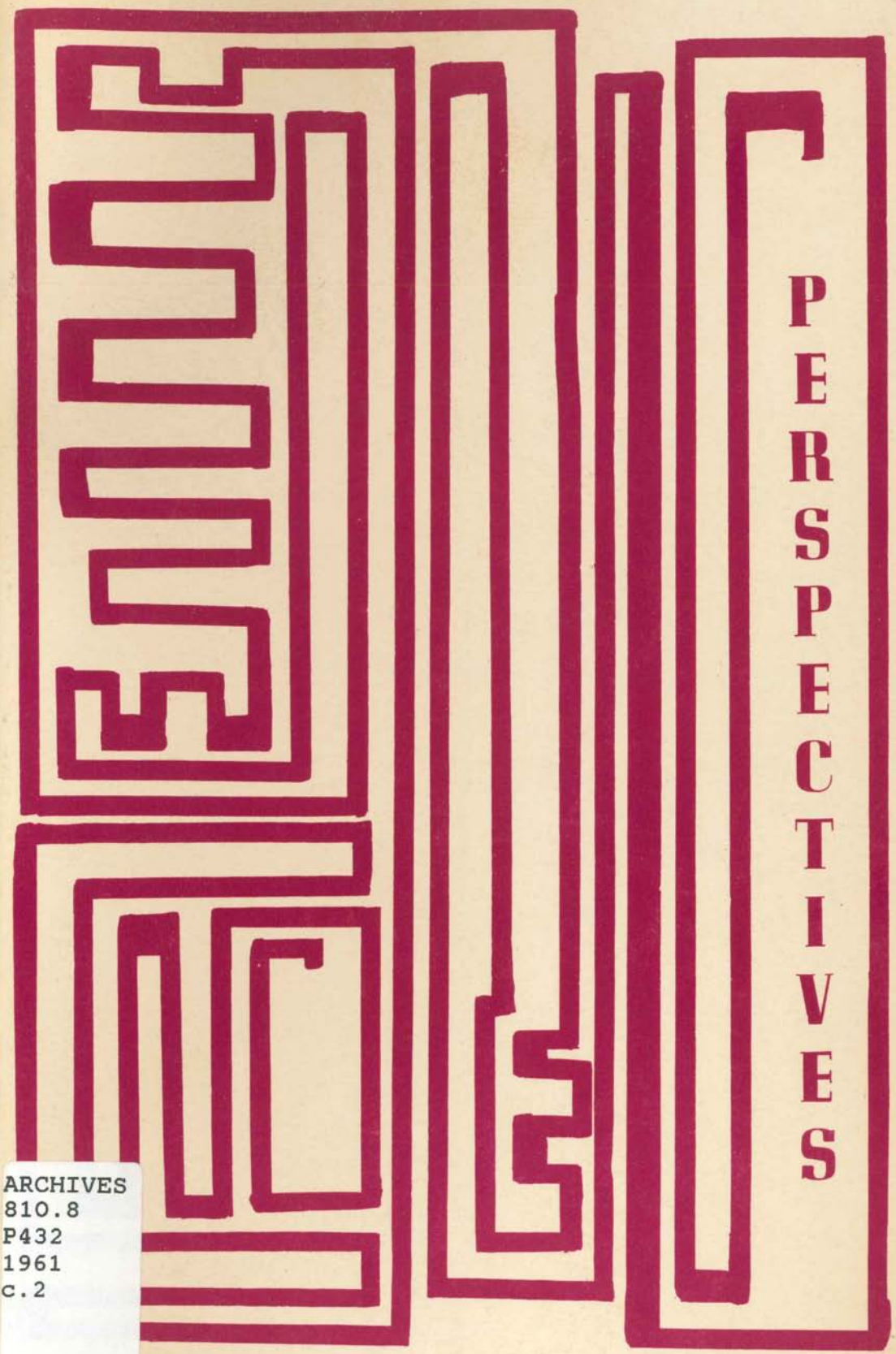

PERSPECTIVES

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Thy Will Be Done

Loren Andrews

World War Three had passed. All was gone. All that mankind had moulded and developed was gone.

In one remote corner of one of the continents, a small band of humans had survived through the disaster. It was now their task to build the new order to reproduce and to be the new roots of the human race.

The tiny band had gathered in a green meadow far away from the industrial-age cities. Everyone was silent. Finally, a man came forward and spoke.

"We, by the grace of God, have been chosen to replenish this evil world that has been. It now becomes our task to build a new order—one of goodness and justice, one that has taken into consideration all of mankind's previous mistakes. It is with this thought that I now pronounce on you our new order.

"You will all be workers of this new order—workers to build our world anew. There will be one ruler. His rule will be for all because of all men had political rights, we can see that there would be many different ideas. The only way to have one idea triumph over another is to have the power to see that your idea wins. This, my people, would lead to war. So, as you can see, in this new order we must have only one idea in government, lest we destroy ourselves again."

The group cheered wildly.

"There must be no religion of gods because nations in the past have marched against nations for the glory of their gods. We will worship the order. All will pray to it for strength. We will praise it for our daily bread. We shall build a temple to our way of life. No man shall worship a god—only the new order.

"There must be no family. For into this unit fall the seeds of rebellion. Father teaches son—and son teaches son—hatred. The women bear their offspring to be taught the foolish prejudices of their parents.

"Our new order will be such that no child shall be denied the privilege of being taught correctly—to live and die, for one thing. There will be no rest for those who break this law. We'll rid ourselves of the false system forever.

"There shall be freedom—freedom of obedience. All shall obey without question."

An angry voice spoke from the group. "Oh, foolish man! You will never keep mankind under you! Man by nature is free, and you will not be able to stop this."

Some of the group shouted in support.

"Silence that traitor," said the leader. "We cannot tolerate such stupidity. The new order must come to be at all cost. Kill him! Kill him!"

The groans and cries of mankind again resounded from the earth. Man battled against man, but the future of the world was at stake. Man against man, women, and children—beat each other with clubs until they were beyond recognition. Blood covered the grassy meadow.

"We have won! The group shall not be ruled by one selfish man."

The group, cut in half, now numbered less than thirty.

The new leader spoke. "We shall educate the children to the ultimate. Education will save the world. We shall teach math and science, and they all

will go to school. They shall be well rounded. As soon as they graduate from high school, they shall spend a year in nothing but social activities. This will give the women a chance to get their husbands. This time will be dedicated to running for office and serving on committees. We then rid the colleges of all husband-hunters and socializers. The next four years will be spent on nothing but studies."

The group cheered.

Then the leader shouted. "Who will build the buildings? Who will dig the sewers and carry the dung to our fields to make them fertile?"

"Not I."

"Not I."

"Someone must," said the leader.

Again the group began beating each other with their clubs.

When the battle ceased, there were only three left—a woman and two men.

"We must fight to the death for this woman because two men can not both exist if there is only one woman."

Then man began this final battle so man could begin the new order. The struggle was desperate. Then one threw a rock, missed his enemy, and hit the woman. She fell dead.

The final battle was over! The new order began.

To Grandma

Loren Andrews

"Come my pet, come to Mommy. There, that's right, my sweet little lamb duck. Come, Miah, my darling bird. There, yes, grandma loves you. Now go back to your cage. That's right."

"My, my. How much you look like a crow. If I'd trim your beak, you'd look exactly like a crow. Then I wouldn't call you Miah anymore, but crow. Oh, I hurt your feelings. Oh, Sweeter, Nanner is sorry. You love only me and I shouldn't hurt you. I bet I'm the only bird owner in this city that can leave the windows open and not worry about my darling flying away."

"Awk—Hello, Joe."

"Nanner, can I have a glass of milk?"

"I should say not. Your mother will be home in about two hours and when she comes, I'm telling her on you. You shouted and frightened my little Miah. Really, Jason, don't you think you could have a little consideration for someone else? If I had only to stay in bed and be fifteen again, I'd be very thankful."

"Now, don't start that sniffling again. I just can't bear this. Your mother and I could live here quite comfortably if we didn't have you here to burden us."

"If you were only twisted or something, but, no, it's worse than that. You had to be born completely helpless. Really Jason, you contribute less to this house than Miah. At least he can move, but you have no arms or legs."

"We can't even have company in this house, because you'd frighten them. Yes, Jason, it's true and I think it's time you knew it."

"Now stop that crying. We must all face our plight in life and if we haven't the courage, then we have no right to live. There ought to be a law . . ."

"Stop that weeping this instant."

"Think how lucky you are that we let you stay here. Middle class people can't afford the things we've given you. Your mother never would care for you. She would just send you away. You see, you wouldn't even be allowed to stay here if it wasn't for me. You must be nicer to me or I will leave and then you'll have no one."

"I don't know. I've always felt rather motherly. I always have liked to care for the helpless. But you're such a burden."

"Awk, such a burden."

"What do you mean, you have to number one? Jason, I just can't carry that stinky bottle. You'll have to wait until your mother gets home."

"No, Jason, I will not read to you."

"I'm not an old scarecrow and sixty-five is not old. I'm going to tell your mother on you. I'll fix you good."

"Awk, awk."

That's right, Miah, you tell that mean little boy what you think of him."

"You want to come to Momma? Oh, that's so cute. Yes, I love you."

"Oh, Loverbun, you poo pooed on my arm. Oh, don't feel so bad. I'll clean it up with my hankie. That is all right, Miah."

