no one else, maybe we could fix him up with Martha!" She heard again the shrill laughter from the next room at the office. The other file clerks hadn't meant anything, it was just a joke to them. They couldn't know she was listening. They couldn't know how it was to be so homely and shy that no man would want you, ever.

When the sobbing stopped at last and her eyes were dry, Martha went to a drawer and took out a yellowed photograph. This was at once her greatest consolation and her deepest pain. The woman in the picture was beautiful, as few women ever are. The woman was Martha's mother.

"She died when you were a baby. Pneumonia," her father had said, when he had given her the picture. "Brought on by overwork in the clinic. I was bitter at first, but I guess she wouldn't have had it any other way."

Martha thought of her cool, lovely mother whenever she looked in the mirror at her own ungainliness. Sitting alone in the high school lunch room and listening to the gay chatter of groups around her, she had thought of her mother's clubs and social activities. She had thought of her mother, who had graduated summa cum laude from college, when she quit high school at sixteen to work. Too shy to talk in class, slow to learn, and afraid to ask for help, Martha had gotten very poor grades.

Later that evening Martha heard her father go out for his usual long walk. She went downstairs and turned on the television. The play that came on was centered around a gay and witty blonde exchanging cheerful comments with her equally witty husband. Martha's lumbering mind questioned that anyone could think so fast or talk so well.

A small scratching noise. Over the wind, the sound of the doorknob turning slowly. The door swishing over the rug with a faint whispering

sound. Martha looked around.

There, crouching in the doorway, was a small boy. He was dressed only in a shirt and trousers despite the snow blowing around him. His head was oddly shaped, and he had the wild look of a lost animal. His body was slumping and uncoordinated; the head seemed too heavy for it to carry. The eyes were remote, as though he had retreated to some strange, lonely world of his own.

Martha started toward him. "Hello. What's your name?"

The child did not answer. He wavered on the threshold for a few moments, and then, beginning to cry, he stumbled to her. He cried her arms for a long time.

Mr. Benton found them in the big chair, engrossed in some strange game with buttons on a string. "That must be the one they're looking for!"

"What do you mean?"

"I saw the searchers on my walk. A boy ran away from the Home up the street. I'd better call them."

Mrs. Larson appeared shortly with a coat, a cap, and boots. She was a plump woman who looked like a friendly partridge. "We're so glad to find Tommy. We've been awfully worried. Come on, Tommy, let's go . . ."

The boy shrank back against Martha, whimpering.

"Why, I've never seen him act this way! Poor boy—six years old, with a mental age of two. How did you get through to him like this?"

"He just needed someone . . ." Martha flushed. "Maybe someone who understood."

Mrs. Larson looked at Martha again. She hesitated for a few moments and then asked, "Would you be interested in working at the Home?"

"The Home?"

"The Home for Retarded Children. We need another assistant badly. And you seem to get along with Tommy so well."

"But I have a job now."

"You could give notice. We would wait six months or so. If you would come along while I take Tom back, we could talk on the way. I don't believe he'll go without you."

George Benton drew his daughter aside while Mrs. Larson was dressing Tommy in the coat, cap and boots.

"Do you know whom you reminded me of when I saw you comforting that little boy?"

"Who?"

"Your mother."

"My mother! Oh, no . . ."

"She was always helping the strays, nursing the sick. She had a deep

love and understanding for people. That was her real beauty."

Martha's stooped shoulders straightened a little as she walked out the door with the child.

—Nancy Crary

requiem

The bomb was set to explode at noon, and we had gathered on this tiny spot in the middle of the Pacific Ocean to watch another man-made monster make its debut of destruction.

At 9 A. M. four small boatloads of international correspondents, chiefly representing the United States, were heading for the island that was to be blasted off the map three hours later. I was seated next to Curtis Pendergast of LIFE as we slowly chugged our way to the atoll. He was a veteran reporter of eighteen years, and I asked him what he thought of the whole deal. "What does a guy think about paying a death call on a stinking little piece of land stuck out in the middle of the ocean?" he said. And he was right—it was a stinking little piece of land, it was stuck out in the middle of the ocean—and it was going to die!

At 9:40 A. M. we reached our destination. A silver sand beach, peppered with sun-bleached driftwood, multicolored sea shells, and dead fish surrounded the island. A few trees were growing out of the rock soil, but this was a far cry from the storybook description of the Pacific islands of paradise. A lonely score of huts, once the homes of the former inhabitants, were a few hundred yards down the beach. The natives had long since been evacuated to another island because we, of the civilized world, wished to use their home in the interest of science; much as a zoologist would use a frog in the interest of zoology. I wondered how civilized a world could get—Rising in the middle of the island on a small hill was a steel tower 486 feet high. At the summit of this tower was a grey metal box, and inside the box was the Bomb. An INS correspondent had been standing next to me looking at the box too. Walking down the beach to our boat we both decided it was the most deadly container man had ever made.

Back aboard the U.S.S. Zenith we were served a lunch. Nobody ate much, nobody said much. At 11:50 A. M. we were summoned to the bridge where we would witness the biggest blast in history. Last minute instructions were given, dark green goggles were distributed to all observers, and we waited. With four minutes to go I became nervous.

Someone coughed, and it bothered me. A cool sweat broke over me and I shifted my position to be more comfortable. That damned idiot coughed again. "Two minutes" blared the loud-speaker. Everyone now became a clock-watcher. It reminded me of those days in grade school when we all stared at the clock on the wall as it neared time for dismissal. But this was not grade school. "One minute" boomed the voice. My thoughts went back to the little island with its sandy beach, its deserted huts, and the stubborn little trees that had wasted so much effort pushing through the rocks just to live. I thought of the tower, the box, and the Bomb. "Fifteen seconds" announced the voice over the loud-speaker, and everyone adjusted his goggles. I looked at my watch—ten seconds, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one . . . I shifted my gaze toward the island. A gigantic flash of greenish-white light is the only way to describe what I saw. There was no noise, just that greenish light. An enormous cloud of burning air stretched for miles around the island. And then came the noise; an indescribable deafening roar that vibrated the very steel deck on which we stood. We were instructed that we could take off our goggles, and as we did so, an umbrella-shaped cloud was rising over the place where the island once stood, shading it as a death canopy shades a newly dug grave.

