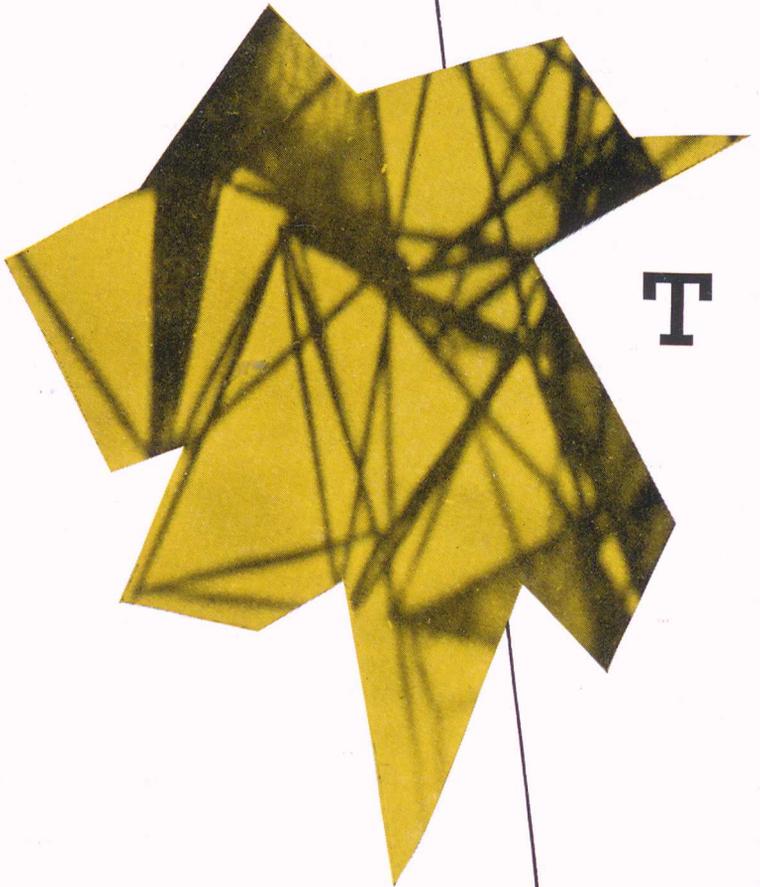




**TOWERS**

Presenting the work of students  
of Northern Illinois State College,  
DeKalb, Illinois



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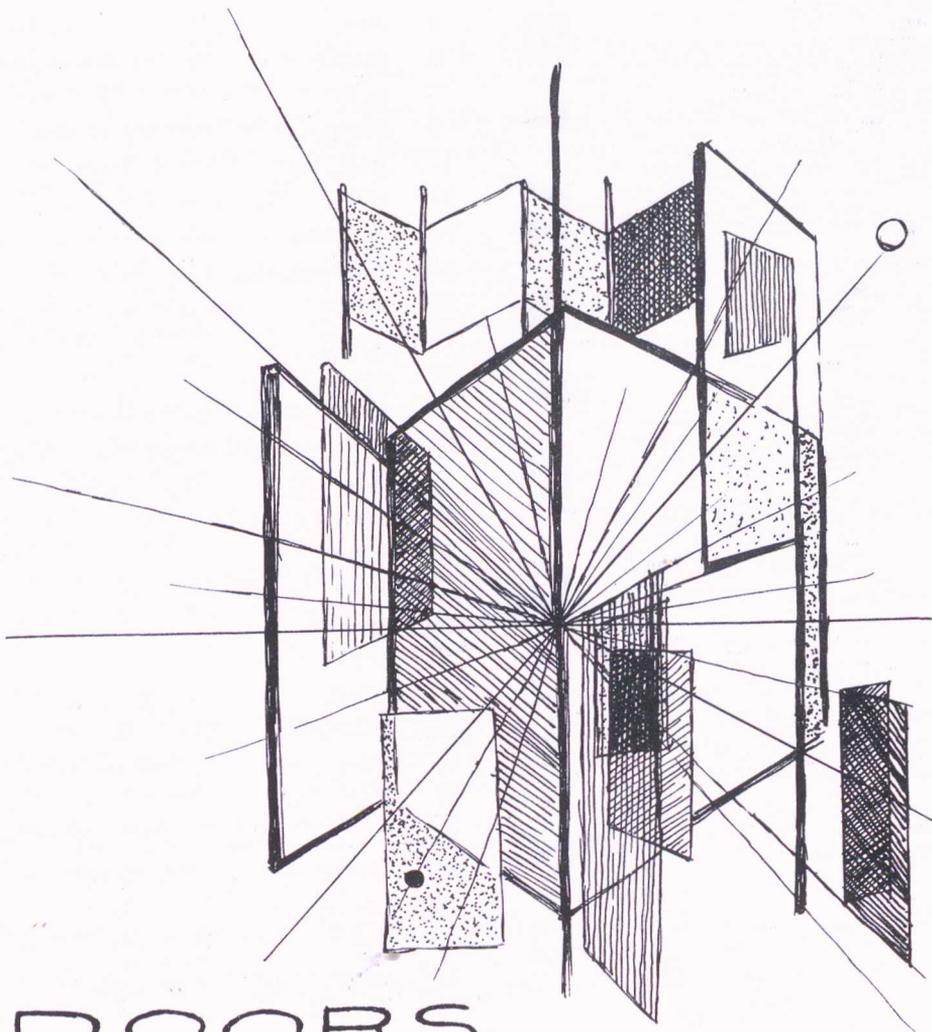
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# DOORS

merle schroeder.

