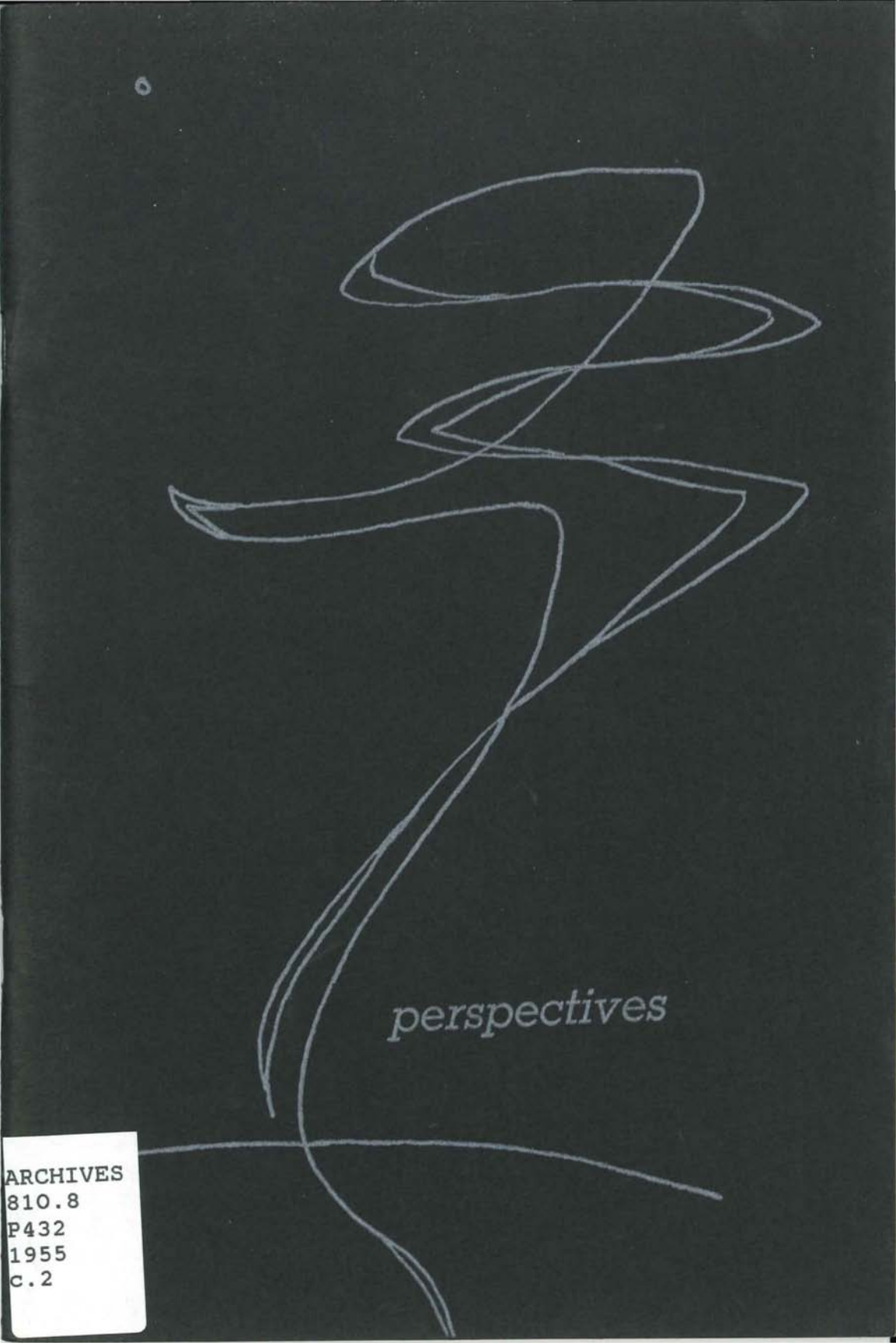

perspectives

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the interloper

Mr. Watanabe was elated. The day was broad and bright, and he felt surprisingly agile, unusually alive. The warmth of the sun was on his back, the coolness of the air was in his face, and his bicycle skimmed the even gray of the highway with a miraculous power of its own.

"Ah," his thought ran, "Ooshi-**san**, of the bicycle shop, is a capable man. Surely my **Gin-tatsu** is the smoothest-rolling, mended bicycle in all Japan.

The weeks since Mr. Watanabe had last seen his grandchildren had been long and lonely, but he was to be with them again today at the home of his son. Happily, he anticipated the shrieking and hand-clapping which his gift of brightly-dyed rice cakes would bring from the little ones. The old Japanese was careful, however, to guide his wheels along the outer edge of the highway. Here, on the outskirts of the city, the vehicles of the American army traveled at great speeds, and the old man wanted no quarrel with them about right-of-way.

Even now, a heavy, olive-colored carrier roared past him, flapping his fresh, white kimono with a blast of hot, oil-scented air. Mr. Watanabe's bicycle wobbled dangerously, and, with one hand on his neat bowler hat to check its flight, it was with the greatest difficulty that the old man retained his upright position. He might have preferred to ride upon the shoulder of the highway, but the ruts and holes along that part of the road forbade that. Mr. Watanabe rode more slowly now, his mind crowded with visions of the joy that the day would bring.

From behind him, there came a growing roar which signaled the approach of another vehicle. Mr. Watanabe steadied himself, his gaunt body erect and rigid. Then, as the roar became deafening, he hunched his shoulders, screwed up his face in expectant agony, and waited for the rush of air and sound which would be the passing of the machine.

It did not come. The roar was close and suffocating now, but it was steady. Puzzled, the old man relaxed, and pedalled on, but there was no change. The roar remained close behind him.

Carefully, he noted the position of his wheel, steadied it, and glanced quickly to the rear . . . he gasped and his breath caught in his chest . . .

Directly behind him rolled the immense wheels of a monstrous army truck! The radiator had loomed only a few inches from his face, and, with his eyes again on the road, he could still feel the sting of hot fumes in his nostrils.

Suddenly, then, a clanging jolt from the rear flung his feet from the pedals and sent his bicycle into a frantic wobble. The old man

fought for control. He veered wildly into the middle of the road, avoided a thundering oil-carrier somehow, then careened toward the shoulder. Regaining control of his vehicle, he resumed a shaky course along the lip of the pavement.

The thought came to him that he should stop and allow the truck to go on . . . and he might have, if the giant machine had not continued to drive him onward. The old man could not understand why it had not passed him . . . he was not blocking the road . . . there was easily enough space for the truck to move around him. If Mr. Watanabe had seen the leering face of its driver he might have realized that the man had no intention of passing him.