Rest in peace, little island, for you will no longer be troubled by the civilized world. You have served your purpose. Rest in peace.

—Tom Tracy

prophecy

He lit the candle
And the infant swung the ax.
Driving down the straight and narrow,
I slipped.
The woman giggled,
The cup was tipped,
The deacon prayed, and I slipped.

Atoms cut the somber mist,
The ax was still.
A gasp, a groan, a sigh,
And the universe was nil.

Sans wine, sans sex, sans mist, sans god . . .

—Al Anderson

moment of instancy

The sod upon which I walk is a part of me forever into eternity.
Yet I walk with fear of desolation,
Desolation and an infinity of emptiness.
The howling winds blow, the night comes serene and slow.
My soul shakes; my mind spins
With thoughts of whirling infinity.
Oh God, help me.
Help me to help myself see your grandeur.
Clear my mind and soul of all material thoughts of your false being.
I hunger for inner understanding!
Yet I fear my soul has succumbed to my physical mind.

A hill has spouted forth from the earth
And overlooks the ground below.
It stands majestically facing the blanket of night
Torn by the light of the stars,
The earth of the hill is warm still from the sun.
The wind still not silenced
Howls in gusty fury
At the obstacle the hill creates in its wake.
Ever so slowly it blows away the outer crust.
Now I stand upon its worn crest
Stand with an open soul and heart,
Waiting . . .
Waiting to hear from the divine night
The warnings of nature
Commanded by . . .

Ah, alas, can I hear the warnings?
My earthly body has withheld from me the meaning
Of all divine things which my soul now hungers for,
Imprisoned, meant not to understand
The meanings of the inner part of the earth,
But instead to walk upon its now worn and hardened crust—
Hardened by man,
Ruined, gashed, bled
By the creatures which were given the gift of life from its sod;
Now the gift is separated,
Now it lives without, imprisoned.

Void . . .

Void and desolate are we, who claim superiority.
The desert now is cool after its toil in the burning sun.
The desert rests; Life continues.
The wind still blows the dried weary crust;
Around and around it whirls
In the swirling fury of the wind,
Going nowhere; the wind

Seemingly takes out its pent up hatred at this form of desolation.
Must this be my ending—
To become in the end dry, meaningless, blown sand?

—Tom Bohan

alone

She moved with an urgency she could not suppress. Her shoes sounded first dully, heavily as they struck the pavement; the heels squeaked from the forward pressure of her body. She couldn't cry, but felt as though something inside her would rip from within seeking some long sought freedom.

By now she was several blocks up the street. A feeling of being unwelcomed, watched by this familiar atmosphere increased the swiftness of her stride, yet the possibility of danger could not impress itself upon her. Of course—she would go by Ruthie's.

With a destination now in mind her body relaxed a little allowing her legs a little more freedom. It always helped to talk to someone, to release some of the weight upon another's shoulders. She rounded the corner and glanced up at the house. The front windows were dark. Only the kitchen shone light in the back, hiding warm and secure from the gloom and desolation of the blackness outside.

She had been silly. What had made her think she would be able to stop, to interrupt the seemingly eternal perfection of the circle around her? Nothing, no one dared intrude. It was not his duty.

She closed the door, hung her jacket in the hallway, caught a glimpse of her parents in the living room watching TV. She climbed the stairs to her room. She paused at her brother's door. Asleep after a hard day of innocent bliss only a child can enjoy hunting and stuffing himself with Easter candy. Only she moved in this world of coldness and indifference. What could she do to shatter this shell around her?

—Mary Silzer

formula

Mr. Jeffries pushed the card into the clock and heard the assuring click. He removed the card and looked at the space marked "Out," 7:15 P. M., over two hours past his stopping time, the boss would like that. He turned and surveyed the empty rows of desks and shook his head thinking of the stampede for the Bar downstairs at 5:00 o'clock every day. What a waste of time most of these people made of their lives. Sitting for eight hours a day and hell-raising a good share of the rest of the time. Mr. Jeffries jammed the homberg on his head, picked up his umbrella and empty lunch bag and walked out of the office. He tested the door to make sure that the night lock had snapped, and took the elevator to the street floor. Walking through the lobby, he stopped to buy the evening paper, tipping the girl a nickle. He stepped over to a scale, deposited a penny and picked up a small card from the slot; 148 pounds exactly, he smiled, just right. He glanced through the open door of the Lounge Bar but caught himself and walked through the swinging doors to the street. He closed the lapels of his brown tweed suit as a sharp breeze lunged at him.

The subway train was not crowded at this time of the evening, so Mr. Jeffries moved to a double seat and placed his umbrella and paper on the other half. He looked about him and eyed the other people in the car. He stared at a woman three seats forward and frowned. From her gay dress and painted features, there was no doubt in Mr. Jeffries' mind that she was about to start on her work shift. He was so repulsed by the sight that he picked up the paper to clear his mind of the subject.

The hum of the wheels and the maze of print soon had Mr. Jeffries' head bobbing. Strange, but he saw himself walking. Yes walking, and in full evening dress. Very strange, he did not even own full evening dress. He looked ahead and saw a bright light. It was the only light, for all was very dark around him; he moved more quickly toward the light. He heard voices asking him to stop for a moment, but he kept moving ahead. The light shone more brightly as he moved faster.

He was becoming quite tired but he noticed that there was now more light, as if the dawn were making an entrance. Mr. Jeffries stopped and looked down. He gasped as he saw the series of belts and pulleys which were attached to a strange electric light a short distance ahead. And the power for the light? The tread-mill on which he walked!

—Jack Lamb

caged

Margaret stood beside a window, looking out over a series of landscaped terraces. She was mentally contrasting this view and the view of her childhood home. She remembered the farm and the hills; more often than not, barren hills, she recalled a little bitterly. She saw a lonely girl standing in windswept pastures, looking at the hills and not seeing them. The girl dreamed of escape to a world of people and light, a world without drought or wind. Her father had escaped, finally. He'd died, leaving her alone. But that was thirty long years ago. How strange it was, to have once been so poor, and now to be a pillar of society in Dorchester.