"Stop laughing, you devil. You ugly helpless devil and so uncouth."

" Awk, helpless and uncouth."

"Why, Sweety, you speak better than Jason."

"You impudent child. Stop that sniffling or I'll beat you until you do stop."

"Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop!"

"Jason? Jason! Huh? Jason, answer me!"

Free Is The Nestling

Ruth Chute

Nadine drew a last drag from the cigarette and crushed it mechanically in the red ceramic ash tray. For a moment she sat there staring at the ash tray and its contents. Half a dozen cigarettes in less than an hour. Too much—she couldn't afford to keep it up at that pace. But it was this confounded sitting around and just *waiting* with nothing to do to keep her busy—that's what drove her almost batty and kept the ash tray filled. Just sit here in this dingy, dirty, little apartment and *wait.* For what? For some knotheaded editor to look down from his throne and say, in a deep, kindly, fatherly tone, "We like your work, Miss Henderson. Our check is enclosed."? Ha! Don't be a dunce, she told herself angrily. Look at your pile of rejection slips. Dream a dream like that, and you're only riding for a fall. Better not to think about it at all, but it was hard not to.

She got up from the lumpy, faded couch and jammed her fists deep in the pockets of her worn tan pants. She looked about in distaste.

The room was fairly large, but badly lighted because the huge maple tree outside blocked the only window. She lived on the top floor of the

house, and the ceiling sloped crazily in places where the roof angled. The furniture had a cast-off unwanted appearance, and no piece matched another. The once-bright red print slipcover of the couch vied with the plumes and flowers in the wallpaper. The rug was the only thing that didn't clamor for attention; it was a sad, tired brown, worn by a steady procession of changing tenants.

What was there about this hole that had looked so charming about a couple of months ago? An attitude, she decided. An Idea. Two months ago, she'd been naively hopeful, radiant with aspirations, eager for independence. Now she was wide awake in the cold, cruelly aware of reality. Yes, she'd waked up all right, just as if someone had slapped her on the face.

So there it is, kid. Two months ago, you were filled with an Idea. You wanted to get to know the World. You had a message. Well, you found out what the world is like, and it's not pretty, is it? And the only message that gets through is the sound of your stomach growling. Not a very pretty picture, is it? Write that up, why don't you? Be another Jack London—make the world weep with your tale of woe! Rubbish! She kicked at the couch with a sneaker-clad foot.

"Ouch! Oh darn!" she muttered, remembering too late that the drooping fringe hid a sturdy wooden leg. She rubbed the aching toe against her other leg.

Nadine stalked out to the tiny kitchen, jiggled the coffee pot to see if there was any left, and lit the gas under it. She rinsed a heavy white mug under the faucet, filled it with coffeee, and carried it to her writing corner in the living room.

The ancient L. C. Smith typewriter sat on the battered oak table, surrounded by disorderly piles of paper and scattered pencils and erasers. The wastebasket overflowed with crumpled-up papers, ideas that hadn't come to fruit.

Nadine pushed the papers to one side to make room for her coffee cup. She felt for her cigarettes in the pocket of the heavy wool plaid shirt she wore—a welcome hand-me-down from her older brother, Douglas. She'd brought the shirt with her when she left home back in Iowa. It was somehow a comfort to wear it, a tie to her life back there. The breaking away had been neither easy nor painless.

"What do you want to go traipsing off to California for?" her father had demanded when Nadine told them of her plans. "Can't you do your writing closer to home, if you think that's what you have to do?"

He just couldn't see that she had to get away from them all. She certainly didn't hate them, heaven only knew, but she had to see things for herself, try to see them as they really were, and not be forever guided by someone else's thinking.

Her mother had taken the news a little more calmly.

"Of course we'll miss you terribly," she told Nadine. "But it's your life and your decision to make. Just remember, you can always come home if things don't work out to suit you."

So here she was, in her second month in her miserable little $40-a-month, third-floor walk-up hole, wishing with all her heart that she could drop everything and run home. But she couldn't do that, and she knew it and was all the more miserable for knowing it.

Even if her father said nothing about her venture, she still couldn't give up and quit yet. It would mean having to admit that she had failed, and she couldn't bring herself to face that fact just yet. By keeping doggedly at her work, she could avoid the inevitable bitter truth—that she was an utter flop as a writer.

Nadine gulped the strong, hot coffee and made a face. You're also a no-good at making coffee, she told herself. But it helped to clear her mind a little, and she could look at herself more realistically.

It's time to take stock of myself, she decided. Here I am, a 21-year-old girl who thinks she wants to write. Assets? One L. C. Smith typewriter, 21 years old, a month's rent ahead on the hole, assorted clothing and the like, and—she paused to do some hasty figuring on a scrap of paper—a bank account of $65.24. With careful planning, she could easily go for another month or so. Liabilities? Nothing tangible, really. Only things like lack of experience.

Nadine stopped to reflect on this last bit. Maybe that was the root of all her difficulties—a lack of experience in almost everything including life itself. What did she really have to write about? Only her own life, which had been shaped by school and family.

Nadine realized the importance of the break she'd made to come to California. Oh, it needn't have been California. Any place would have been all right. Her father had had a point, but she hadn't seen it. The main thing was that she had to get out and see things for herself and not listen to someone else telling about what *he* had seen.

But it didn't happen overnight. She knew now that she'd expected too much too soon. You absorbed it gradually, almost without knowing it.

Which brings us up to now, she thought, and the fact that I'm hungry—or soon will be. Obviously you can't keep body and soul together by writing, so you'll have to think of something else. You may have to swallow a lot of pride, old girl, but for a while at least, you'll have to put the Idea on the shelf and turn to more menial labor.

It was surprising how even this small decision made her plight seem less desperate. Nadine remembered seeing three or four ads in yesterday's paper for secretarial help. She was a good typist—she certainly should be able to fill one of those jobs. Today she would seek work, and if necessary, tomorrow and the day after.

And she really wouldn't be neglecting her Idea. She'd have a chance to soak up life, storing away her knowledge for future use.

With a lighter heart than she'd had for weeks, Nadine straightened up the clutter of papers on the table, dropped the cover on the typewriter, and gave it a pat. Goodby, old friend, but not for long. She picked up the empty coffee mug and walked out to the kitchen.

Martha

Ruth Chute

The insistent rapping at the front door roused Martha from her light sleep, and she sat up quickly on the bed. Better go see who it was—guess they won't give up. She yawned as she got up from the bed and shuffled out to the living room in her flopping bedroom slippers.

As she moved to the door, she glimpsed the short stout figure on the door step through the curtained window and stopped short. Oh, no! That looked like the welfare lady—she never could remember her name. Why did they always have to come around when you least expected them? The house was a mess, and she was a mess and—she wished she had enough nerve to not go to the door.

But she pushed the impulse down—after all, the welfare lady was a busy person, and she couldn't just come to see people when it was convenient for *them*. Martha quickly smoothed her mussed hair and straightened her dress and opened the door.

"Hello, Mrs. Hudson." Olive McIlhenney stood on the narrow step, warmly buttoned up in her heavy brown coat. "I was just about to leave. I began to think no one was home."

"No—I was lying down for a while." Martha smiled nervously. "My back's been bothering me again, so I was just lying down. Oh—don't stand here in the cold. Please come inside."

Olive McIlhenney stepped into the small living room. She tried not to look too obviously at the clutter of papers and magazines and toys all around her.

"You can sit down here if you like, Mrs. MacKelley." Martha scooped up the newspapers from the seat of the big chair.

"McIlhenney," Olive corrected her. "Thank you." She gingerly sat down on the chair, but did not lean back. She wished the woman would stop flitting about so—it made her nervous. It seemed that many of her clients acted like this when she called on them Briefly, she wondered why.

Olive opened her notebook. "How have you been, Mrs. Hudson. Have things been going well for you? Now then, if we can just quickly run through your household expenses—I hope you have your receipts handy?"

"Uh—yes, I think I know just where I put them." Martha went to the desk and rummaged in the pigeonholes until she found the large envelope in which she kept her light bills and the grocery tickets and the fuel oil bills. Olive quickly flipped through them and jotted the figures down in her notebook.

"Mmhmm. Mrs. Hudson, I see that your food bills are running up again—you're creeping over the line, and you know that just takes it away from some other item in the budget."

She looked earnestly at Martha through her round rimless glasses.

"I know it's hard, Mrs. Hudson, but try to remember that it's not like being on your own with a good income—you have to watch the budget all the time. There just isn't room for luxuries."

A silent protest rose inside Martha, but she said nothing. It *was* hard, trying to make do on what little the welfare check amounted to, but nobody had any ideas on how to do it any better.

Olive remembered to ask about the children. Stress family relationships, the manual said. Remember that maintaining family unity is essential.

Martha's face lighted up as she spoke of the children.

"Janie's teacher says she's doing much better now in reading. She brings books home from the library, and she reads out loud to us a lot. I think that helps, don't you? Oh—and Freddie's started doing long division in arithmetic now. He says he likes it—can you imagine that? I'm real proud

of him. You know, I kind of hope he'll take after his father. Fred was real handy at figures—no telling how far he could have gone with it if that sickness hadn't come on him so suddenly."

She got up from her chair and rummaged in the desk again.

"I've got the pictures of the children they had taken at school. Would you like to see them?