A second jolt drove his teeth painfully into his tongue, but he managed, with several desperate wrenchings of his wheel, to retain control of the bicycle. Another crash shook him . . . he increased his speed and a succession of jolts followed.

The truck pressed him even faster. There was no stopping now, because his antagonist rode as near the edge of the highway as he did. A turn to the left would throw him into the ruts at breakneck speed; a turn to the right . . . the traffic in the other lane rammed by without a gap. In a corner of his mind, Mr. Watanabe wished that he had taken one of the quiet sidepaths as his route.

The thighs of the old Japanese were stiffening. His sides ached with his breathlessness, and the taste of blood was hot and sickening in his mouth. There was no real escape, and it was impossible for the old man to go on. He chose the only route he saw . . . he steered his speeding bicycle directly into the rutted shoulder of the road.

The frail vehicle bucked and shuddered. Man and bicycle shot into the air, parting in mid-flight to perform double arcs against the sky. The bicycle crashed into the grassy gully beside the highway; its rider, kimono trailing, thudded to the ground near it.

The truck rolled on.

Mr. Watanabe lay in the soft green and blinked at the sky. He was only vaguely aware of his cramped legs and the numbness in his back: he felt a great dread. The old man was convinced of his guilt. He had broken a law somehow . . . he had offended someone. In no other way could he explain the events on the highway.

He sat up suddenly. Then, scrambling over his ruined bicycle, he clawed his way up the slippery incline to the pavement. Painfully, he pulled himself erect.

The truck was now far down the highway, lost from sight in the long, olive-drab line of traffic.

The small man turned in the direction that it had gone and bowed low, again and again, respectfully.

—Lyle K. McDole

the zebra a fantasy

The capezios lay untouched, for the spotted zebra had again walked into the house. The slippers. A strange color, more intense than purple, more alive than scarlet, resting in the middle of the floor. Long satin ties entwined carelessly, aimlessly. Entwined, entangled. The zebra capered around the bare floor to the weird strains of **Les Demons Amusent.** Atré crouched in the darkened corner of her house, her feet bare, powerless, undanced. Her voracious eyes devoured the zebra. The horrible zebra. The ugly zebra. Atré thought it striped, but alas it was spotted.

For an instant Atré's eyes found one of the small, murky windows in the house. A faint brightness illumined the window as the lightening parted the clouds. The outside was greencast. She dared not look away from the zebra for too long. The thunder split, but it was the zebra that caused the house to tremble. The creature limped heavily toward the curious slippers, leaving a muddy floor. Atré remained powerless in the corner. The zebra stained the slippers as it trampled them. She could never again wear the slippers. The lovely slippers. The ugly slippers. She had forgotten how to dance. The zebra left the house, and though the walls crumbled with its every step, Atré knew that it would return to survey the wreckage. It **was** the wreckage.

—Nancy Samuelson

running

Run! Run!
Until the morning breezes swoop,
Until the green grasses wilt,
And the snow covers all.
Run now,
Time is small,
Hurry—
You might be late.

—Loretta Scoville

the cows

"The cows, Dave, time to get the cows," droned Grandpa.

It never mattered whether he was talking to you when you were two feet away or yelling to you when you were 200 feet off. The effect was always the same. He just droned. The monotony was unnerving. But Grandpa always claimed that he couldn't see any sense in getting all excited and trying to race your voice up and down the scale like a singer.

"C'mon, let's go get the cows," he called in the same tedious manner.

"O. K.," drawled Dave.

Y'know, it's funny how any two voices could sound so much alike. Maybe it was just the direct influence Grandpa had over Dave. They were alike in a lot of ways though. They walked the same, they scratched the same, they leaned against a wall the same, and they were even the same hight. Dave was only seven years old, but then Grandpa was stooped quite a bit. Several times Dave had asked Grandpa why he wasn't as tall as their hired man. And each time Grandpa just kinda shrugged his shoulders and said, "Well, he's different."

Dave was up on the roof of the house resting. The roof was pleasant, a sunny place to rest since it was flat and Grandpa had cut off all the tops of the trees surrounding the house so that they were now the same height as the house.

Dave rolled over to the edge of the roof, stepped down, and grunted, "O. K., I'm coming."

Grandpa smiled—he always smiled whenever he met Dave—and asked, "Shall we walk backwards out to the pasture tonight?"

"O. K."

"Maybe we'd better not though. The cows might not like it."

"O. K."

So the trip out to the pasture wasn't much different from the ones they'd made the night before or any other night as far as that goes.

Grandpa was known as a good man in the neighborhood when it comes to handling his cows. His cows were always tame and easy to manage. But Grandpa always said that no cow is a real cow without having some faults. The worst thing about Grandpa's cows was that they were hard to see at night. The trouble was that they were gray, all of 'em.

When Dave got into the pasture, he jogged off to round up a few of the cows that had strayed from the main herd. Grandpa watched him take off, smiled, and called out with his usual lack of enthusiasm,

"Don't chase 'em, Dave. They'll all follow when they see the rest of them head for the barn."

Dave circled back to Grandpa and the two walked together behind the cows. Grandpa was right. Before long two of the cows that had remained behind loped by the boy and the old man to join the rest of the herd.

Up at the barn the cows filed methodically into their proper stanchions where Grandpa locked them into place.

"Hand me the milk pail, will you, Dave?"

"O. K."

Grandpa grabbed a milking stool, sat down, and began milking a heifer that had just come fresh about a month before.

"What's the matter?" Dave asked.

"I don't know. I don't know. She's gone dry."

—Gordon Walter

the dilettante

He'd eaten bitter fruit as well as sweet,
Tasted of poverty and drunk of bliss.
He'd borne the crushing blows of cruel defeat
Only to rise triumphant with a kiss.

He was the dreamer and his dreams set sail,
Full blown by winds across the seven seas.
He was the lover but if love should fail
He'd look for other pleasures if you please.

He dabbled in the arts quite as a jest:
Read Goethe, Shakespeare's Hamlet and Racine.
He knew Matisse, Cezanne—all of the best—
And his own oils were works that should be seen!

I supped with him one day at evening meal.
Ah! Then I asked him what he liked the most.
And this he was reluctant to reveal,
But I found out. He loved full well to boast.

—George A. Hawks

a class for onessa

Onessa Colley felt, as she gazed out over the campus of the great eastern university, the full force of the unhappiness which had, for months, been gathering itself about her. At this moment, she was willing to throw aside all the books and papers over which she labored and return to the seclusion and obscurity of her small-town home.