She watched an expensive car drive through the gate. And as Margaret turned from the window, and started to descend a long stairway, she thought that for the next two hours, she must be a very, very good pillar of society. She would be entertaining the Influential Catherine Dunham. Because Catherine Dunham was influential, because Mrs. Dunham's opinions mattered in Charles' business circles, and in Margaret's social world, Mrs. Dunham would never be aware of Margaret's contempt for her. Regardless of feeling, Margaret knew that for two hours, she would be a fine example of the social pillar. She had to be.

Margaret reached the bottom of the staircase and stopped to admire an expensive gilded birdcage standing nearby. Charles had given it to her during their last trip to Europe. It was a beautiful piece of workmanship, delicate and artistic, but so useless. Margaret smiled. She wondered what her father would have thought of it. Then she went on to meet her guest.

Two hours later, Margaret was rather depressed. She stood again by the window, thinking again of the farm, perhaps a little wistfully. As a girl she had hated it, but now Margaret thought of the closeness to nature, the naturalness, the freedom. She longed for the wind, so cruel, and yet the wind which had gently played with her long hair as she had skipped or run over a pasture. Her face softened. She saw the wild, colorful sunsets; she saw an old house standing up proudly to the fierce wind; she saw her father calling to her as he returned from the fields.

An expensive wrought-iron grille on the window caught her attention. Its design resembled that of the birdcage.

—Sandra Sauvain

the paper walls of mr. dundee's world

Beatrice was an artist. Her personality mirrored an inner character of harsh and liberal dogmatism, and yet she was ever so sensitive to the external forces that moulded her world of creation, experimentation, and expression.

Her father was John Dundee, a retired government employee. He was a quiet man who silently fulfilled the obligations of fatherhood, neither complaining nor enjoying. Mr. Dundee's world centered in and around an overstuffed leather chair, a half dozen pipes, and the omniscient **Evening Gazette**. This world was complete and peaceful, his only duty being to protect it against the intrusions of a daughter and wife.

Mrs. Dundee was one of those scourges of society who was led to the assumption that the home, its occupants, its world existed solely for her. She thought herself the spiritual apex of all creation. Her mind had long since closed to those impressions that did not conjure a complimentary smile or nod. In a word, Mrs. Dundee was the epitome of selfishness.

The Dundees lived in what was once considered a fashionable part of the city, but time had scarred it with industry, filth, and poverty. There remained only a decayed skeleton of Victorian arches and gates. But to Beatrice, this world was the source of powerful inspirations. Its people were not intelligent beings, but mere creatures who floundered in the muck and mire of industrialism. They were like wooden blocks who could feel and be hurt, and who could only be helped by some force outside of themselves. She thought herself to be an altruist, but society had branded her with another name—Communist. Beatrice was not concerned with what others thought of her; instead, she was only preoccupied with what she thought of others. Her father was, in her mind, a victim of slavery who had lost all personal identity.

He was a symbol, much as a cross or a star is a symbol. But when reflecting upon her mother's character, Beatrice lost her passiveness, and boiled with a spirit of personal hatred. To Beatrice, her mother was capitalism, industrialism, and all other institutions that personified exploitation of the masses. Her hatred would often burst forth into angry lectures on society and its evils, and then she would neatly tie this together with a brutal condemnation of her mother's selfishness.

One of these scenes had just ended. Mrs. Dundee had silently

walked out of the house and would probably go Uptown and buy a hat or dress, for this was the way she soothed her nerves.

Beatrice was still red with anger as she prepared the living room for the weekly meeting of the Young Socialists' League. Extra chairs were placed here and there. Copies of the local labor union's magazine were placed on each chair. All was ready. Her mother had been driven out into her own world, and her father was impenetrable behind his paper.

Beatrice walked up to the mirror in the hall to briefly inspect her hair and make-up. As she looked at herself she could see the living-room, with the extra chairs and magazines. All was in order. Suddenly Beatrice noticed her father had put down his pipe and paper and was looking at her. It was a piercing look of love, sorrow, and sympathy. Beatrice pretended not to notice and nervously brushed her hair with quick, vigorous strokes. She glanced again into the mirror, but her father had once again closed the door of his silent world as he quietly smoked and read his omniscient **Evening Gazette**.

—Tom Tracy

spring night

The evening's air is warm, alive, fresh.
Above me winks the galaxy, panoramic, boundless,
Emeralds in a field of azure.
In the slums a small boy sleeps in some dusty, dim, deserted hallway . . .
No dreams, no plans.
Across the river, two proud young parents observe their first blessing,
Blissful in the sweet sleep of infancy . . .
They dream, they plan.
A pensioner sits alone this night in some lonely room; time has
robbed him . . .
Of dreams, of plans.
A hopped-up stickman leers through the smoke,
The dive is packed, a sweating, teeming, moving mass;
He beats out his methodic rhythm, caring not . . .
For dreams, or plans.
Two kids, restless, reckless, recoiling from standards,
New to the teens, have just crossed the state line . . .
Such dreams, such plans.
I lie here looking up, looking out, looking down,
And I wonder . . .
About dreams, about plans.

—Roger Erickson

the peace-tag

It wasn't really the printing, itself, which bothered him. It was the context of the printing; the frosted glass of the door on which it clung; the slightly close and musty air, lying in an almost academic manner about the printing, which gave its thin and faintly feministic body a foreboding aspect. From where Dar sat—Dar was short for Darwin, a name his father, being peculiarly addicted to science, had, in memoriam, given to him. The word President seemed a lexicographical extension of the man it represented. President John W. Strait, B.S., B.A., M.S., Ph.D., charge d'affaires of Montose College, in Who's Who of Educators, dedicated scholar, and an example for all aspiring young Abes to hold high with grubby little hands.