Olive took the pictures and glanced at them briefly.

"Very nice, Mrs. Hudson. You have two very fine children."

She handed the pictures back to Martha and zipped up her notebook.

"Well, I really must be going," she said. "Several more calls to make this afternoon."

She buttoned up her coat and settled her brown felt hat more firmly on her head. Martha walked to the door with her.

"I'm so glad you dropped in, Mrs. McKilney. I don't get much chance to visit with anyone. I'm sorry the house is in such a mess today, but my back's been so bad lately I just can't do much housework at a time."

"Well, goodby, Mrs. Hudson. I'll see you again in six months. And if you have any problems before then, just call the office." Olive walked down the steps and over to her car.

"Goodby," Martha called.

She shut the door, and the pain started in her back again. There were always so many things she intended to tell the welfare lady when she came, but somehow she always forgot them when they were visiting, and anyway, the welfare lady was so awfully busy with all the other cases she had and the calls to make—it was no wonder she never had time to stay very long. She'd meant to ask her what she thought about flu shots for the children. Martha wondered if they were worth the expense, but she decided not to bother her at the office—they were so awfully busy there—no use burdening them with her little problems. It wasn't too important anyway. She'd try to remember to ask her the next time she came to the house.

The pain in her back nagged again. She decided to try the hot water bottle on it and rest a while before Janie and Freddie came home from school. They would have something exciting to tell her, she was sure. My, but she was proud of them. If Fred could only see them now.

The Disorganized Repairman

David Crumley

Martin Everyday was seated at the breakfast table. His morning eggs cooled in front of him, shielded by the folds of an open newspaper. He was dimly aware of words that came as from a distance, as pebbles cast against the cliff of news.

"Martin, why must you read that newspaper at breakfast every morning? The very least you could do is wait until after your coffee. Every morning, every single morning . . . "

Martin did not actually hear the words. He was engrossed in an article titled, "Your Government, a Study in Team Organization," authored by a very wise and respected pundit.

The echo continued. "I get up every morning, slave over your eggs and orange juice, do all I know how to do, just to see that your toast is right. You! What do you do? You hide behind . . ."

Martin was slightly bothered by the mosquito song from his wife. Hilda could be persistent at times. Martin was much more concerned with the lesson to be learned from his newspaper. It comforted him to know that his nation was in the hands of an efficient team. Martin could not discover, from the article, exactly who were the members of that team. Neither could he ascertain what they were trying to do, nor how they were going to do it. The article pointed out only two things. There was a team, and it was efficient. That was enough for Martin.

The distaff solo was not ended. "Martin, you cannot continue to ignore me like this. You've got to make me a part of your life, to share with me all the ups and downs. After all, Martin, we are two married people, and that makes us a team!"

Those words jarred Martin from his inattention. He wondered at their meaning, and if it could be that he was unfair to Hilda. He not only read a newspaper during breakfast, but there were other times and things which he did not share with his wife. Martin considered this, and decided that he had, indeed, been unfair. He resolved to, in the future, include her in every portion of his existence, to create a life in which they would be together.

Martin made apology to his spouse, in a scene that was both emotional and lengthy. When he finally departed to catch his morning commuter, he had a pleased and happy Hilda, and he was late. At his business, he coupled that tardiness with a forenoon of inactivity. He was so full of ideas on how to realize the marital team that he could not bring himself to his duties as a jewelry repairman. The inaction did not escape notice. It was shortly after lunch when Martin received a call from his employer.

Mr. Harness spoke to Martin in his office. "I see that you were late this morning. I intended to overlook that violation of employee policy, but your attitude today will not let me. You know it isn't our practice to continue a man who fails to show the proper spirit." Mr. Harness stepped close to Martin, placed an arm around the repairman's shoulders. "You've been with us a long time, my boy, and you know that it takes all of us to make things go. Now you return to your job, and remember," he slapped the words onto Martin's back, "We must all play our position on the team!"

The workman returned to his repair-bench. He thought over Mr. Harness' lecture. Martin knew that he should feel uplifted, but he did not. Martin felt small, something less than a man.

Martin, so full of resolution that morning, did not hurry to his wife at day's end. He didn't know why, when he left work, but he felt he needed a drink. He entered a cocktail bar, and one by one, Martin had several drinks. Then he became intrigued by the conversation of two men who were seated next to him. He didn't catch all of the words. He heard only phrases, like, "We must create an image . . . the consumer . . . status symbol . . . all facets . . . the campaign . . ."

Martin did not understand that conversation. He had no idea of its meaning, but the many obscure words were captivating. Martin stayed, eavesdropping, until the two men prepared to leave. He heard clearly the final words of the older, more aggressive of the two men. "All right, that sets up our complete advertising campaign. Now all we have to do is tie everything

together, see that everyone works as a team!" The familiar words struck home to Martin. They reminded him of the things he was supposed to be doing, and that he was not doing them. He rushed from the cocktail bar, and ran to catch his train.

The train was not crowded. Martin stared out his window, but the many drinks had placed him in a sociable mood. When the conductor punched his ticket, Martin attempted to engage the man in conversation. For want of a better beginning, he made reference to the only subject which he knew to be of common interest. "This is a very nice railroad." The man did not answer, but Martin lisped more alcoholic words. "No, I mean it. And you, sir, run a very nice train."

The conductor showed Martin an indulgent smile as he moved away. "Well, now, that's very nice of you. You know though, I'm just a cog in the team." The conductor settled in another part of the train.

Martin would gladly have talked further, but the man did not return. Martin satisfied himself, instead, by letting their short communication echo and re-echo in his head. It continued to do this, without let-up, until Martin arrived at his station.

Martin entered his living room to an immediate tirade from Hilda. "Martin! Where in the world have you been? You had me worried sick! Not only that, but you know very well that tonight, of all nights, was the meeting of our Lawn and Garden Planning Association. That's a very important organization, and we should all get behind it, be loyal, working members of the . . ."

He shot her.

Destiny

Joanne Johnston

Sumac flamed the rugged slopes, tinged deep brown by the summer sun. Maple trees dotted the hill, which rose, sharp and spur-like, to crest above low-hanging autumn clouds. Sunlight, slanting through the dappled maple leaves, bronzed the sorrel coats of two saddled horses, flecked with sweat, heaving, standing with reins down. The large sorrel, raw-boned and shaggy, shifted restlessly. The other horse, wiry, small, hungry-ribbed, sniffed the wind and nickered.

A few yards away, two boys sat in the yellow-bleached bunch grass. Sharp-roweled spurs gleamed in the sun as the smaller towheaded boy sprawled flat on the ground.

"Say, Jimmy, them sure is some spurs you gotcher self," said the black-haired boy. "Whatcha gonna use 'em for?"

"You know, Sam," Jimmy chuckled. "I'm going to train Fleas to be a ropin' horse."

"Aw, don't horse me around, Jimmy," Sam's black eyes laughed. "You know your Dad says she's too small."

"Well, he doesn't know. Anyway, she weighs 900. I took her to the stockyards in Sioux City once, and she weighs all of 900."

"Yeh, Jim, but 900 ain't heavy 'nough for ropin' steers."

"Who said steers? I'm going to rope calves."

"Yeh, Jim, but there ain't much call t' rope calves on a ranch, 'cept at brandin'. It's the steers what need doctorin' all year 'round."

"Well, I'm not going to stay on a ranch all my life, you know. I'm going to rodeo."

"*Rodeo?* You'd better not letcher Dad catch ya sayin' that!"

"He doesn't have to know. Anyway, Buzz says I'll make a good roper."

"Aw, what's that old saddle tramp know 'bout ropin', anyway?"

"Buzz isn't a saddle tramp." Jimmy sprang up from the ground. "At least, he hasn't always been a saddle tramp. He used to rodeo."

"Boy, you'd better not letcher Dad find *that* out!"

"Dad doesn't know," Jimmy huffed, "and he isn't going to far as I'm concerned. That is, unless *you* tell him."

"You know me better'n that, Jim."

"O.K."

"But I still say he couldn'ta been much good or he wouldn'ta turned saddle tramp."

"He *was* good! He just got hurt, that's all."

"Yeh, that's whatcher Dad says. He says every fool what rides rodeo ends up gettin' throwed by a crazy-headed bronc or gored by one a them Brahmas. He'd sure brand that Buzz 'n make a stray outa him quick if'n he knew he was a rodeo tramp."

"Buzz isn't a tramp! Why, one year he even won the title!"

"What title?"

"World's champion calf roper, that's what!"

"Well, your Dad still 'ud run him offa the place if he knew. 'Specially since your brother Tom got it from that bull in Cheyenne."

"Tom would have made champion if he hadn't been killed! You should have seen him ride, Sam. He'd sit those bulls like he was riding an old Shetland pony. He could spin faster than any spinning bull, and everybody that saw him ride said he had championship class."

"Yeh. Well, you'd better not letcher Dad catch ya, that's all." Sam admired the spurs. "Can I touch 'em, Jimmy?"

"Sure." Jimmy proudly lifted a booted foot.

"Hey!" Sam jerked his finger back and grimaced. "Them rowels sure is sharp!"

"Yep," Jimmy smiled. "That's what makes old Fleas get out and stretch."

"Well, you sure did outrun me," Sam laughed. "And on that pint-sized mare, too!"

"Don't you say it, Sam!"