It was not of her choice that she should be enrolled in this strange and forbidding place. Her attendance here had been unavoidable. Onessa could recall the delight her parents had taken in her quiet reading habits which had been so different from the vigorous pastimes of her brothers and sisters. She had always been aware of her physical incapacity. Often too ill to attend school, she nevertheless turned her energies, limited as they were, to her studies. It was only through long hours of labored and exacting study, however, that she managed to outclass her sisters and brothers in the reports they brought home from school. Even then, she had always hated the reputation she had earned within her family as the "smart 'un," for her parents had, from the beginning, proudly expected her to go on to college.

Now it had come about. Her infirmity was still with her, and she was all but lost in the complexities of an academic life. She sat now, small and alone, in the great empty library of the university, her child-like form perched on an oversized chair. Through the window, the dull, red orb of the sun hanging low in the west told her that the afternoon had gone. Listlessly, she gathered together the sheets of manuscript which littered the table and patted them into an untidy sheaf. This, Onessa placed beween a pair of huge books, and, as she was about to push her chair back and rise, she spied a single piece of paper that remained on the table. Irritated, she reached for the thing and turned it over to inspect it. It was nothing more than the card which bore her class schedule. She had memorized its contents some weeks ago, but, idly, and without reason, she leaned back and studied the card.

Her classes were listed neatly . . . but there were so many . . . five, six and seven! Indeed, there were too many! She was so painfully aware of the pressures of each of those subjects that she was certain that there should be but six. With a sinking feeling, she moved her finger down the list, followed it with her eyes. Each title registered in her mind until . . . there at the bottom—the ink was smeared . . . but there was a seventh subject listed! Her sight blurred, and a dizziness swept over her momentarily. She peered closely at the seventh entry but she could not make out the word. There was the room number, nevertheless, and the day and the time. Somehow, she had overlooked this

class. Thinking back into the early weeks of the year, she decided that, in the frantic confusion of those first days, she must have forgotten the class completely. Yet, creeping into her mind, there was a dim memory of having attended the class perhaps once or twice. The thought wavered, however, and faded. Onessa turned back to the card. The class was scheduled to meet on this day . . . and the time . . . . Fearfully, the girl glanced at the clock on the library wall. It was almost that time now!

The desire was strong to creep away to her room to compose her thoughts. But then the whole evening would turn into a nightmare of worry and indecision. It would be best to attend the class. The girl arose, hoisted her books into the crook of her arm, and moved down the long row of tables. Only when she reached the door did she pause to glance again at the card. The class met in room 10. That was in the basement.

The halls of that great old structure were dark and empty, but a muffled, pedagogic voice rising from behind a door somewhere assured Onessa that she was not alone in the building. She set out, her eyes focused far down the long corridor on the pale square of light where a window illuminated the stairway to the basement.

Anxiety and despair clouded Onessa's mind; she foresaw the embarrassment of entering the strange classroom, of making the proper explanation for her absences, of the probing questions that the dean might ask. She was only vaguely conscious of her movement down the hall. When her thoughts returned at last to the present, she was already descending the stairway at the end of the hall.

One last length of corridor lay between Onessa and the room numbered 10. It was a cavern of darkness, the smooth, granite walls of which revealed themselves with faint gleams of reflected light. It seemed hardly possible that a class was to be held at the end of that hall. Nowhere was there a hint of human presence. The only sound was the cold ringing of her own footsteps, and, when she paused (which she did often, listening for some sound of activity), silence pushed in upon her, stifling and deadly. The oppressive gloom of the place began to seep into her already-troubled mind. She turned her steps to the center of the corridor to avoid the dark recesses of the doorways and the vague, shadowy rectangles of long-unviewed artwork that lined the walls. She tried to convince herself that no class was to be held here. She had only erred in filling out the card, or perhaps the class had been discontinued.

It was then that she saw the light at the end of the corridor. Apparently, it shone from one of the classroom doors, but it was pale and somber—unlike any electric glow. A moment before, Onessa had almost begun to feel relieved at the darkness of the place; it told her that perhaps there was no class after all. Now she should feel the re-

turn of fear and apprehension, but there was none. She welcomed the appearance of the gray light, and her confidence grew strangely as she neared the doorway from which it came.

The door marked 10 stood open, revealing the dimly-lighted interior of the classroom. Without hesitation, Onessa stepped through the doorway. No question presented itself in her mind; she gave little thought to the ghostly shapes which sat motionless and silent in the semi-darkness. The girl found a seat and took it wearily. Her books had grown oppressively heavy.

The smell of dust lay heavy in the air, she noticed, and, from the far side of the room where an ancient chart rack stood, drifted the odor of rotting parchment. She thought of her own small room at home, with its musty, green window-shades, and recalled the way she had often lain across her bed in the evening and watched the world through the dust-coated window-pane. Stark and real, then, a picture of that familiar landscape shaped itself in her mind. It was dusk, it seemed, and heavy clouds were darkening the sky after an oppressive summer day.

Onessa awoke to the room around her and noticed with a start that a man had entered the room while she had been dreaming. Ancient and stooped and motionless, he stood beside the huge desk at the front of the room, prepared to call the roll, it seemed. Deep inside, Onessa felt a pang of apprehension—a small fear that her name might not be called —that it might have been removed from the roll. But assurance flooded back, and she knew, beyond all doubt, that it would be read . . . .

The black clouds swirled promisingly in the sky, and there was a premonitory flash of lightning somewhere, far off . . . .

She was in the classroom again, then. The figure stood at the desk, watching her expectantly, and she became aware of an echo that hung faintly on the air. He **had** called her name! Somehow, it had remained on the roll! There was a surging joy within her—a great, growing elation. . . . Then, with more confidence than she had been able to summon in the whole of her life, she called out her exuberant reply. And there was the overwhelming rush of rain on a summer evening.

* * * *

From behind his impressive desk, a college dean, gray and incredibly withered, faced a woman's counselor on the following morning.

"This was no fault of yours, Hilda," he was saying, "It could have happened anywhere."

"I know," the woman answered, on the edge of tears. "If only someone had had her confidence. If only she had given us some idea. . . "

"As I see it, she was a rather foolish girl—she hadn't distinguished herself anywhere."

The counselor sobbed.

"We must think of the school," the dean went on. "It doesn't appear in a good light at all. It's as if we don't look after our people."

"I do my best, sir," the woman wailed.

"Of course you do, Hilda," the dean soothed, "but the thing happened through no fault of yours. The girl simply became ill and wandered into the store-room in the basement."

He turned in his seat and gazed out over the campus of the great eastern university.

"The girl's parents are arriving in the morning to claim the body, I believe," he said absently, fiddling with his lip.

—Lyle K. McDole

memorials

What is written on a gravestone besides a name?
Tears are written on a gravestone:
Sorrow and grief; recollection of atonements,
Too late, to satisfy the conscience, are written
On a gravestone.