Dar shifted about uncomfortably on the rigid, straight-backed bench; the bench reposed opposite to the frosted-glass door which carried the malevolent printing. The outer-office receptionist-secretary, momentarily disturbed by his shuffling from her furtive perusing of a **True Confessions** magazine kept in the top drawer of her desk, frowned annoyingly at Dar. He, perceiving the frown, felt a distinct impulse to stick his tongue out in all its red glory and waggle his fingers in his ears . . . as a means of retaliation.

Probably scare about twenty years of pedantic stuffiness out of her, he thought. Do her a world of good.

He appeased the impulse by merely indulging in a good yawn, to let her know she hadn't made an impression, and fell back to wondering why old "Straight-jacket"—Dar's personal nom de guerre for the president—wanted him. It had been a summons of a peremptory nature.

Dar conjured up the image of the president, earlier that morning, stopping him in front of Dar's lecture room, before the first period, and requesting, in a short, rather peevish tone, his presence for a "chat" in the office after the class. Then President Strait had stalked off with his umbrella clutched . . . almost frantically . . . under his left arm, and the bulging brief case, with great restraint and in a disciplined manner, had swung in the right.

Probably smuggles comic books with it, Dar had gleefully speculated.

Actually, Dar had a good idea of why "Straight-jacket" had issued the summons.

It was over the Steele brat—kid, Dar mentally amended. Hadn't Hocky, the Chemistry and Biology Prof warned him? Didn't he like the advice ole Shaker, "Shaky" to the students, had given him? Shaky

might teach English and talk about Shakespeare as though they were intimately acquainted, but he learned the laws of economics as fast as anyone. And all the others . . . Mac, coach of the hired eleven . . . Stan, who loved and taught history; they had all, at the first opportunity after getting acquainted, said the same thing. Always, the advice was veiled and hidden through their indirect method of offering it, and the furtive air it brought to Dar's mind made the pity and sorrow, at times even anger, well up into consciousness.

Basically . . . it added up to laying off the Allah, Dar thought. Don't touch Steele with anything but kid gloves, Dar, ole boy. His ole man is God in these parts. He owns all . . . is all . . . and buys grand, stalwart Montose all sorts of pretty baubles—in compensation for taking care of his heir and rather block-headed son. Steele, Jr., must, therefore, have passing grades and be above the strife of the other peons who . . . unfortunately . . . can't buy us any compensating baubles. They, miserable wretches, must adhere to principles in lieu of their deficiency.

Dar irritably recrossed his legs and momentarily interrupted his mental conversation by coming to the sharp conclusion that the skinny vulture was sure making him wait and sweat . . . on his free time to boot. The irritated feeling increased.

You'll never save up any money for that doctor's degree, this way, Sir Lancelot; Dar swung back to his now moody introspection.

So what; give the clown a C. Pass him; get him out of your hair . . . why make an issue, boy? It never pays off when you're bucking City Hall . . . pretend like you're in Rome and be a Roman . . . the rest of them do it. Course, they have kids and wives who like to eat, and you, now that Ruth has died, have only yourself.

He thought about the first time he saw Anthony Steele, Jr., as that notable figure entered psychology class. Money stuck out all over his dumpy, out of proportion, bottom-heavy frame; from the tailor-made clothes and bevy of surrounding, fawning admirers to the possessive air the heir of all those farm machinery millions emanated. Though the world was small in this Nebraska town, it knew where its sun resided. At the roll call of the students, Steele deliberately waited a few seconds before answering to his name with a "present, of course;" he smirked at all the admirers of his wit. A perverted sense of the dramatic, Dar had thought; just to let this new and obviously unindoctrinated psychology instructor know what was what.

And so it had started, Dar musingly reviewed; when Steele attended, it was only to impress the rest . . . for all that he learned, or even was capable of learning, he should have stopped after he had finished making the high-school teachers miserable.

At the end of the mid-term exams, when all the other instructors were awarding the "special" C or B to Mr. Steele, Dar had given,

completely blasphemously, the deserved F.

Rank heresy it was, and so here I am, Dar thought, but—

"President Strait will see you now, Mr. Cole," Miss Drube, having abandoned her vicarious life for a moment, turned her pointer-like nose towards Dar as she spoke. Dar didn't reply, but, instead, on deadened legs pulled his blocky stature erect, ran a hand through his thinning, usually uncombed, hair and strode towards the irritating print with a purposive stride.

As he entered the president's office, Dr. Strait was observed to be busily rifling through a sheaf of papers.

Probably wondering who's good at Belmont today; that was as far as Dar got with his intriguing projection.

"Ah, hrumph, Mr. Cole"; Mr. Strait, his thin and pale face twisted in Dar's direction as the president laid the papers on a corner of his massive mahogany desk. He spoke in a tone reserved for benedictions.

"Sit down, please, sit down. I'm glad you could make it for a moment. I like to meet all the faculty members at least once during the term; it leads to better understanding and a tighter, happier family."

He must have got that "hrumph" from reading Dickens and making Scrooge his ideal, Dar surmised as he took the offered chair and answered non-committally, "You wished to see me, Mr. Strait?"

"Yes, yes . . . Mr. Cole," "Strait-jacket," who liked to be addressed as Sir or Dr., hid his resentment and went on. "I have a lot of good reports on your work here, Cole." The Mr. part of the title had dropped, and Dar, meanwhile, wondered if the reports he spoke of came from hired spies.

"You are fitting in marvelously, here, in our happy little family." It was at first ludicrous and then almost grotesque to witness Strait mouth the platitudes and attempts to ooze good will and joviality.

Like a cobra, smiling, was the metaphor which leaped to Dar's mind. It is trite . . . but it fits. The president finished up a particularly flowered and well delivered oration.

"And so, I know you will work out fine, Cole." Dr. Strait leaned back in his over-stuffed, black leather swivel chair in order to achieve an unsuccessful, benevolent pose.

"Thank you; I'm glad the school finds I am proficient enough for its high standards," Dar replied. The last part of his statement held an almost unnoticeable . . . and it went unnoticed . . . twinge of irony in its delivery.

"However, hrumph," Strait leaned forward and pulled a desk drawer out with a commanding inflection, "there seems to be a small detail, here, that needs rectifying."

The man said "rectifying" not "clarifying." Now we get to the heart of the matter, Dar thought.