"I gotta say it. I can't help it. Nobody else in the whole state a South Dakota rides a mare—leastways, not when his Dad's got plenty a good geldings."

"Darn it, Sam, you know Dad won't let me use his Quarter horses. He's afraid I'll use 'em for ropin'."

"Ain't that one on him? He'd never figure you could do much offa that little mare, huh?"

"Nope."

"Only, Jim, there's one thing bothers me."

"What's that?"

"That little mare. Ain't she kinda nervous t' be usin' spurs on?—Leastways, them spurs?"

"She can take it."

"You seen much rodeo since your brother got it, Jim?"

"Dad won't go, but I snuck off to one at Deadwood once."

"Yeh? Didja have fun?"

"Sure. And I met Tibbs."

"You mean Casey Tibbs?"

"Yep."

"Wow! How many times has he been champ now?"

"I stopped counting, Sam. More than anybody ever, Buzz says."

"Well, I guess I'd better be gettin' home t' chores, Jim. Meetcha here tomorrow." Sam rose, caught his big sorrel gelding, and swung lightly into the saddle.

"Hey, Sam, wait a minute! Let's have a race."

"Now, Jim, these horses are pretty done in."

"What's the matter, Sam? Afraid my mare can beat you?"

"No *mare* can beat old Baldy!"

"That's the fellow, Sam. Now, it's about as far to my place as to yours, so we'll race for home, and if I phone your place first, I win."

"O. K., Jim. But no scrubby mare can beat old Baldy."

"Scrubby, huh? We'll see about that!"

"Hey, Jim, I'll make you a *real* bet."

"What?"

"If your mare don't beat me, you'll have t' promise never t' rodeo. If your mare makes it, I'll give ya a gelding from my Dad's string."

"That's a bet!" Jimmy vaulted onto his mare. "Ready . . . Set . . . Turn 'em out!"

Sam's gelding started with a powerful surge. Jimmy slapped the spurs to his mare. "Run 'em down, Fleas!"

The mare shot ahead and flashed past the big gelding. "See, Sam!" Jimmy hooted. He dug the mare again. The sharp rowels gleamed in the sun.

"Hey, Jim! Look out!"

The mare coiled like a tight spring, shot sunward, and uncoiled as she hit the ground.

"Jim, your spur's tangled! Hang on!" Sam spurred his gelding toward the crazed mare, but reined in with a jerk as Jim fell half off. His spur tangled in the cinch. The mare lurched wildly forward, dragging the screaming boy.

When Sam finally overtook the mare two miles from the starting point, she stood quietly in a patch of sumac, heaving and white with lather. Blood flowed from her side, where the spur had torn flesh from bones. Jimmy's mangled body lay nearby. The shiny rowels gleamed red in the sun.

Arsenal

Joanne Johnston

I'll never forget him. It was the first day of the fall term. He paused in the doorway. He was short, pudgy, and ugly—utterly unlovable.

A slingshot bulged out of his back pocket. Right away, I recognized potential in that boy!

He looked around with the stupid, woebegone air of a lost puppy. "Is this sixth grade English?"

"Yes, it is. Come in, turn in your arsenal, and sit down."

"My—uh—what?"

"Arsenal."

"How much will one cost?"

I couldn't help laughing. "You know," I said, "your weapon."

"Weapon?"

"The slingshot."

"Oh!" He forked it over.

"Sit down."

He shuffled to the back of the room and tried to squeeze into an undersized seat.

"Not back there. Up here right in front of me."

He managed to wriggle into the widest seat in the room.

"There. That's better. Now we can see one another better, can't we?" I insinuated, but I don't think he caught it.

"I...guess so." He gave me a cold stare. I returned the compliment.

We were off to a good start. Establish empathy, but scare them the first day! That's the way to do it. Yep! Only—he didn't look too scared—just hostile. There goes my empathy. Have to establish rapport later—after I've engrained fear. Yep! That's the first day. Yep!

The rest of the little hoodlums filed in. I assigned them numbers on the seating chart, put them in desk-cells, and sent them out to chop rock—to read Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."

They all groaned. "Oh, no!" one fellow whispered, "not *poetry!*"

Fatty, the slingshot boy, magician-like produced a rubber band and was just taking aim when I snapped, "You! Slingshot Pete! Open your book and memorize the poem on page ten." Everybody laughed—except Fatty. "You see, I have an arsenal, too."

"You mean you've got my slingshot."

"No, I've got your rubber band." I snatched it. "Now get busy and memorize that poem."

"How come *they* don't have to?"

"*They* didn't bring an arsenal."

"You mean a slingshot?"

"No. A rubber band."

Fatty roared. His whole frame shook like (to use a cliche) a bowl of jelly. I laughed, too.

Then the whole class parroted us.

From then on, Fatty and I had an understanding. We knew exactly where we stood. And neither of us liked standing barefoot in an icy puddle.

The memory of that year in the icy puddle has thawed some in twenty years. We've been through a world war, and I've seen duty in many classroom skirmishes.

I saw Fatty—Jim—last week. He blustered into my apartment. "Hello, Miss McCracken!"

"Sit down, Jim."

"Front seat?"

"Yes."
"Where you can watch me better?"
"Of course."
"My pocket's still bulging."
"So it is." I regarded him silently for a moment. I stared coldly. "Well!"
"Well what?"
"Aren't you going to turn in the—"
"The arsenal? Sure. Here."
He emptied one pocket. Wallet. . .comb. . .handkerchief. . .newspaper clipping. . .pocket knife. . .two green earrings. . .
"Whose earrings?"
"My wife's."
"Where's the arsenal?"
"There—right there."
"Come on! Turn it all in."
"Oh, all right."
Pencil . . . notebook . . . slide rule . . . rubber band . . . purple heart . . .
"That's it? All of it? The whole arsenal?"
"Yes."
"Where's the slingshot?"
"Don't you remember? You still have it. You never gave it back."

Bus Ride

Joanne Johnston

It was a routine Friday night, except for the heavy rain. Hank Rewey drove his bus toward the river bridge on the eleven o'clock run.

"Well, Jim, how's the cafe business?" Hank asked the dripping passenger in the front seat.

"Slow, Hank, slow. Doggone rain." Jim leaned forward, and his voice assumed a confidential tone, "Say, Hank, you've been holding out on me. Who's the girl?"

"Girl?"

"Ya. You know, Hank—the girl. The only other passenger on this clinker. The hour-glass blonde." Jim laughed, "Remember now, Hank?"

"Sure, Jim, except I can't help you much. Never hauled her before. Think she came from the Orpheum."

"Alone?"

"Guess so."

"Well, now!"

The bus barreled onto the bridge, and Hank Rewey muttered, "Nuts." Below, the surging water seemed to seethe and boil as it hit the timbers of the bridge, swelled into great foamy waves, and then cascaded past. "Damn bridge," Rewey said.

"Figure it'll go out before morning, eh, Hank?"

"That's for sure." Rewey looked relieved when they left the bridge behind.

"Anyway, it's o. k. for now," Jim said flatly. "Think I'll desert you, Hank," he laughed, "She's quite a dish." He started to get up.

He sprawled forward as Hank hit the brakes, lurching the bus to a stop. "Hey, Hank, what kind of driving—" He grabbed a hand-hold. "It must be three feet deep!"

The headlights shone on a swirling, seething mass of inky water. Rewey muttered, "It's over a block wide."

"And then some, Hank. What you gonna do?"

"Only thing I can. Turn 'er around." Rewey backed the bus slowly.

"Hey, Hank, did you hear that?"

"What?"

"Stop this rig!"

Rewey killed the engine. Then they both heard it. It sounded like a low moan, like a mammoth tree creaking in the night wind. Slowly the eerie moan grew louder.

"What is it? the girl's voice came, high and trembling.

"Shut up."

Then she heard it—a distinct, sharp moan.

"Sounds like lightning hitting a tree."

"No, I think it's—"

Three sharp cracks split the air, and the moan became a roaring, tearing sound.

"Gawd, the bridge!"

There was a deafening rumble, the very earth seemed to shake, and a wailing shriek—like a human in pain—pierced the air. The bridge behind them yielded to the rampaging river.

"She's out."

"Gawd!"

"Well, there's only one way now." Rewey put the bus in gear.

"Will she make it, Hank? That water's at least three feet—"

"She'll have to." The bus lumbered forward animal-like, seemed almost to hesitate, then plunged into the water. It seemed to swim along, gliding smoothly.

"It's downhill, Hank. The worst part's under the trestle. Will she do 'er?"

"Has to!" Rewey hit the floorboard, and she barreled through the deep water under the train trestle.

"We're clear! That's the way, Hank! Come on, old baby!"

A loud groaning buried Jim's monologue. The engine coughed, sputtered, coughed, died. The lights went out.

"Gawd!"

The blonde groped her way forward. "Driver, I can't swim." Rewey grimaced. "How 'bout you, Jim?"

"Not a stroke."

"Great!"

Outside, the current rushed. Rain fell in black, shroud-like sheets.

"You got a match, Jim?"

"Ya, I think so . . . ya. Here."

"Good." Rewey rummaged in his tool box. "Now if I can just find that flashlight."

"Oh look!" the girl cried. "The water!"

The water gleamed blackly as it seeped in through the door, bubbled, and slowly rose to floor level.

Jim's match flickered and died.

"Another one, Jim!"