—Roger Erickson

on the battleground

It was over—I still remember that swimming in my head,
Amid armies of the wounded and the regiments of dead,
Side by side they lay so peaceful, foe and friend and bad and good,
For in death they were united in a lasting brotherhood.
What a futile way of toiling, what a hopeless way to die
And those men who loved their country beneath foreign soil must lie
Yes, they died that those awaiting may not ever have to see
Their own country torn to pieces for the price of liberty.
Though we win a thousand battles, we can never pay for strife,
And agony and suffering caused from losing one small life.
Here the battle field before us, here the dead for freedom fell;
Here another grim reminder that war is only hell.

—George A. Hawks

time of trial

It had happened with a slow suddenness. It was one of those things you sensed but could not admit as an actuality. He saw it coming like some gigantic swooping pigeon, claws first, its white body splotched with ugly gray, the bit of rotten wormwood drooping from its senseless beak, and all the while those livid wings flapping noiselessly. His first impulse was to reach out and crush it, but then he just turned his back heedlessly. After all, was it not just an ordinary bird building its nest, performing faithfully the tasks which life exacted from it?

He had ceased to worry about the endless cascade of extra-large white business envelopes, officious in their cold aspect; ceased to tear open voraciously the crisp paper of various qualities; ceased to glance dejectedly at the polite hedging of another publisher's impersonal refusal—"Regret to inform you—," or "Because of our limited amount of space—," or "Perhaps next time—."

Perhaps next time. His lips had formed the bitter words wryly, contorting into a cynical twist hardly recognizable as a smile. He used to stare fixedly at nothing until the nothing became a blurred progression of paunchy editors, passing judgment or ignoring, spitting contemptuously, plodding on to other things—other things—other—? God, it was the sort of thing that soured his stomach. At times he was sure he wanted to forget it all. He wondered why he even tried. Why not dig ditches? More honorable than this bumming. Be happier, too—happy?—oh, well.

But then the spring and the fragrance crept in. Marya said she knew he could. The worn-out, dead feeling was gone, the spirit rose, and the sparks of creativeness revived. Perhaps the next day was all the more acutely vile for it.

Now the letters lay unopened on the desk in his study, the pen was dry, and the dust gathered on a forgotten manuscript. Perhaps another time—. The doctor said that Marya's condition demanded rest and a long convalescence, possibly even a stay in the hospital if she did not improve—a case of pleurisy—could develop into pneumonia—maybe she had been working too hard?—That insidious rattle in the chest—

He wished the doctor would stop talking. Had the job been too much for Marya? She had never been well—"Be sure to fill the vaporizer regularly and see that—" But Marya's cheerful determination would triumph as it had over all other obstacles. In a matter of weeks she would be her own loving self, giving up the niceties of life that had never really mattered. "Sulfa pills—five the first dose, then two every four

hours—" What a heel he was—The doctor's voice was louder. "Call me immediately if there is any change—"

It was early spring. He had snipped off budding stems of the bare forsythia bush, placing them in a vase of water beside the bed. The pain in Marya's chest tightened, forcing her limp body down upon the bed each time she tried to move. He waited in agony; it was useless to comment. Then the vivid yellow of the bell-shaped flowers forced its way from the bare stems. Marya was noticeably better.

The memory of the temptestuous Chopin prelude recurs. The notes pile higher and higher upon one another, crashing asunder, tearing his soul out by the roots as they fall. Marya is dead.

—Nancy Samuelson

wake up, mankind

Wake up, Mankind, and see the mess you've made;
You've kicked the covers from a bed of peace.
It's just a dream you've dreamed while sleeping there,
But while you dream world wars can never cease.

Wake up and see the havoc you have wrought;
You with your morbid nightmares and your dreams,
Awake to see the sea of tears they've brought,
Awake to hear a hungry infant's screams,
Awake and see the ashes of a form
Once human, lying charred against the clay,
Or see the fields once filled with golden corn,
Watered in blood from bodies where they lay.

Will you not wake? Oh, will you never see
The trust that is within your power to keep?
Open your eyes, Mankind, and see yourself,
But, no, perhaps 'tis better just to sleep.

—George A. Hawks

the anthill

It was a gravel road, but out here the rain and the snow and the cars and the tractors had all combined to wear away the gravel so that now the road was just barely covered with a thin, worthless layer of fine sand.

Most of the farmers grumbled about the road whenever it rained. But then, that was just when it rained, so what difference did it make? Besides, not very many people used the road—none, in fact, except the farmers. Even when the sun scorched the road, making huge cracks in it, no one griped as long as it wasn't muddy. The farmers hated mud.

Actually, the ants disliked the mud even more than the farmers. Each new rain destroyed their puny, yet herculean, efforts to build their hill.

The road was dry now, and right in the middle of it, the ants had started another hill. At least the ants were persistent. Everytime the rain had ruined their other hills, they re-assembled and commenced their project over again. There was no defeating them, no giving up, no end.

The mound of fresh earth had grown minutely in the middle of the road for the last two weeks. The working ants toiled daily to uproot and carry the tiniest of particles of dirt to the surface of the ground where they quickly made their deposits and then scurried back into the hill for another load.

The process might have continued indefinitely. One of the farmers, however, pulled out of his lane and onto the road with his tractor in sixth. The farmer unconsciously headed straight down the middle of the road.

The tractor squashed the hill and some of the ants.

—Gordon Walter

one

Let me help you;
I am strong.
No, he cried.
I need no one.
He passed on,
All alone.

—Rita A. Brown

my friend

You are my friend.
I treasure our friendship dearly,
For you are special,
Like the first star in an evening sky.
You have taught me many things,
Shared with me precious experiences,
And let me stand close to your heart.
From your understanding
I have learned to build better my own life;
From your quietness, my own poise developed;
And from your free expression of love
Came the release of my own hidden store,
Out of the depths of my being.

Your smile is exciting,
Like the first drops of rain on a thirsty garden.
It soaks down to the deepest roots,
A vital necessity for very existence.
Your eyes speak from within,
Bringing forth a tumbling melody of feeling,
A full chorus of song.
My heart dances to the rhythm,
Its beat reflecting the tempo of the strain.

Your voice sounds with varying intensity,
And as I listen, my own catches its spirit;
The mood is reflected there,
Like a rippled pond that had caught some of the grandeur
of the blue sky
To make richer its own tones.
Oh, fair one, let me walk with you,
Let me sing with you, laugh with you, cry with you!
Let my emotions be dependent on yours;
Let them stir at your insistence and quiet by your soothing.
I want to be your follower, your helper, your cherished companion;
I want to be yours, for I love you.

—Rita A. Brown

this we knew

I saw him;
He was walking.
I listened to him;
He was talking.
Each movement majestic,
Every word delightful.