"It is about this report you turned in on Mr. Steele, when you issued a failing mark to that young gentleman." "Strait-jacket" placed the offending report on the desk in front of Dar with a very noticeable look of gathering distaste.

"I have read the report," Dar replied. He picked up the heretical report, nevertheless, and looked at it again.

"Mr. Cole—I have talked to this young man's other instructors and find that they have found him, if not an admirable, at least an above average student. Don't you believe you're being a little severe with the boy?"

"No," Dar went on with more force in his words. "The school requires a report on all failing grades. I believe . . . it was my attempt to show anyhow . . . that this report sets forth my reasons as to issuing the mark." Dar started to tap the report to show it was enclosed therein, and for emphasis.

"Mr. Steele didn't attend half the lectures; he performed his lab experiments in F fashion, and as far as I can tell from his—I use the term loosely and very broadly—exam paper, the knowledge he has accrued in psychology is of an invisible nature. To add to this—"

"I know, I know," Strait waved a depreciating hand and interrupting Dar continued, "but wouldn't you chalk this up to an over-exuberant nature and his youth; you know—:" here the president's face took on a confiding set; "sowing a few wild oats, and needing a little maturity to see the true values of an education"; the words drifted into generalities.

"I'm not certain as to the motive," Dar cut in; it produced a narrowing of the eye-brows on "Strait-jacket's" part.

"But I am sure of the grade he earned and received." The apparent lack of backing down on Dar's side could be seen to produce mounting exasperation in the president.

"You're new here, Cole. Don't you think you should tread rather soft in an unfamiliar position? One which has unprecedented opportunities of advancement?" Before Dar could interrupt, Strait went on, the edge off his growing anger after his first statements.

"Mr. Steele, this boy's father, called me this morning. He was highly—and I believe rightly—perturbed with the whole situation. Mr. Steele is a highly successful citizen, and has, as every progressive member of this community should have, a deep and loyal interest in this school. Now then," to the president the logic was of solid concrete, "are you telling me that this school cannot guide and direct its pupils?" He didn't expect an answer; he went on.

"Is this school unable to give the citizens of this community the education their children and the welfare of the community demands? It is a reflection on the school—as to meeting that need—when we have

fallen to bestowing F's rather than the proper direction." "Strait-jacket" paused for air and effect; then leaning forward inquired, "Don't you agree Mr. Cole?" Dar would have bet his entire library of psychology books that he was quoting Steele's telephone conversation almost word for word.

"I agree the school should work to better the community"; Dar spoke evenly; meanwhile, he laid the odious report on the edge of the desk.

"Fine, fine," repeating words was another trick "Strait-jacket" engaged in.

"Then I am sure, Cole, when you have reviewed the case . . . it will take on a more inclusive"—over the word inclusive it seemed as though he was going to slobber—"angle and a judgment that would be more fitting and more beneficial." The last word had the "I-wont-stand-for-any-nonsense" tone.

"The grade I gave Mr. Steele was fitting and, as to its nature—totally deserved"; Dar spoke in an even but slowly rising tone.

Easy does it, boy, he thought.

"Of course, of course," the president tried to intervene, but Dar went on talking.

"As to an increased nature—it would be sheer, ridiculous lying to grant it, and even I, who possess an extraordinary amount of rationalizing ability, would be unable to swallow it." Though Dar had reminded himself to stay cool, he hadn't listened to his own advice.

"What you mean to say, Mr. Strait, when all the camouflage is taken away—is that—around here, Mr. Steele, Sr., donates buildings and other objects of an irrefutably substantial quality, and that Montose, to show its appreciation, can do nothing less than take good care of that not more than seventy-five I.Q. he has—unfortunately—begotten." Dar was now entirely aroused. All the furtive whisperings of his colleagues, the prolonged wait in the outer-office and the hypocritical gymnastics just performed before him were goading him to speak.

"To speak specifically, Mr. Strait—scholastic endeavor around here is spelled exactly like the word money. In fact, and in spirit, you are unable to tell them apart; they are, in actuality, the same. This isn't a college; it is a hobby of Mr. Steele."

John Strait had listened with at first astonishment, but it wasn't long before a glare began to beacon a warning from his pouchy (Who's Who called them far-seeing) eyes.

"What what—why why"—it was indeed an occasion when a double-double word combination was startled from him—"how dare you sir?! How dare YOU?!!" Strait-jacket rose from his swivel chair to stand on the deep, beige, wall-to-wall carpeting.

"I demand your resignation, sir." Strait had undoubtedly heard the

phraseology in an expose on "The Correct Practice in How to Duel." To him, the speech of Dar he had just heard, was incredible.

"It is now glaringly apparent that you are not of sufficient caliber to teach here at Montose. How dare you level those preposterous and false accusations at this institution." "Strait-jacket" sounded as though the very buildings Mr. Steele had built would crash down in retaliation.

"Get out of my office—I shall expect your immediate resignation, sir!" His voice cracked on the last words, and judging from the bulging veins in his face, Dar thought the color red was rather becoming in them—at least he looked alive.

At the door, Dar turned to fire his parting salvo.

"By the way, 'Strait-jacket,'" he spoke with the faintest trace of a laugh in his words. "Don't forget to call King Steele, after I'm gone, and tell him that the upstart Cole has been taken to account; he is waiting to hear." From the expression on Mr. Strait's face, a face fast assuming an apoplectic hue, Dar could see his words strike home. He didn't wait for a reply.

The door with the repugnant printing, giving a wheeze from the metal mechanism which slowed the door to an appropriate and dignified click, swung shut behind his back as he entered the outer-office.

If only I might slam the damn thing, Dar thought. What a grand exit it would make.

In the outer-office, he leaned over the wooden railing which preserved the sanctity and marked the boundary of Miss Drube's territory. Shaking his finger as though addressing a child, he began.

"Naughty, naughty;—tell me Miss Drube . . . are the vicarious thrills worth the tension of being detected?" He placed an exclamation mark after the sentence with an exaggerated leer and wink.