"Ya. Here. Got it." The two passengers watched silently as Rewey groped through the box.

"It's here," Rewey said. Just then, the match burned out. Rewey turned on the flashlight.

"Isn't that the bowling alley up ahead, Hank?"

"Here. Take this, Jim, and start signaling."

"Where you going, Hank?"

"For help." Rewey pried open the front door.

"What's the matter, Hank?"

"Too deep to swim—too fast." They saw branches and debris in the rushing water.

"Gawd! Close the door, Hank!"

"Give me a hand."

"There . . . Got it, Hank!"

The girl had the flashlight. "Shall I keep signaling?"

"No. Turn it off. There's no one there."

The water rose slowly, lapping hungrily around them. They huddled together at the front of the bus. The water licked greedily at the seats. Outside, hail began to fall, battering the bus roof.

"Climb on top of the seat." Jim told the girl, "and take off those high heels." She obeyed meekly. "Hank, let's try yelling."

The men opened the front door. "Now! One . . . two . . . three . . . Yell!" Their powerful chests heaved as they strained together, but the wind seemed to pick up their cries and toss them down into the murky water.

"Gawd! Shut the door, Hank. Hurry!"

The men sweated and strained. "Got it."

"Hang on, girl. Hang onto the pole." Jim barked. "She's going!"

The bus seemed to shudder and to rise up beneath them. A siren wailed.

"There goes the flood whistle, Rewey. Just in time!"

"Oh, we're floating!" the girl screamed.

Jim scrambled onto the seat beside her. "Hang onto me."

"Oh . . . oh . . . " the girl moaned as she clutched Jim desperately.

"Easy," Jim said. The bus floated slowly, then faster . . . faster . . . faster.

"Oh," the girl screamed, "we'll float into the river!"

"No." Rewey growled, "the base of the train trestle should stop 'er."

The bus hit the trestle, lurched wildly, then came to an abrupt, sickening halt. Jim felt the girl trembling. "It's o. k. now," he said, but he saw that the water was rising fast. Already, as they stood on the seat, it lapped around their waists.

"Jim," help me pry the back door open. I've got to try it."

"Gawd, Rewey, you'll never—"

"Shut up and help me." The two men forced the door open. The water was rising faster.

"Rewey! Look!"

They saw them. Only a few hundred feet away. A large crowd. On the dry bank of the trestle. "Help. Gawd. help us!"

From somewhere above them on the trestle, a deep voice boomed, "How many are in there?"

"Three. One's a woman."

"Can you swim?"

"No, only one of us."

"All right. Hang on a little longer. We're going after ropes." It rose. Chest-high . . . The minutes stretched—four . . . five . . . six . . . seven . . .

"Gawd, Rewey, tell 'em to hurry!"

"Hurry!" Rewey cursed and muttered.

Suddenly, the bus swayed and lurched. "Gawd! She's tearing loose!"

"No, no. She's holding . . ."

Rewey yelled. "You up there—help! Hurry!"

The sound of footsteps echoed on the bus roof. A half-naked man leaned over the edge and boomed, "Let's get her out of there first."

"Thank Gawd." Jim pushed the girl forward and into the water. "Got her?"

"O. K."

"Don't . . . let . . . me go," the girl cried, " . . . the . . . current . . . "

"It's all right," the man boomed, "I've got you." He grasped her arms, half lifting and half dragging her onto the bus roof.

"Hurry," Rewey urged.

"Hope this rope holds," the man bellowed. "O. K., come on." He hoisted the other two onto the bus roof. They crawled across the slippery tin and climbed a ladder to the train trestle.

Seconds later, they stood on the dry bank as the midnight express roared across the trestle. The bus was completely submerged in the floodwater.

The Lost Instinct

Sandra Shattuck

Lois Randolph placed the sleeping baby back into his crib. She had been following his feeding schedule exactly as the doctor had instructed. She certainly didn't want anything to go wrong with the baby; it would just add to her problems.

She left the nursery and walked downstairs to the kitchen. While rinsing out the baby bottle, many thoughts passed through her mind. She missed her job as a newspaper reporter for the *Baltimore Globe*. She missed all the unique adventures and the travel which were the interesting part of the job. With the arrival of the baby, she had had to leave her career. David was now three months old, and, it seemed, the older he grew, the more trouble he became to her.

Lois had read many books on the care of babies, and what's more, she did very well in seeing that the material needs of the infant were satisfied. But it was not until the last couple of months that he had started progressing as he should. He had been examined by the doctor and nothing physically wrong had been found. He just hadn't grown very much. But now he was doing better and down deep inside she knew the reason. It was just a matter of convincing herself.

After retiring to a chair in the living room, Lois picked up a magazine and turned to an article which she thought would be interesting. But she was unable to concentrate. Her husband, Don, wouldn't be home for another

week. His job prevented him from being home during the week and so they saw each other only on the weekends. Don and Lois had much in common. They both loved to travel and could not stand to be in one place for any length of time. And he, like Lois, wasn't particularly enthusiastic over the arrival of the baby. He wasn't home enough so that he could feel the baby was a real part of him. But he did have to admit that being a father did have its advantages in dealing with people. Just displaying the baby's picture and discussing his little family did miracles in his sales technique.

Lois had to admit frankly that their marriage was not very happy, but it was comfortable and secure. She did have a deep fondness for Don as she was sure he did for her. But it was by mutual understanding throughout the five years of their married life that they had retained their separate careers and income. Moreover, having the baby did not help the situation any—not as far as they were concerned.

Suddenly, she heard the doorbell ring. She opened the door and ushered in a little woman in her late thirties.

"Come in, Mrs. Kuck. I'll put your coat in the hall closet. Well, the house is just a mess, so you can start cleaning anytime."

"Okay!" replied Mrs. Kuck, who was a widow and had been the Randolphs' housekeeper for many years.

"By the way, Mrs. Kuck, can you clean the baby's room last? I think he will be awake for his feeding about the time you finish the rest of the house. Then you can straighten up his room while I feed him in the kitchen."

"Fine. How is little David gettin' along?" asked the housekeeper.

"He's fine, just fine."

"He's such a beautiful baby and I just love to play with him. You know, Harold and I only had the one child and we were so broken up when he passed away. Now I wish that when Harold was alive we could have adopted some children. But we didn't. Well, I run on so! I'll start cleanin' upstairs." Mrs. Kuck then left the room.

Lois was very fond of the little lady. She was a wonderful person; she was also a very diligent worker.

Mrs. Randolph soon fell asleep on the sofa, and she must have slept for quite some time. For when she awoke, she found Mrs. Kuck tiptoeing about the living room as she cleaned.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Kuck, for being in your way," replied Lois as she rose from the couch.

"Now you just lie back down. You weren't botherin' me at all. In fact, I was being careful so I wouldn't wake you."

"Well, it's time for the baby's feeding, so I had better get busy." Lois then walked back to the kitchen and started preparing the utensils for the necessary chore.

"Mrs. Randolph, I've finished all of the house except the nursery."

"That's fine. Now, Mrs. Kuck, you just come right in here and we'll have some coffee and cookies. David will be awake soon and you can start on his room then."

"That's very nice of ya!" The little woman sat down at one end of the table while Mrs. Randolph sat at the other. "Ya know, Mrs. Randolph, you sure do have a lot of things for David. Babies nowadays have everything. I bet you really enjoy taking care of him."

"Yes," replied Lois in an unenthusiastic tone.

"I think I hear him crying now. Should I go see?"

"Yes! And if he is, then bring him down, will you?"

"Okay!" Mrs. Kuck eagerly ran upstairs and slowly opened the nursery door. She looked down into the crib. "He's such a pretty baby," she thought. "Oh, your diapers need changing. We'll just take care of that, Davie boy." The small baby stopped his crying and smiled up at the woman's gentle face. She continued to talk to him while she made him comfortable and then brought him downstairs. His face beamed because of all the attention he was getting.

"Here's the bottle, Mrs. Kuck. Would you like to feed him?"

"I sure would!" And the little lady put the nipple of the bottle in his mouth while she continued her baby talk. She felt a strange sensation in the pit of her stomach. She wanted to hug him just as tight as she could. Now she imagined that David was her child, and Mrs. Randolph was the next door neighbor who had just come over to have coffee with her. After finishing his bottle, the baby responded to the fondling which he received from the woman and then finally fell asleep.

"Just put him there on the sofa, Mrs. Kuck. I'll watch him while you clean the nursery."

"Okay, Mrs. Randolph."

After some time, the housekeeper came downstairs.

"I've finished the room now. Shall I put David back into his crib?"

"You certainly may," answered Lois.

The little lady carefully carried the child upstairs and placed him in the crib. While she stood looking down upon the small bundle of innocence, she thought about the number of years she had worked for the Randolphs. Now, this little infant had brought a whole new interest into the housekeeper's life. She could hardly wait until the next time she could be with him. She was growing up with this small baby. She was growing in love. Mrs. Kuck walked out and slowly closed the door.

Lois was in the kitchen doing dishes when the woman entered.

"The baby's sound asleep, Mrs. Randolph."

"That's fine!"

"Well, now that my work's done, I'll be on my way."

"Mrs. Kuck, will you sit down? I want to talk to you. I have suddenly realized how much you think of David. Also, I believe the baby is very fond of you; perhaps more so than his own mother."