He saw me
And I smiled.
We talked together
For awhile.
Each smile radiant,

Every word warm.
Many hours
We were happy.
Day by day

Our friendship grew.
All sparkling hours,
Days joyful through.
He touched me
And I trembled;
Held my hand
As we walked on
Through morning, evening,
Midnight, noon.

Sorrows came,
But we conquered.
Love is strong,
And Life will do
With us two forever;
This we knew.

We smiled.

—Rita A. Brown

so who do you think you are?

Phoo!
Said the brontosaurus
And the rest of his crew
Pha!
Said the sabre-toothed tiger
And the Mastadon
Hee! Hee! Hee!
Giggled the Dodo.
But you forget, said the man,
I'm not like you fellows were,
I'm a rational animal.
You're about as rational,
Said the giant tree sloth,
As a Tyrannosaurus.
I resent that, said
The tyrannosaurus.

—Robert Bostrom

so?

There's no question that it is a big city, a big brawling, noisy dirty city, but it can be a large peaceful, quiet city. In fact, this center of population can take on almost any disguise. It spreads inland with its front porch on the Lake. The breezes blow from the Lake and wind themselves through narrow streets and big buildings, through broad avenues and big buildings and through busy cross streets and big buildings.

Making its way through the city, curving so as to miss the tall buildings, there is a river. Because most streets are much too busy to be stopped by a river, they continue their way by bridge. Bridge after bridge spans the water, and during the hours of light, hundreds and even thousands of humans use these structures to complete their business. Yes, that is why they are there, for people to use.

Shortly after four o'clock in the morning, few people make use of the bridges. Just the theatre crowd coming home and the early shift workers going to work. Up the river just a short way, there stands a

bridge not used so much as the others because of a new city highway project which blocks one end of the span. Tonight the bridge is not completely alone, however. A young man stands on the walk-way staring down at the muddy river. He seems fascinated by the ever-moving water. Oh, possibly he is just a young man out for a walk. This is a possibility, but there is a strange expression on his face. All at once his head jerks as an elevated train goes whipping by. As the noise races into the distance, the young body resumes the slumped position. The hair on the hatless head shifts from side to side in the breeze, and the dark brown, expensive-looking coat whips about his legs. The same strange expression still is impressed on his face, but now with tears marking a path down the still face. Not a sound comes from the man, just the tears. Suddenly with a roar, another elevated train rushes by and before its noise is gone another sound mixes with it, an unhuman scream tearing from between tortured lips.

Both sounds leave as quickly as they had come. Now the bridge is alone. The water still moves. The breeze still blows.

But weep no more, my child. So convention had it. So? Was he God Almighty that we should waste our tears, or was he a little known name whose only claim to fame will, in years to come, be only a yellowing picture tucked safely out of sight in an attic? Thou shalt not kill, but shall not thou forget the killed. Ah yes, life is long, life is short, life is living! One ant from an ant-hill, not a precious loss. Rain falls, rain evaporates, more rain falls.

Life is but a gift wrapped in foil and ribbon; accept it blind and worry about the contents later. Life is not a diamond, more a hunk of glass. One gone . . . so . . . ?

—Jack Lamb

gone

No one knew where he went;
Only that he was gone.
Who cared how his time was spent,
Or that he was all alone?

Would they had taken the time to know
Or showed him that they did care,
He would not be where the hopeless go,
Doomed to eternal fear.

—Rita A. Brown

brief interlude

Morning broke on a sunless day. The wind carried across the river a sound of dissonant bells from some half-forgotten tower. It was too early yet for the disturbance of the usual clashing traffic. Only an occasional muffled under-tone of a lumbering truck. He could hear the change in speed of the motor as it began again, disappearing into an absence of sound. He thought he could even sence the nauseating feel of exhaust in the place which should have been his stomach. The hands of the clock pointed to 5:10. What an ungodly hour!

The humid wind of a rain-drenched night blew in over the bed, disarranging the sheaf of papers on his desk as it advanced. He could not remember what day it was, but, in any event, it was too early to get up. Disgusted, he turned the wrong way, twisting the sheet tightly about him. He remembered the slight, dark-haired woman with the sylph-like waist; the fathomless black eyes dreaming beneath the fringe of casual dark bangs. Usually, he avoided women, for he hated their false superficiality. But there was something refreshingly direct about Jeanna.

He had arrived in the crowded little cafe at a busy hour. He hesitated, scanning the full tables between which hurried waiters darted nervously. The atmosphere of tinkling glassware and clicking silver accompanied by the polite, airy chatter of the customers rankled his nerves. Just as he had turned to leave, the dark eyes met and held his. He stood there for what seemed like several minutes. "I—I'm sorry," he manaǵed, and would have hurried on, but she stopped him.

"It's quite all right, really," she said, motioning toward the empty seat opposite her. "Do sit down."

The subtle heaviness of the lilacs pressed in upon him, closing off the surrounding air he no longer desired to breathe. "Consume my heart away—sick with desire and fastened to a dying animal." Was that his voice quoting the strange passage?

She looked up, shocked, from the bit of wilted flower she had been picking apart with gloved hands. The dark eyes burned from the stark-white face. She had shuddered involuntarily. Now the color in her cheeks heightened as she searched his intense visage, the small, close breaths causing the pulse to beat heavily in her slender neck, the rise and fall of her bosom gradually slowing beneath the effort of forced control.

"That was a stupid thing to say. I don't know what possessed me."

"Please don't apologize," she breathed. "It's just that it was so true, so painfully exquisite. I feel as if I'd known you forever. That

magnificent, yet controlled release of the soul from the shackles of life. It is the subdued undertone of a last Beethoven quartet come to life. And yet—it is life."

"Why, I didn't know anyone could express it so perfectly, so completely." He had begun to wonder if this were he, himself, really living for the first time. Or was it someone else? It was the sort of interlude not often recaptured.

The expression on her face shifted, bringing back with it the illusion of reality. She glanced at the ever-present clock, her deep eyes shedding dry tears. "I hope you will forgive me, but I must leave," she said, rising with a lithe quickness.

"I can never forgive you, Miss—"

"Just Jeanna," she returned, pressing his hand in gentle release.

"Next week at this time, Jeanna?" He felt sure that she must have heard. Her lips moved unintelligibly; then she was gone, the acute purple scent of violets lingering.