"Remember the code of us scholars, Miss Drube! When in doubt, we must resort to experimentation. In that direction," Dar pointed at the guilty drawer, "lies only perversion." The receptionist shoved the magazine-bearing drawer shut with a self-conscious motion and stared spell-bound. As Dar in smiling reflection turned to go, he addressed Miss Drube in an after-thought.

"On second thought . . . stay where you are, dearie. You haven't the constitution." There was an over-powering silence in the office as Dar walked out. As the receptionist turned back to her reading, she suddenly was struck by a growing guilty feeling at its renewal. Around Dar's words, she began to construct a glowing, rising feeling of indignation to blot out the guilty one. The light on the inter-comm appeared, summoning her to the president's office . . . as she rose with notebook in hand to obey . . . she resolved to mention Dar's conduct to that governing personage . . . he'd know how to handle smart alics . . .

There went the doctor's studies for another year . . . what a boob.

Hail—Sir Empty-head . . . with the report he'll give, you'll be lucky to get a job, period. The thoughts kept crowding into Dar's mind as he strode along the corridor; as his pace increased, however, he started to realize that he didn't feel too bad after all.

"Funny," he thought. "I don't feel particularly miserable or even self-conscious. I'm not the type to play Joan of Arc, I guess." As he walked along, the feeling grew; it was a good feeling; there were no tears of smugness in its make-up. He felt a twinge of conscience for having taken some of his spite out on Miss Drube.

He would apologize before he left these sacred halls. He might even take Miss Drube to dinner as penance.

By the time Dar had reached his cubby-hole office on the second floor, he was overwhelmed by the sense of peace he had obtained. As his feet carried him over the threshold of the office, they seemed much more of the size to fill a doctor's shoes.

—Leonard Miller

without answer

What use?
What need?
What happiness?
What part am I to play?

You leave me without answer,
Aye, without a way
To be to you, my heart,
—One part for which you live.

You have pleaded of desire
But find not within your soul
The answer to my pleadings
To make my heart a whole.

What use?
What need?
What happiness?
What part am I to play?

You leave me without answer,
Aye, without a way.

—Mary Silzer

an ode to civilization

drunken stumbling swinging hardfists
burbeled he who sought escape from
bowing to the deific Camera (T.V. of course)
our Favorite Son favored reform (and peace)

the High Secretary of foreign affairs
mopped his unerring brow consulting UNIVAC
war clouds covered starsandstripes
but mac (who now wears stripes) salutes no stars

struggling starving eating tablescraps
dies the scum who drinks to peace
plush expensive most terrific auto
speeds the victor to the WHITEHOUSE

in a jointsession our representatives (forgetting to shave)
vote to stop aggression (amid patriotic cheers)
johndoe wears from foot to head
KHAKI (in which he travels to eternity)

umba the african native (most uncivilized)
plants turnips in the greenearth
a most uncultured beast who lives without
razorblades forks water softeners and Atomic Bombs
however we are not to be concerned with umba

but to pity this despicable creature (much less fortunate than we)
and pray loudly that someday
the whole world will be covered with CIVILIZATION

—Al Anderson

street trial

The sun was a blaze of white heat high in the Alabama sky. The humid air was still and heavy, seeming to smother the inhabitants of the normally quiet sleepy little village. A dog trotted up the street, kicking up little puffs of dust behind him.

On one side of the town square a group of men were sitting in front of the grocery. Despite the heat, they were talking excitedly in low whispers. Occasionally bits of conversation escaped their group.

"Last night . . . about ten-thirty." "Attacked . . . insulted . . . beaten." "Miss Markey." "Damn . . ." The rumble of discontent was growing louder and stronger.

Stan Holman's blue station wagon pulled around the corner and stopped. Holman, a deputy in the sheriff's office, got out and walked over to the group, pulling at his shirt where the sweat had plastered it to him.

"Just got back from the County Hospital," Stan said mopping his brow. "She ain't woke up yet."

"She's goin' to be okay?" one of the men asked.

"Doc don't rightly think she's gonna make it. I guess it's pretty bad. Sheriff's gonna stay with her case she comes around enough to talk."

"This town ain't gittin' fit for decent folks to live in." Every one turned and looked at Ed Thornton and nodded in agreement.

"Those black sons have gone too far this time. Government or no we ought to do sumpin'!"

"Right," said Thornton, "If we had the K.K.K. then they wouldn't be so smart."

All talk stopped as the door of the grocery opened and banged shut behind its proprietor Sam Morris. Sam was a little man, quiet and respected. He was kind of frail looking with a partly bald head and grey hair to match his eyes. He had just the opposite of Holman's appearance of violent brutality. Sam sat down and for a moment no one said anything.

Finally Sam broke the silence. "Well now, I don't think this is any Negro doins. Seems to me, could have been any one."

"Who else but a dirty nigger," said Holman. "Who else would attack that ol' maid?"

"She weren't so old," said another man.

"Alright, but who else besides a dirty nigger?"

"Now," said Sam thoughtfully. "Who you accusing in particular?"

"Well—ah—Joe Tennis for example," said Holman. "That lazy son has been hanging around a lot lately."

"Shore nuff has," said Sam. "He's been doing odd jobs for folks hereabouts. He sweeps the store for me, and has been takin care of Miss Markey's place too."

"Well, you're shore sticking up for him." Thornton threw up his hands in disgust. Between the hot weather and the niggers, a man can't sit still for a minute."

"Now, you can't blame the weather on 'em," Sam said.

"We ought to make an example," someone said. "Can save the state the trouble too, Joe Tennis I mean."

"Let's go get him." Holman jumped to his feet. "Let's go get him or do you want to sit here and talk about it till all our wimmin been raped or beaten by those black sons. Let's teach 'em a lesson."

"Stan's right," said one of the men jumping to his feet. The rest of the men jumped up too, ready to put an end for all time to this business. Sam Morris rose slowly to his feet. "Well now I don't know if I'd be in so much of a rush, boys. You don't know he's the one."

"We know," Thornton snapped back.

"You guys are making a big mistake. Maybe you ought to wait till the sheriff . . ."

"Wait, hell," shouted Holman. "This ain't no mistake, nigger lover."