"But —"

"No! Let me finish. It may be quite a shock to you, Mrs. Kuck, but I miss my career and I am bored just staying at home. I love my baby in my own way, but I'm not satisfied just being a mother. I want to hire you as a nurse for my baby. You will live here in the house. I'm sure we can come to some arrangement as to the amount of salary. Don and I are fairly well off, so we can afford a nurse in our home. What do you say, Mrs. Kuck?"

"You are serious?"

"You know I am. What is your answer?"

"I accept, of course! I love your baby as much as I loved my own."

"It's settled then. You can take the guest room next to the nursery."

"What about Mr. Randolph?" asked Mrs. Kuck.

"I have discussed the matter with him and he thought it a very good idea. I just didn't know if you would accept the position. I guess I was

afraid you would say no. I have called my former boss, and he said that I can start back on the job next week if I like."

"You're sure this is what you want?" replied Mrs. Kuck.

"Very sure. I certainly have had quite some time to think it over. Just so we are both happy. I guess my instincts are not of the maternal kind. All right, it's all settled. I'll expect you the first part of next week. "

That Isn't George – George

Jules Smith

Willie Jones was a very handsome and intelligent boy. He was seven years old, had bright red hair, and was short and stocky. Willie lived with his Aunt Bertha and Uncle George, for his folks were killed in a mountain climbing accident when he was an infant.

Willie's Aunt Bertha was a big woman in her late forties. She was very jealous of Willie. Often she would complain about his behavior at dinner and the trouble he caused her.

Willie loved his uncle. He seemed to ignore everything his wife said about Willie and always treated him as if he were his own son. Every day he would spend some time with Willie. When Willie's parents had the accident, Uncle George was the first relative to volunteer to be his guardian.

"Hurry Willie, Uncle George will be here in just a few minutes to take you to the zoo. I can't understand why he fusses with such a boy like you," said Aunt Bertha.

"Ouch, that hurts," cried Willie, as his aunt tried to hold him still while she brushed his hair.

"Hello, is Willie ready?" called Uncle George as he walked into Willie's room.

"Hello, Uncle George," said Willie.

"Willie, for the last time, will you stand still so I can get your hair combed?" begged Aunt Bertha.

"Has he been a good boy today?" asked Uncle George.

"No, he hasn't. This morning at breakfast he didn't eat his mush and I had to throw it away. George, this kid is going to be the death of me yet. I can't take it from him any longer. I think we should send him to the bad boys' home. They have better boys there than Willie," replied his aunt.

"Please, Uncle George, don't send me to the bad bays' home, please don't send me there, please," cried Willie.

"Now, now, big fella, don't cry. Aunt Bertha is just upset and everything is going to be all right. Now stand still so she can finish helping you dress, and then we can go to the zoo," said George as he tried to comfort his nephew.

When Willie was ready, Uncle George took him out to the car and they were off.

"Uncle George."

"Yes, Willie."

"Please don't let Aunt Bertha send me to the bad boys' home."

"No, don't worry, she won't."

"My friend Semore told me that they give all the bad boys bread and water to eat."

"Don't believe that, Willie. Has Semore ever been to the bad boys' home?"

"No, but that's what his mother said."

"Let's forget about the bad boys' home for awhile and have some fun."

"But do you promise not to let Aunt Bertha send me there?"

"Yes, son, but just don't aggravate her."

"What does aggravate mean?"

"Bother or annoy."

"What does annoy mean?"

"Just forget it, Willie, and be a good boy."

"Yes, Uncle George."

"Well, here we are at the zoo."

"Oh, boy, I can hardly wait to see the lions and the tigers."

"Now hold on, let me first find a parking space."

Uncle George drove into the nearest parking lot. He parked the car and took Willie and they began their tour.

"Oh boy, Uncle George, look at that tiger. I bet the tiger is the meanest animal in the world. Do you remember that circus you took me to where this man went inside the cage with a whip and made those tigers do all kinds of tricks?"

"Yes, Willie."

"Say, Uncle George, I'm hungry, can I have a hot dog and a glass of lemonade?"

"No, Willie, it will spoil your dinner."

"Oh, please, Uncle George! I promise I will eat everything at dinner."

"Well, all right, but you had better keep your promise or else I will really be in trouble with your aunt."

"Oh, Uncle George, you're the best uncle in the world. I love you."

"I love you too, son."

The sandwich and drink were purchased. From the look on the boy's face, his uncle realized that he had enjoyed every bit of it.

"Let's get ready to go home, fella. It's been a long day and my legs are killing me. I think we've been around this zoo fifteen times and I feel I've had a good workout."

"Can't we see the monkeys just once more?" pleaded Willie.

"No, son, it's time to go."

"All right, I'll race you to the car."

Willie and Uncle George got into the car and started for home, George turned on the car radio and heard the newscaster give the final stock market returns.

"I see where your towel company has gone up, young man," said Uncle George.

"What does that mean?" asked Willie.

"The towel company that you inherited is making more money."

"Terrific, I love money."

"You and me too," said Uncle George under his breath.

Upon arriving home, Willie went directly to his room and began preparing himself for dinner. Being rather weary from the excursion to the zoo,

like all boys, Willie was rather slow getting ready. Aunt Bertha was looking at the clock and becoming very impatient.

"Willie," she called from downstairs, "it's almost time for dinner."

"I'm getting ready," answered Willie.

"Willie."

Willie recognized that tone of voice and knew Aunt Bertha meant business; that he had better get dressed quickly and go downstairs.

"Coming, Aunt Bertha."

"Where have you been?" asked the impatient aunt.

"Dressing."

"How long does it take you to dress?"

"I tried to get ready in a hurry."

"Oh, I just bet you did. You probably sat in your room dillly dallying around like you usually do."

"No, I didn't, Aunt Bertha."

"Let's have dinner," interrupted George.

"This bad boy shouldn't have dinner."

"Now, now, dear, I'm sure Willie is sorry, and from now on he will come to the table faster. Won't you, Willie?"

"Yes, Uncle George."

"See, I told you so, Bertha."

The dinner was served. Willie saw the meat, and sure enough it was liver smothered with a good helping of onions. He disliked liver and many times said so, but it didn't do any good. His aunt said that liver was good for growing boys, and there were many boys in the bad boys' home who would like very much to have a piece of liver.

"Why aren't you eating your liver?" asked Aunt Bertha.

"I don't like liver."

"I suppose your uncle spoiled your appetite at the zoo buying you all kinds of junk, but then when it comes to a good, wholesome meal, you won't eat it."

"Let the boy alone," said George.

"The trouble with him is that we left him alone too often," replied Bertha.

"Willie, will you please leave the room for awhile," asked his uncle.

Willie excused himself and departed to his room. He sat on his bed and even with the door closed, he could hear yelling and sometimes even screaming. He decided to get down on the floor in order that he might hear the argument better, but it was no use. The rugs were too thick and filtered out the voices. After an hour's time, Uncle George came up to Willie's room and closed the door.

"Willie, your aunt and I have decided that we are going to send you away to a military school."

Willie began to cry.

"Now, big fella, it isn't going to be that bad. In fact, you should enjoy it. You will meet many nice boys and you will even get to wear a soldier suit."

"It won't be a soldiers' school, it will be a bad boys' school," cried Willie.

"Now, Willie, don't say that. Do you think your uncle would send you to a bad boys' home?"

"No, but Aunt Bertha would."

"No, she wouldn't. She loves you, Willie, just as much as I, and we are doing what we feel is best for you, son. I do hope you realize that. This weekend we are going to drive up to Mount Vernon Military School and you will be able to look around and meet some of the boys."

"I don't want to go," shouted Willie in a rebellious tone.

"Now son, your aunt and I made up our minds and we feel it is necessary and I'm sure you will enjoy it. Now why don't you come downstairs with me and I'll have the maid fix some sandwiches and a glass of milk?"

"No, thank you, Uncle George. I think I will stay here in my room."

Uncle George patted Willie on the head and went downstairs. Willie lay down on his bed and began to cry. After crying for almost two hours, he undressed and got himself ready for bed.

The weekend finally arrived and Willie was dressed in his best suit for the visit to the military academy. His aunt decided not to make the trip, so Willie and his uncle departed by themselves. When they arrived at the academy they were greeted warmly by Colonel Hall, the head of the school.

"Well, I suppose you are Willie."

"Yes, I am."

"Would you like to become a soldier?"

"No, sir."

The colonel laughed and explained to Willie's uncle that he had many boys who felt like Willie when they first arrived at the school, but after a few weeks they became adjusted and learned to like the school as much as their own homes."

"Is this the bad boys' school?" asked Willie.

"No, it is not," replied Colonel Hall. "It is for boys who wish to become fine young men, and we only accept good boys."

"Do you give the boys bread and water to eat?" asked Willie.

"No, we don't," smiled Colonel Hall.

Uncle George and Colonel Hall left Willie outside to wander around while they went into the colonel's office to discuss matters about enrolling Willie. In the meantime Willie saw many boys his own size in real army uniforms and began to like the idea of coming to the school. "I can hardly wait until I start," said Willie to himself.

After making the final arrangements Willie and his uncle were on their way home. Willie was very excited and was busy telling Uncle George all what he saw.

"I am sure happy that you liked the school, Willie. Your father had it in his will that you should attend the academy when you reach your next birthday. Since you are almost eight, I feel you are now able to take care of yourself."