* * * *

She had never returned. Had the whole experience been a too-real dream? Had he hurt her more than he realized? The thought pierced his annoyed consciousness. 5:30. No use trying to sleep. He would try to forget her. He closed the window, deadening the harsh chords of the bells. Methodically, he picked up the scattered papers and threw on a robe. The newspaper lay damp on the porch. The wind bent the trees as it carried again the loudness of dissonant bells to his sensitive ears. He picked up the paper, unfolding it. The black headline stood out curiously, but a blurred photograph caught his attention instantly. He had not imagined her . . . Jeanna Mason, wife of the well-known actor . . . An overdose of sleeping pills.

—Nancy Samuelson

sunset

Blankly he stared,
Watching the sun
Disappear.

Where does it go,
And why
Am I here?

Rita A. Brown

bootless

Theodorus:

> **Not reasonable that a wise man should hazard himself for his country and endanger wisdom for the company of fools**

We gather together in rectitude
for one who was our
comrade
patriot
countryman

for one who gave himself for
purpose
cause
principle

What thoughts What feelings What sensations
smoke
fire
escape

Wait Hope or maybe pray—such chance or fate
instant
eternity
nonexistence

If you can fill these boots
career
cause
nonexistence

—Patricia Wenzel

a korean lullabye

It was December, 1950, in Seoul, Korea.

I looked at the man lying on the cot.

"Sergeant Krause," I said, "we are only two-thirds alive."

"How's that?" the man got out, two words and a yawn battling.

"We've been up here for about a month. Now, we know where to pick up our C-rations . . . the chow."

I flipped up one finger.

"We know where the latrine is."

Another finger.

"Okay, Krause, what's missing?"

"First thing that comes to my mind," he answered, "is booze."

"Well then, get off your tail, and we'll locate some . . . we can get Oe to help us."

I stuck my head out the door and yelled. Oe was an interpreter who had come up with us from Taegu. He lived in a squad room down the hall of the old school building that was our quarters.

A minute later the Korean bobbed in, grinning.

"Oe-**san**," I began, "where can we get something to drink?"

"Beer?" he asked.

"Anything that will go down and stay down," I specified, "and we got money."

Oe thought a moment and then spoke.

"I know a place where you can buy the rice beer. Or you can buy the western-style beer, Korean made."

Krause woke up.

"Let's take off," he said.

We did.

Oe led us out of the compound and through the maze of shack-shops which surrounded it. We emerged upon what had been an important street in Seoul's business district and proceeded down that rubble-lined thoroughfare.

"How far?" Krause asked, thumbing his carbine sling toward his neck.

The Korean looked thoughtful.

"Two minutes walk," he said.

And then we were there.

The place was the only intact room in the shell of a giant, gray office building. We walked in. Krause and I found a table, unslung our carbines, and sat down. Oe disappeared into the darkness at the rear of the room.

"Not bad," I remarked, viewing the place. "There's no snow in here."

There were perhaps a half-dozen rough-cut tables in the room . . . the kind of tables that limp because of a short leg or two. The chairs were even more crippled. In the middle of the floor squatted a military-type oil stove which had been converted ingeniously into a wood burner by throwing wood in it. Nearby, in the darkness, I could make out two other GI's, a thin man about forty-five years old, and a colored master-sergeant who sat with him. The few others in the place were Korean troops and black-coated civilians.

Oe appeared after a moment bearing a corroded brass teapot and three heavy glasses.

"Rice beer," he announced.

Pouring the stuff, he explained.

"This is a very strong drink which we Koreans enjoy. But you Americans will soon become very drunk."

He grinned.

"I will be here to help you back to camp."

He spread the glasses and swung into a chair.

At first glance, I could have sworn that he had brought us milk. The teapot had yielded a familiar-looking, thickish, white liquid. After a taste, I was willing to swear again that it was milk . . . milk of magnesia . . . with an alcoholic edge. But it wasn't bad. Two pots later, it was excellent, and I told Oe I thought so.

"Oho, ' he laughed, "I told you so. But is it not a very strong drink?"

He shook my hand. He shook Krause's hand. Ten minutes later he was shaking hands with everyone in the place. Finally, he began to shake all over, then he stretched himself out on the floor and departed gracefully. Some hours later, with great joy, we helped him back to the compound.

In the days that followed, Krause and I revisited the place often. Somehow, we could relax cheerfully at the alehouse in spite of its chill and dark drabness. On our second trip we struck an acquaintance with the colored master-sergeant and his older companion. I'm not certain that those two ever left the place. Regardless of when Krause and I arrived, they would be there, settled comfortably beside the roaring stove.

They welcomed us at first, I think, because we were willing to help keep the fire alive. The proprietor of the place saw that there was plenty of wood, but feeding the stove was left to anyone who cherished comfort enough to do so. And then, even when the stove was kept blasting away at its best, the cold crept close enough to freeze any liquid that was spilled more than a few feet from the fire.

The alehouse had another feature—a pleasant one—the Star.

The Star was a tiny, happy-eyed waitress who appeared to be about sixteen years old. The name? I'm not sure where she got it . . . one of us must have hung it on her . . . but it was appropriate. I don't know how a person could have been so constantly happy and yet have so little to be happy about. Her parents had died on the long retreat from the North, and the girl worked now at the inn for a few **won.** She was allowed to sleep there, too, on a bundle of rags which she would unroll near the dying fire after the alehouse closed each night.

I'm not certain about our feelings toward the Star. Outwardly, at least, they were brotherly or fatherly or something close. But still . . . and it was a hard thing to put a finger on . . . there must have been something else in there somewhere. It seemed to me that often I caught the eyes of the others following her furtively . . . that is, when my own were not. Krause, who had no ability at all in covering up his feelings, certainly had ideas.

"Sergeant," he said to me one night as we were making our way to the compound, "I want the truth, now. What do you really think of the Star?"

I had to think it over for a moment.

"I'd sort of like to take her home with me," I said, adding discreetly, "and put her on the mantle where everyone could appreciate her."

"Oh," Krause muttered, plainly disappointed in my answer. "I guess that's about the . . . way it is."

The girl was unmistakably attractive. Her skin was smooth and clear and fragrant-looking, and the full, feminine richness of her body wasn't hidden by the traditional tunic she wore. Her hair, straight and gleaming black, was drawn severely away from her face into a single braid which hung down her back. She tripped through her duties with some efficiency in spite of the rather violent blushing and giggling spells which broke her composure when some observant patron showed interest in her.

One evening the conversation had lagged. The four of us sat around the stove empty-eyed, each thinking his own beery thoughts. Outside, the wind went cursing down the deserted street, and I could see the snow, faintly visible in the growing darkness, slashing horizontally past the front window.

"I knew a guy once . . ." It was Claypool, the older man, who spoke.

"You just don't know how to get along with people," Krause interrupted.