The men moved off with determined strides. They moved faster as they neared their cars and were running by the time they reached them. Doors slammed, motors raced, more men jumped on the running boards. Holman honked and motioned the men to follow him.

"Know just where to find that black son too," Holman said to the men with him, "Fishin and boozin under the bridge."

The cars slammed to a stop near the bridge over the creek and the men poured out and down the banks and swarmed in on Joe. Holman grabbed him by his shirt front and dragged him to his feet.

"Now, you black whelp, you're going to get yours."

"Let go me, boss," said Joe in a frightened tone. "Let go me, I ain't done nothin. Let go me. Let go me."

"Call it nothin, eh?" Holman struck Joe across the mouth with the back of his hand. Blood started running out of the corner of Joe's mouth. He wiped his mouth with his hand. "Wha fo boss? I ain't done nothin. I aint, I tell ya."

Joe went down under a barrage of kicks and blows. To Joe it seemed that fists and feet were coming at him from everywhere.

Someone produced a rope and Joe's hands were soon bound securely behind his back. Two of the men dragged him to his feet and up on the road.

"I ain't done nothin. Wha fo you all treatin me this here way?"

"Shut up, nigger." Thornton hit him again and Joe sagged to his knees. He was picked up bodily and thrown into the back of a car.

"Head for the swamp," someone said. "I know of a real deep bog."

The air was cool and the sun was setting when Holman and the rest of the men got back to town. A cool breeze was fanning the town and there were a few scattered clouds in the sky growing thicker every minute.

Holman drove in past the town square.

"Ain't none of those black sons hanging around now," Holman said to the men with him. "If they know what's good for 'em they'll stay away too." The others joined him in a laugh.

The other cars took their own way home but Holman pulled into the curb at the sheriff's office. The sheriff leaped out the door at them.

"Now where have you been all afternoon, Stan?" the sheriff asked.

"Just taking care of a bit of dirty work, eh boys?" Stan winked at the group. They laughed and winked back.

"Well, while you're out around playing cards or something, I had to make an arrest by myself."

"Arrest?" Holman asked dumbfounded. "Who?"

"Jim Morris, you know, Sam's boy. Miss Markey finally came around and told us who attacked her. Now come on in and write up the confession so he can sign it."

Stan's jaw hung slack. "I don't think I can, sheriff. I better get home. I don't feel so good." He turned and with his head hung, slouched off down the street.

Thornton and the rest of the men left too, silently without saying anything to each other. They went their own way alone.

"Well now what got into them?" the sheriff asked himself. As if in answer to his question the sky suddenly opened and the rain came down hard and furious, as if it were trying to wash away the sin of the world.

—Robert J. Larson

meditation

Ahk-mar sat alone.
Ahk-mar dreamt.
Darkness descended
As Ahk-mar dreamt alone.

Ahk-mar sat alone.
Ahk-mar thought.
The Light came
As Ahk-mar entertained.

—Kay Zurcher

fire

Racing wind,
Scorching flames on . . . tinder trees.
Scarlet towers streak . . . blackened sky.
Screaming animals,
Frothy mouths . . . bared teeth,
Slashing hoofs . . . smoking ruins,
Death!

—Loretta Scoville

adventure at night

Only the music of the falling snow echoes in this world. The pines bow to the earth with white velvet clothing their arms. Sinking flakes fall from the depthless gray. A curtain of sparkling lace weaves a pattern of diamonds. The curtain thins, and sprinkling the diamonds on the earth, swirls and silently drifts into the shadows.

Shadowy lights from the distant homes twinkle still, and the vast white lies waiting. The music of falling snow softly fades and dies. The far-off lights become dark and, finally, the town becomes silent.

And then there is no sound—a breath is held. The sparkling snow flows from the bowing pine branches to the earth below. Glowing under the moon and stars, it reaches afar to the end of the sapphire sky, white and smooth; a velvet scarf broken only by the shadowy pines.

—Loretta Scoville

always

She's waiting there, as always, just beyond that dune,
Phantom lady of the desert,
Unattainable, visionary, sighing with the wind,
Appearing, vanishing, reappearing.
Her face is that of Venus; her hair,
A matching brilliance to the early evening sunset,
And yet with darkness acquiring darkened hue,
That the stars might dwell thereon.
Shadowy spirit, shifting . . . merging . . . racing with the ageless sand,
Across the plains of Pharaohs past, and slumbering dynasties;
Sleepless siren, whose shadow dances 'cross the moon,
Pausing now, yet pausing not, tempting man to follow . . .

—Roger Erickson

from time to time

He sat, as he had so many times in the past, and gazed into the white face of the stop watch. His was a never ending job but he enjoyed it because he was a gambling man at heart and here nothing stopped him from wagering on the time of reaction. He put down the watch for just a second so that he could have both hands free to peel part of an orange. This finished, he picked up the watch and pushed the start button.

Emily sat quietly in the darkened den. The black of her clothing seemed to blend so well with the pallor of her face. The artist might describe it as the beauty of contrast. She sat with her eyes searching an unfocused subject. These two eyes, one could plainly see, had been put to much work, crying. In the murky room nothing was in motion except for the fingers of her right hand as they moved in the well traveled path back and forth on the arm of the chair.

Emily's thoughts were of nothing but Ralph. Why had he been forced to leave her? He was so young and becoming quite successful. She had told herself over and over again that she would never know the answer to that question. She had lived a lonely life until he appeared. He had become a living part of her, he had made her decisions for her, had thought her thoughts for her and generally, she guessed, controlled her life. But how glorious it had been. At times she thought that her life had gone with him into that gray steel box. She had thought many times in the past two weeks of schemes by which she could join him, but as yet she had taken no action. In fact, she had done very little except sit in this darkened room and think of Ralph.

People had been so kind to her; many asked if she would have enough money to take care of herself. She was sure that after the will was read, she could live comfortably; in fact, she realized that she might be able to live very comfortably. Her friends and neighbors had been so thoughtful; they would visit with her quite often and as time passed she appreciated more and more having some one to talk to. The people across the street always made sure that she had more than enough food and that her other needs were cared for. The man next door had spent time with her helping to ease the pains of loneliness. In fact, he had lately spent much time with her. Her thoughts were now focused upon him. He was a fine young man even though he was a bit lazy. She had never before thought much about the young bachelor,

but now . . .