"Did they give you a suit for me?"

"Yes, they gave me everything that you will need, and told me that you have to report there Monday."

"Will Aunt Bertha miss me?"

"Yes, and I will miss you too. If you ever get too lonesome, you can call home."

"Gee, I must be lucky to go to such a school."

"I hoped you would feel this way, Willie."

After a long and interesting trip, they finally arrived home and Willie went directly to his room to get ready for dinner. Everything was done in a neat and orderly way and Willie was the first one at the dinner table.

When his aunt came into the room, Willie very eagerly started to tell her all the facts concerning the school.

"Do you know that Mount Vernon has a real neat cannon right in front of its gate and they even gave me a uniform to wear? It has one big stripe on the sleeve and it looks just like a real soldier suit."

"I only hope that after you come back from that school you will learn to enjoy your home just a little bit more."

"Now, Bertha, let's eat in peace. After all, the boy is leaving Monday, and he will have a tough time during his basic training," said George.

Dinner was served. Willie found a small piece of steak on his plate and a helping of french-fried potatoes. The only part of the meal which did not meet his approval was a dish of asparagus. Willie made an attempt to eat the vegetable, but the taste seemed awful and he couldn't force himself to take any more.

"Why don't you eat your vegetable?" asked Aunt Bertha.

"I don't feel well," said Willie.

"That's because of the lack of vegetables in your system."

"May I be excused?" asked Willie.

"You may," said Uncle George.

Willie marched to his room and opened the box he was given at the military academy. He examined the uniform and noticed the shiny buttons and the big black belt which he would put around his waist. Willie tried on the cap and began saluting and pretending that he was a general in charge of a big invasion. After letting his imagination carry him away for awhile, Willie decided he was tired and that he had better get ready for bed before his aunt reminded him. Willie was almost asleep when he heard a knock on his door.

"Who is it?"

"Uncle George. Did I disturb you?"

"No."

"I wanted to tell you that everything you need is packed and Aunt Bertha will call you at seven. Goodnight, Willie."

"Goodnight, Uncle George."

The next morning Willie was awakened by his aunt. She gave him complete instructions to get himself ready and to make sure he cleaned his entire body.

"While you are away at school I expect you to be a perfect gentleman; if not, Colonel Hall will send you to the bad boys' home," his aunt threatened.

"Honest, Aunt Bertha, I'll be good."

Willie was dressed and stood admiring himself in the mirror. He was very proud of his appearance and thought of all the fun he was going to have. He was even glad that he would not have to listen to Aunt Bertha's scoldings.

The first day of school Willie went through the usual orientation. The next day he was moved into his barracks and was introduced to his roommates.

"So you are Willie?" asked a lad who looked older than the rest of the boys.

"Yes, I am."

"My folks knew your parents before they were killed."

"Oh."

"Who do you live with now?"

"I live with my aunt and uncle."

"I would sure hate to live with my aunt and uncle."

"My aunt is a nice lady sometimes, but my uncle is the best."

"It is not like living with your own folks though."

"Oh, yes it is. My uncle takes me all over."

"I heard you are the owner of the Dundee Towel Company."

"Sure, and every week it goes up on the stock market," said Willie proudly.

"I suppose your uncle runs it for you?"

"Yes, he does."

"Boy, are you a sucker. You know what he is doing? He is trying to get control of it and force you out of it, but you're too dumb and too little to know anything about business."

"I am not."

Suddenly a cadet appeared who had listened to the conversation.

"All right, you guys, knock it off and go to bed. The next guy who makes any noise will be on K.P. for the rest of the week."

The lights in the barracks went off and all the cadets went to sleep. Willie could not sleep. He felt very lonesome, so he got up and went to Colonel Hall's office.

"Colonel Hall, may I use your phone? I wish to call home."

"Is there anything wrong, Willie?"

"No, sir, but I have to call home."

Colonel Hall understood. The first few days all the boys are lonesome and want to call home. He dialed the phone and handed it to Willie.

"Hello, Uncle George."

"Hello, Willie, what's the trouble?"

"Nothing, but do you love me?"

"Sure, son, your aunt and I love you very much. Why do you ask?"

"Thanks, Uncle George. Thanks a million. That's all I wanted to know. Goodnight."

"Goodnight, my boy."

"I don't care what anyone says, I love my uncle and I always will, no matter what," Willie said to himself, trying to control his emotions.

Weeks passed. Soon it was time for Christmas vacation. Willie put on his uniform and looked forward to seeing his uncle. His uncle finally arrived at the school and Willie ran to greet him. He threw his arms around Uncle George and gave him a big hug. Willie could tell his uncle had missed him.

When they arrived home Willie was given a warm reception by Aunt Bertha.

"Well, how is my favorite boy?" asked Aunt Bertha.

"I'm fine, Aunt Bertha, how are you?"

"Just wonderful, son. I suppose you are hungry. I have hamburgers and shoe-string potatoes for you."

Willie couldn't understand what was happening. Usually his aunt made him eat liver after a trip.

"Dear Willie," his aunt said, "I missed you so much."

"Willie," said Uncle George in a troubled voice, "I must tell you something."

"What's wrong, Uncle George?'

"You are not going to return to school. You are going to live with your other uncle."

"Why?" questioned Willie. "I like living with you."

"I know you do, son, but I have done something very wrong. I have embezzled money from your company so I could pay my gambling debts. The bank examiners found the shortage and I have to stand trial."

Willie felt like crying, but he couldn't. "I just don't understand big people and some of the things they do," Willie said to himself.

THREE POEMS

by

Ruth Chute

Fisherman

Stoutly he stands on the deck,
Braced against a tossing, blowing gale,
Covered head to toe in yellow oilskins
In his hand the battered, stinking chub pail.

His face, a craggy, weather-beaten rock,
Shows the mark of years of sun and salt.
His eyes, bright and deep in lines and creases,
Search among the waves and never halt.

Wait for a silver flash of fin
To show him where to throw his chopped up bait,
That will draw the swift, elusive herring
Into the brown and heavy net he spread to wait.

Empty House

There it stands: empty, quiet,
Devoid of all its peopled traits.
Emptied of its generations of families.
It stands silent, alone—and waits.

Darkness lurks in its windows
Age is peeling off its paint.
An empty shell, it stands there, waiting,
Crying a lonely, silent plaint.

Alone In The Night And The Rain

I walk in the cool darkness,
The rain gentle on my face, not hard.
I am alone in the quiet darkness,
Save for a restless dog in some dark back yard,
Who challenges me as I pass,
What my mission is, what right
I have to walk so near.
I salute him silently and pass on by into the night.

Ahead, a misty island
Clusters close about the light,
Its transparent, weightless substance
Seeking solace in a dark and friendless night.
Alone, I walk from island to island,
Down a dripping path without an end,
Alone in a world of dark and damp,
Searching, as I go, for lights and sounds and friends.

Through The Shadow Of Night

Richard Diamond

I was walking through the shadow of night
Cold, without prayer, and friendless.
Running to hide from the light,
On a path that seemed to be endless,
Running from footsteps behind me,
A crescendo on the walk.
The less I believed in God
The closer they seemed to stalk.
I ran till I was breathless.
Without faith I could not see.
I looked around with fear.
It was God pursuing me.

TWO POEMS

by

Janna Dodge

Night

Not every day can be so glowing
to feel the earth warm and bright.
Not every lurking shadow as dark,
as the darkest blue black of night.

Spring

What if no spring would come this year
and none the great green of rebirth?
With the death of hope of spring,
so dies the summer of a lifeless earth.

TWO POEMS

by

Marvin Essing

Hitler As A Boy

It was a warm and windy day.
Dead leaves flew swiftly by,
like starlings startled by a storm
while scooting through the sky.

A father, growling like a dog,
exclaimed: "Get out, ya' nut!
your mother doesn't want ya', boy,
you're illegitimate."

The boy left home, felt lost at school,
and sat down in a slump.
His head and shoulders both hung low
like the handle of a pump.

Then when the teacher slapped his face
because he broke a bat,
he said, "All people I shall rule
and treat each like a rat."

Spelling Out God

"Eureka!" was the sculptor's shout,
which followed with the spout:
"God's face is shiny like a trout!
I've finally found Him out!"

"Eureka!" was the painter's cry,
as he stopped his stroke to sigh:
"God's face is white like mine and the sky!
not dark like dirt or dye!"

"Eureka!" started the teacher's tale;
"God's blink could break a nail,
but His heart is larger than a whale,
and He loves you though you fail."

They're ejecting wind like a jet,
but more than that, they're set
on spelling God on high, and yet,
they're using the wrong alphabet!

SIX POEMS

by

Dave Evans

Oh Time, Oh Life, Go Back, Go Back

Oh time, Oh life, go back, go back,
Oh where have my young days been?
I've seen the smiles, I've seen the joys
They're gone, they can't come back again.

Oh time, Oh life, go back, go back,
And where has that beauty been?
Those dear that sparked my happy days,
They're gone, they can't come back again.

Oh time, Oh life, go back, go back,
Oh where are those eyes that burn?
I saw them then, the happy eyes,
They're gone, they can't, they can't return.

Oh time, Oh life, go back, go back,
Look, what did the angels spurn?
The simple ways, the little things,
They're gone, they can't, they can't return.