". . . in Osaka," Claypool went on. "He was the cruddiest joker I ever knew. The man thought that a toothbrush was something the army dreamed up for a foot-locker display. And when this guy put on a set of OD's, they didn't come off until they were ready for salvage. Well, his

girl was a real sweetheart. She was nice-looking and sensible. But she had one fault . . . she worshipped this guy. I don't know why or how, but she did. The night before he was shipped back to the states, he came off pass happy as hell. Said he had just told his woman off. Said he told her how happy he was to be leaving that God-forsaken country, and that there was nothing there that he wanted, or that anyone in his right mind would want. He said he told her that gooks had never been any good and never would be any good. . . . And then, a couple of weeks after he went back to the states, the girl had her baby."

The colored master sergeant, whose name was Golly, grumbled. "That cat was a real sentimentalist, wasn't he?" he said.

"He sure was," I agreed. "A real, clean-cut, American kid. I'd sure hate to see the Star get all fouled up like that."

"Any guy who would do that should be shot." Golly was serious.

"By God," Krause whispered with drunken profundity, "that's it, Golly."

Inspired, he reached for his carbine.

"Any lousy hillbilly who comes in here, he shouted, "and starts messing around with the Star . . . gets this!"

He made a violent motion with the carbine, and, unexpectedly, the thing went off.

Instantly, every man in the place was on his feet. There was a crash of upsetting tables and breaking glass. Everyone I could see stood in a kind of a running crouch, necks craned, searching for the source of the shot so they might know which way to run. When they noticed Krause sheepishly inspecting his weapon, they began to relax. Someone laughed nervously and there was a screech of chairs as the men resumed their places. Glaring at Krause, we sat down and ordered a quartet of beers.

Oddly, especially after his vehement outburst that night, Krause was the one who stepped out of line later. He was in a foul mood one evening about a week after the carbine incident. His eyes had taken on that wild look . . . the way they always did when he was about to do something irrational.

"What that bitch needs is a good man," he blurted out suddenly, with a gesture toward the Star.

Golly straightened in his chair.

"Do you think you can qualify?" he asked threateningly.

Krause looked at the big Negro. He started to say something, but changed his mind. Instead, he sat there and glowered.

A minute later, he announced that he was leaving.

"Yeah," he said, "I don't feel too great tonight, guys."

He arose, slinging his carbine, and headed for the door.

Suspicious, we watched him leave. Then, dimly in the darkness,

we saw him pass the front window. That could mean only one thing. He had no intention of going to the compound . . . unless he was going to circle the world first, walking in the wrong direction like he was. He was making his way to the rear entrance of the inn . . . the entrance the Star used when she would empty the glasses she took from the tables.

Golly stood up.

"I'll handle this," he said, moving silently toward the rear door.

I couldn't see what was happening in the darkness back there, but I heard Golly open the door. There was a short scuffle and the colored man reappeared pushing Krause ahead of him. Reaching the circle of light provided by the lidless stove, the big Sergeant slammed Krause into the wall so hard that chunks of plaster showered down all over the place.

"Sergeant Krause," Golly boomed, stepping back and regarding him, "how old are you?"

"Twenty-one," the fearful Krause stammered.

"Well, why don't you sit down and act it?" Golly concluded with venom.

Slowly then, Krause pulled himself away from the wall and took his chair.

When Krause and I returned to the compound that night, we walked into a flurry of activity. A fleet of six-by-sixes was lined up beside the school building, and the unit equipment was being moved into them as fast as GI backs could carry it.

"What's happening?" Krause inquired of a pair of legs wobbling under a bulky crate.

"Moving up to Taegu in the morning," came a voice, breathless and muffled.

The crate toppled onto a nearby truck, and the legs straightened into a man.

"The Chinese are getting too close," he said. "They are just outside Munsan now."

As our convoy moved across the vast and dusty Han river bed the following morning, I gazed back toward Seoul. The broken city lay quiet and forsaken in its mountain citadel. I bid a silent goodbye to the alehouse and to the Star. The reality of the place and the people I met there was already beginning to fade in my mind.

* * * *

It was more than a year later, in the spring of 1952, that I saw Seoul again. When the U. N. forces moved northward after the Chinese offensive, our unit by-passed Seoul and established itself farther north. Then the decision was made to set up a unit rear in the capital city, and

senior members of the outfit were given priority to volunteer. Krause and I were among the first to turn our names in.

I found Krause sitting outside the familiar school building the evening after we had unloaded in Seoul.

"How about it, Krause?" I asked. "Is it still there?"

"It's got to be," he answered. "I'd hate to think I volunteered for all this work for nothing."

He stood up and glanced around.

"I think we could take off now and never be missed," he said quietly.

"Let's go," I concurred.

On the street outside, Krause addressed me.

"You know Sergeant, I pulled a lot of goofy stuff at the inn."

"You did, Krause."

"No more, though. I'm a cooler guy now . . . a much cooler guy than I was a couple of years ago."

"Sure, Krause, you're cooler," I said.

Well, the place was still there. And it was like coming home. When we walked in, there sat Claypool and Golly, looking familiarly nonchalant.

"Why aren't you guys out winning the war?" Claypool asked with a grin.

"We were screwing up so much that they kicked us out," Krause countered.

We shook hands all around and made it four at the table. There was a broad silence.

"Is the Star still here?" Krause blurted nervously.

Golly glanced at Claypool.

"No," he said, after a long pause.

"Oh."

More silence.

"Anybody know what happened to her?" I spoke.

"Works at some GI place," Golly answered. "Drops in here once in a while though, to visit the old man who runs the alehouse."

"Same old Star?" Krause asked him.

"Same old Star."

"That's a lot better than working here," Krause ventured bravely.

"That's for sure," I said.

It was a dull evening after that. The beer tasted flat and Golly and Claypool seemed remote. But Krause was loading up. He drank about three beers to every one the rest of us ordered and soon was drunk and sullen.

"Do you think she'll be in tonight?" he asked thickly.

"Who?" asked Claypool innocently.

"Who?" Krause snarled, "Who? What kind of a question is that? What kind of a stupid question is that?"

"I doubt it, Sergeant, I doubt it," Golly said quietly.

Krause relaxed, breathing heavily. He continued to glare at Claypool.

It was then that the proprietor walked up to the older man and whispered into his ear. Claypool nodded, sweeping all of us with his gaze. He arose and followed the Korean to the rear door.

A moment later, I heard voices coming from the outside, through the open door at the rear of the place. One voice was feminine. It had a familiar sound.

Krause frowned and looked at me.

"What the hell is going on here?" he grimaced.

Golly leaned forward in his chair and grabbed Krause's arm.

"Where you guys been since '50?" he asked loudly, pacing his words.

Krause, weaving around in his chair trying to get a view of the rear door, did not seem to hear. Golly pulled on the man's sleeve.