A smile crept over his face as he released the button. He recorded the time and, having finished the orange, he threw the peelings into the gray waste basket. He selected another orange and began to peel it.

—Jack Lamb

mount tacoma

Jerry Meeker lived in Tacoma, Washington, near Mount Rainier. The mountain, a dead volcano, was originally named Mount Tacoma by the Indians. Tacoma means god. Jerry gave his last prophecy January 10, 1955. He was ninety-three years old.

Old Jerry Meeker
In his last year
Prophesied a late winter.
He'd prophesied the weather
As long as could be remembered;
But this year was doubtful.
The weather was mild;
It rained all the time
But that was usual.
Around the first of April
Jerry passed on—
Still believing.

Winter came,
Came so late
The daffodils almost didn't bloom.
Jerry was right—
Right because he knew;
He looked at the mountain and knew.
This mountain of his forefathers
Was Tacoma—their god.
The perception of the Indian—
To see the glaciers,
The snow, the degree of whiteness,
The god who foretold the weather.

—Kay Zurcher

the wait

The restless ocean—heavenly blue, hellish dark—
Ever restless in its uneasy balance
Controlled by the greater force of the galaxy.
The life it holds, the secrets
Which are buried within the depths, never to be revealed.
Not understandable in its impenetrable calm;
Yet the force of its present tranquility remains
To be broken.

Its surface is suddenly penetrated by an intruder.
It yields, accepts,
Laughs in fury at the poundless, fruitless attempts
Of its intruder to break through to its protected secrets.

The gray-white sky hanging over its bed is forever protecting
And warning the intruder.
It sends a message of degradation and danger—
A message one feels when his soul is disturbed by the whole of the
world,
When every living thing is hushed and silent in its efforts of life.

From within comes an unearthly song transposed
From the ocean's symphony of sound.
The tune has a gay, light tone
As waves lap and swish upon the sands;
But forever sounding is the lagging, rolling swell going lower,
then higher—
And always the song dies to a mournful, useless moaning.

How peaceful it seems singing its song of immortal life and death,
Both meeting here in the depths where life itself began.
Now they have met and lie in peace.
My soul yearns to penetrate the rolling depths,
To reach out and capture its meaning,
And express the tranquil feeling of peace from within.
My footprints upon the shifting sands of the drained earth

Are the only signs which follow me to the ocean.
When the two meet, they are forever wiped clean

By the restless waves.
No one will hear me now; never will I tell my secret
Of the restless ocean.
For now I am a part of its secret forever locked
Within its impenetrable blanket of restless white foam,
And scattered through its depths of meaning.

Now I, like the ocean, lie and wait for you.

—Tom Bohan

secret

As the tractor moved steadily down the field, the man turned around on his high seat to gaze at the black furrows being made by the plow. In the distance he could see his two-story white house and the washing blowing on the line. It occurred to him that the barn and various out-buildings were going to need paint again this year. Will Hubbard took great pride in keeping his farm the neatest in the county.

He had been farming the land now for thirty years and doing very well too. He supposed he was happy. His wife, Christy, was a good woman. He'd married her soon after his father had died twenty-eight years ago. During these years she had borne him three sons and had made them a comfortable home. There was a strong bond between them, not of love, but of having lived together for so many years.

He finished the last round and headed back to the house to wash up for dinner. As he stepped down from the tractor, the yellow mongrel dog trotted up to him and wagged his tail lazily. Together they entered the kitchen. The man completely filled the doorway. He was not fat but he was tall with a barrel-like body and a ruddy complexion.

"Gettin' warm," he announced to the back of his wife as she bent over the stove.

Without receiving a reply, he headed to the bath, rolling up his sleeves as he went. Grasping the yellow soap in his big hand, he cleansed the sweat and grime of his morning's work from his neck and arms. As he watched the water eddy down the drain, he remembered the smell of the newly turned earth and was filled with a desire to pour out the feelings which his thoughts aroused.

"Get the east section done?" Christy asked as he returned to the kitchen.

He nodded and went into the other room. She watched him from

the kitchen and wished as she had so many times since their marriage, that she could enter his mind and explore the nooks and crannies of his thoughts and perhaps understand him, for she never had. She repressed her impulse to ask him what he was thinking about and finished cutting the bread.

"Dinner's ready," she called finally. He turned reluctantly away from the window through which he had been gazing and sat down heavily at the table. As he began his meal, he was filled again with the desire to tell her of his morning. There was something in the new spring that had excited him and at the same time had made him morose. He longed to write poetry about the birds, the budding trees, and the smell, but he knew no words.

At last he said, "It's gonna be a dry season. Not enough snow this winter." As the words came out, he knew he had failed again to speak the things he wanted to speak.

She looked at him sharply and in an effort to change the subject said, "I finished cleaning the brooder house this morning so we'll be ready for the chicks when they get here."

"They'll be here Friday. It'll be good to have chicks around here again. I always miss them during the cold," he said with a small smile.

Realizing she had been successful, she began chattering as she cleared away the dishes.

"Ben Jones was showin' me some pictures last club meeting."

"Oh?" He reached for a toothpick and leaned back in his chair.

"They showed beautiful houses with low bushes and hedges and flowers all around them. It was all planned out by a landscaper. Some of the evergreen trees were cut to look like chairs and people and lots of things."

But he was not thinking of her now. He had remembered a time many years ago when his youngest son Russ was only six years old. Russ had brought a jug of iced lemonade out to the men who were threshing. Father and son had sat a little apart from the group. After several minutes of silence, the little boy spoke.

"I've been thinking of what I want to do when I get big, Daddy."

The man was tired but he answered, "What do you want to do, Russ?"

"I want to make a big picture of God," replied the child, "a big picture."

"Will Hubbard, you haven't even been listening to me!" cried Christy.

"No, no I haven't," he replied hazily. He got up clumsily, put on his hat, and stumbled out the door. In the safety of the barn, he wept.

—Karen Lias