Oh time, Oh life, forget, forget,
And bring me my sadness soon,
And leave the frightful past a past,
Move on, and grant this only boon.

A Note Of Solace

Each hour displays a better part,
Each day some bird will sing.
Each man contains a little art,
Each year at least a Spring.

A Thief

Who robs Autumn of its life,
Who steals the song from the lark,
Who brings Winter, wound in strife,
Who makes the Spring day dark?

The Road

Last night I lay lamenting life,
Reclining in my bed,
While wannish thoughts of endless woe
Went winding through my head.

And sinking off in silent sleep,
Yet conscious, it would seem,
I saw a child upon a road,
So happy in this dream.

And skipping now and then he went
Expending all his might,
And gayly shouting, gayly laughing,
It was a joyous sight.

The road was soft and beautiful
And twisted through the wood;
He loved the road, the wondrous road,
And all was right and good.

Beyond the hills, above the trees
Was something better yet;
And up the road he'd find the light,
Beyond the red sunset.

As time went on the road grew steep
And left the ripening wood;
Perpetual summer left the road,
The boy his childhood.

Now ruts and pebbles bent his feet
And slowed his rapid pace;
The sky grew damp, the wind blew cold
And slapped his second face.

And up the road he saw no light,
The clouds obscured the view;
But golden meadows, russet leaves,
Were all around, he knew.

And wondering still about the light,
He left the rotting way;
And in the meadows, in the leaves.
Again he found dismay.

Again the sky grew damp and dark,
The wind blew hard and cold,
A dullness lulled the meadows' life,
The leaves, the man, grew old.

Above the darkened clouds and sky,
Beyond the withered wood,
He saw the light he'd known before,
His light of childhood.

He longed for the distant light,
He felt his life grow dim;
The light, the road, he couldn't find,
He died in search of them.

The wood, the light, have vanished now,
The meadows' life is gone;
The leaves, the man, have perished since,
The road is all alone.

My Father Used To Walk Alone In The Rain

My father used to walk alone in the rain,
When the town was stilled by tinkling silence
With the raindrops sprinkling down
Upon roofs, gardens and trees.

My Father used to walk alone in the rain,
When the mist of evening masked the hill
And the stars, like muffled ghosts,
Hung half-hidden in a dry, white heaven.

My Father used to walk alone in the rain,
When the whetted wind and softened sand
Prevailed upon a plain
Pregnant with peaceful melancholy.

My Father used to walk alone in the rain,
When the town was asleep, all the town
Save my Father and the rain
Made one by some unhappy miracle.

My Father used to walk alone in the rain,
My Father could look into the rain;
I could not see him
Unless I listened to the rain.

Man

Exiled in a speckled, timeless sea,
On a world wrought in a dark domain
Only meant for stars, or lights of stars,
Is a man, desolate, lost, alone,
A living grain lingering in winds,
Dissolving in winds, wasting with time
And dying exiled, a friend of night.
Perhaps a flower will pierce that brain
That lies loosening in the desert soil;
Perhaps the sockets of that skull will house
Other things of brief mortality,
Dissolving in winds, wasting with time,
Other than man, lost, alone,
Man, the dream within a dream.

Signs Of Spring

Marilyn Higgins

I noticed on the trees as I passed by
Hundreds and hundreds of tiny round buds
Each one a leaf-to-be in itself
To clothe the bare brown twigs.

As I continued on my way,
A robin was busy at work
picking weeds to mix with clay
for a nest in a tree near by.

The Land Of Too-Much

Diane Huntsinger

Radio, hi-fi, television,
Watch of white-gold for precision,
Yet my daughter, in derision,
Says that she lives in prison.

Bike, clothes, spending-money,
Rifle, dog, a horse named Sunny;
Yet my son, looking quite funny,
Says he'd *rather* his nose be runny.

Mangle, maid, free afternoons,
China, crystal, silver spoons,
Yet my wife, in carefree tunes,
Says, "No more meals for you at noons."

Debts, scowls, income tax,
Little praise, and some wisecracks,
Yet I come home to face the facts,
"More money, Dad, you can't relax."

To outdo Jones is their desire;
Chauffeured Invicta and fine attire;
Outside show: join the choir
But sleep while parsons preach on fire.

Listen, but don't pay much heed
For you are not the one in need.
You've got a gold or silver bead;
You don't *need* a Christian creed.

And Why?

Nancy Lewis

He stands alone, a watchman of the night.
The cursed dampness holding in his light.

The rain has stopped, the barren corner's still.
One's desolation bends him to its will.

He feels the ache of loneliness inside,
The bitter ache for which weak men have died.

In the street the small pools of water stand
Reflecting the dim light he gives for men.

He gives in vain. He still remains alone
With only dreams of some gay past he's known.

His thoughts run back to times when lovers met
Beneath his light. He still can hear them yet.

The silly words, the promises and plans.
They pledged their all to meet love's sweet demands.

But that is past, the lovers come no more.
The world is still—no laughter as before.

And why? Does anybody know God's will?
He does not know—He suffers and is still.

He stands and waits, the rain begins anew.
He is alone, and I am alone, too.

SEVEN POEMS

by

Bradley Pietens

Odyssey Reversed

When John went marching off to war,
His head held high, erect, and stern,
He vowed he'd settle up the score
And from the battle soon return.

Each day that passed while he was gone,
His mother said her beads in vain,
His lover pined and wept till dawn,
Oh, that he would return again!

But time went on, surging ahead,
Life sowed, death reaped its endless yield,
And then the word that he was dead,
Asleep on some far-distant field.

Oh humble church where once this man
Knelt down, like child, engrossed in prayer,
Your sanctuary to employ,
Your spire no longer rends the air.

But in the humble yard beside,
In shallow and unmarked grave,
The heather, brier, and bramble hide
The remnant of God's loyal slave.

Death

When touched by death's dark velvet wing,
Unlike a piece of clay or sod,
A moment of remembering,
Before we see the face of God.

In Absence Of A Title

Behind a burst of cloudy fire,
The sky-lark spirals ever higher,
To trill a silvery offering
Before the sun, his only king.

Autumn

I see old autumn standing there,
In disillusion and decay,
Dressed all in limp, bedraggled flowers,
That bygone summer's cast away.

House Of Death

Sometimes a house, like man, will die,
And on the hearth, cold ashes lie,
An empty echo in each room,
In darkness, morbid as a tomb.

Futility

I walked tonight in winter;
The whole earth seemed to be
A shroud for dead things, buried,
Marked by only barren, gnarled trees.

There was no color but the color
Of death, grey snow, black sky,
The wind moaned a funeral dirge,
We walked alone, the wind and I.

I am in darkness without a star,
A spider's web in the night,
Emotions poured out into a
Bottomless crater of black fright.

No urge within me but to lie
Close to the earth. The dark,
Violet gloom steadily closes about me,
Snuffing out my futile spark.

The Farmer

What if the back is stooped, the skin dried,
Tending the soil? The sun, wind, and rain
Leave kindlier marks than avarice and pride
Upon the countenance of man. One share of pain
Had best be got from simple things, like drouth
And dying plants, than from the real disease
Of Selfishness, that puts upon the mouth
A deformed smile, and whips our memories
Until they burn. Oh! farmer, your plough and hoe
And the sweat you drop on the seedlings
In the ground,

Bring a harvest of abundant life to show;
While we who are occupied the seasons round
With cunning thoughts and schemes, become twisted
And curved,
Even as your back is. We have not seen the fruit
Of life ripen, and having not served
Our earth or ourselves, are lost and destitute.

THREE POEMS

by

Beverly Tritle

Expose

Two young fools met in this cruel world
And thought they were in love.
An attraction so magnetic
Surely must come from above.

"I will be forever faithful,"
She promised him that day.
"Never will I love another!
With you I will stay."

And truly, truly she did love;
She learned a woman's art.
Yet seldom did she really please
And burdened was her heart.

Then one day a lover beckoned
And offered a huge sum;
A life exciting, love responsive,
And woe—she did succumb.

So surely, surely toward the fate
She chose; now on she goes.
But judge her not! In time our acts
All inner thoughts expose.

Ripples

We walked beside the lake, my lover and I.
The night was calm; the water blue and still.
Almost as if by accident, he stooped
And tossed a pebble far and high.

The surface, once so calm, was broken when
One little splash began a ripple ring.
Tiny little waves chased each other
Until they vanished in the calm again.

It was a pleasing thing, and so once more
He tossed a pebble; then a larger stone.
I tried it too; we found the special ones
That skipped far out from the shore.

The ripple rings we started grew and grew.
They met each other and they spread
Far out onto the lake; but that was all.
Then it was calm; and the lake was new.

A Woman

This earth is a shambles
Then, who with their own hands
Harnessed such tremendous power,
Destroyed it.
And themselves with it.
And here I stand; a woman
With no understanding of the power
That wrought such destruction;
But could have brought bounteous plenty.
A woman; but only skilled in the arts,
Whose whole life until now
Was a drama, and music, and beauty.
Lovely to look at
Lovely to hear
A star with no audience now.
A woman; alone
Except for that man in the field.
A man; hoeing the ground
That it will bring forth food.
A man; strong and able
But black as night.
Here I stand; a woman.

PERSPECTIVES Short Story Prize, 1961:
To RUTH CHUTE

PERSPECTIVES Poetry Prize, 1961:
To DAVE EVANS