"Man here asks a question . . ." he began again.

Krause jerked his arm away.

"What the hell are you doing, Golly?" he shouted in exasperation. "What's going on there?"

Golly dropped his hands resignedly and looked at the floor.

"I best tell you now," he said.

Krause was in no frame of mind for one of Golly's tedious explanations, however. In an instant, he was out of his chair and headed for the rear door.

Sensing violence, I arose and followed, Golly at my side. What I saw from the doorway almost threw me.

Standing out there, in a brilliant splash of moonlight, was the Star. Claypool was beside her, his arm encircling her waist. This was a different Star. Her hair was stylishly bobbed, and she was dressed in the best that an American mail-order house could provide. The implication was obvious . . . she was a GI's "woman" and her keeper stood beside her.

Before Golly and I could stop him, Krause was out the door. Still on the run, he caught the surprised Claypool under the chin with the heels of both hands in an uppercut, then he proceeded with looping rights and lefts. There was a scream from the Star, and, as Golly and I raced in, she tried to step between the two, hammering ineffectually at Krause's burly shoulder with her baby fists.

I reached Krause first and yanked him backwards. Arms outspread, Golly moved between him and the unfortunate Claypool, who lay on the ground, bleeding profusely. The Star knelt beside him, sobbing.

Krause seemed spent. He stood dumb and motionless, his arms hanging limp at his sides.

Golly faced him.

"I tried to tell you, punk, but you were too stupid to listen, I guess. This here Claypool," he pointed to the man on the ground, "is married to the Star."

Krause seemed not to understand.

"He helped her and the old man get to Pusan when we left Seoul, and they got acquainted, you might say. Soon as his papers are okayed, they'll have a stateside ceremony and take off for the USA. Does that penetrate?"

Krause stood, dully comprehending. He turned then, as Golly stooped to help Claypool to his feet, and walked stiffly into the building.

I followed, feeling sick inside.

There wasn't a coherent thought in my head as I picked up my carbine. I heard Krause fumbling with his weapon, and I can remember that we crowded each other as we went out the door.

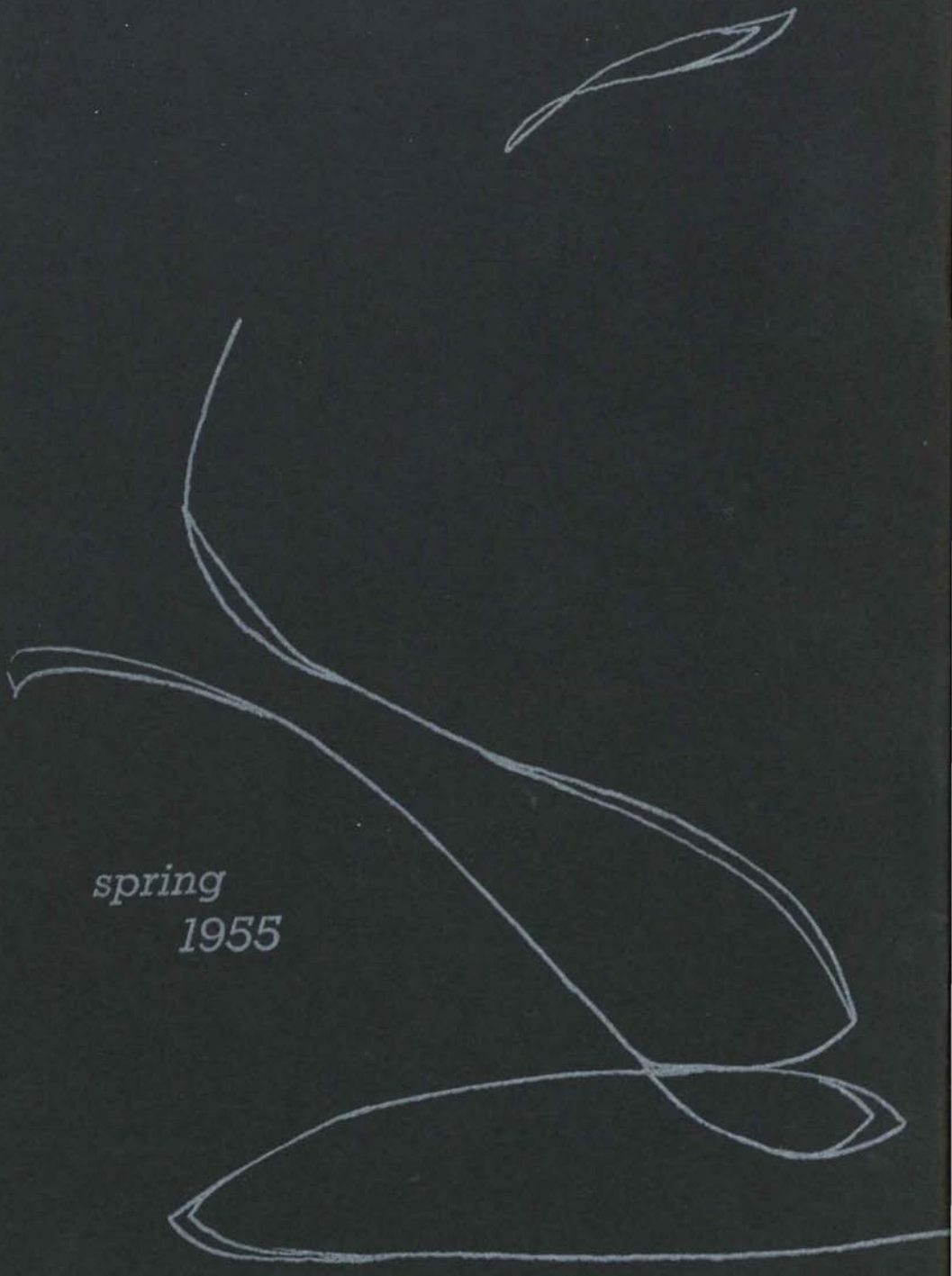
The path that led to the compound seemed long. Neither of us spoke a word. I started counting my steps once . . . but my boot-squeaks kept getting mixed up with Krause's.

—Lyle K. McDole

lost star

The moon is green cheese he said, and i believed him. i came,
i saw, i came
This is the day they give pennies away
Follow the Shadow through the valley but look alive and forget,
forget the star
This is the day they give pennies away
Punch the time clock and pick up the check but stop not to
look between
This is the day they give pennies away
Don't turn for you might not like what you see: shut mouth,
clamped tongue, tin star
This is the day they give pennies—
Run from the crooked mirror in the mad fun house: i came,
i saw, i came
This is the day they give yes
This is the day (yawn)
This is . . . ?

—Nancy Samuelson



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