She stepped from the car, setting her foot down carefully to avoid catching her high heel in the cracks between the paving bricks. From a little mound of debris piled up against the safety island, the hot summer wind snatched a strip of oily newspaper and slapped it against her ankle. The soiled ribbon of paper clung to her nylon hose. As she made her way to the sidewalk, she shook her leg, hoping to dislodge the flapping strip without having to touch it. The jagged edges of the paper were snagged in the threads of the hose. She mounted the high curb to safety on the walk and paused for a moment to unpeel cautiously with the tips of two fingers the wrapping on her ankle.

She walked on, studying the smudge that the greasy newsprint had left on her white gloves. Filth. The badge of the city. Soot on white blouses. Grease on gloves. No way to avoid dirt in this neighborhood. Everyone and

everything wore the label in some way. Gloves were removable and washable, but some things would never come clean.

The buildings, for example. They had been here too long. Dirt had ground in, as on little boys' knees. She surveyed the old familiar landmarks which lay before. For ten years she had been walking those two blocks from the Talman Avenue stop to the office, passing the same buildings, scarcely aware of them. She hadn't realized until today how subtly they had changed since she had first observed them. They couldn't shake off the stigma any longer. They were permanently scarred.

The International Register Company building there on the corner was gray and grimy now. It used to look respectable and aloof, as if it were ignoring its dismal neighbors. Years ago, it seemed so impressive that a stranger would never have noticed the ramshackle tavern squatting down beside it.

Ignore that tavern now? Some chance! The laborers at International used to eat lunch there and cash their paychecks on Friday. But they don't go in there any more. She quickened her pace instinctively as she passed the tavern. The door was open, as usual on a humid summer morning. The breeze carried to her nostrils the morning-after smell of stale beer. The juke box was still blaring. A shifty-eyed, lanky Negro sat on a tilted crate, leaning against the building. The box creaked as he tapped his foot to the beat of the music.

"Ain'tcha gonna work today, black boy?"

She raised her eyes to see who had spoken. The mulatto with the straightened hair and the flower-encircled chignon was leaning out of the window in the flat above the tavern, shaking her head and flashing gold earrings.

"Worked yesterday, gal." The black boy laughed, not looking up and not missing a tap with his cleats.

"You sho are a card, tha's all . . ."

The voices faded into the distance. A Cadillac with white-wall tires sped past, coming close to the curb and scattering a heap of curbstone trash. She held her breath as she came through the viaduct which separated the tavern from the office. She had just a few more paces to go now. Reaching the office, she kicked an empty gin bottle away from the entrance, and opened the smeary door. Its surface had become marred and streaked from daily encounters as it had stood adamantly all these years, sternly resisting the onslaught of the dirt. It had been a faithful guard, for, beyond the door, the office inside remained clean.

There were a few other stalwart doors nearby, stubbornly trying to withstand the outward stain, forbidding the foulness to get past their thresholds. Fleeting, she thought of the door of the Mission Church which she could see from her office window on the second floor. Above the door-knob hung a crude, hand-lettered sign, "Come to Jesus." A Moody Bible Institute student led the grubby urchins through this door when he could coax them from their street games. Inside, closed off from their dismal playground, they sang hymns together. Sometimes, when the windows were open, she could hear their clear, fresh voices singing, "He Will Wash Me Whiter Than Snow."

Dirty outside, this neighborhood. Clean inside — in places . . .

She hurried up the first flight of stairs, pulling off her white gloves, getting ready for the day's work.

"Good morning, Miss Beach," said the shipping clerk as she passed him on the landing. "Is it hot enough for you?"

## **the river, or five stages of life**

From the earth's deep womb she bubbles up,  
And laughs a greeting with her new found life;  
With faltering steps she gurgles on  
Twisting, turning in happy delight.

With small muddy arms she flings a hug  
To the pebbles and earth, as they gently advise —  
This path is the best, go this way my child,  
Tumble gayly on as your waters rise.

She sees a lake bordered by pines,  
And dreams pretty thoughts with a tearful sigh.  
She stops to gaze at this handsome sight,  
Then hurries on with the wink of her eye.

Her waters meet a river strong,  
Laughing together they flow through the land.  
They conquer the rapids, and sing a song  
Of love of life, the sky, and the sand.

Their work on the land is peacefully through.  
They flow towards the sea; sweep into His arms,  
Where He cradles them in His eternal blue,  
And blesses their home in peaceful calms.

— *Phyllis Anderson*

### **the night**

I am alone within it, enraptured and reverent,  
But alone.

It stirs and moves, surrounding me;  
It breathes as deeply as death, and as quietly;  
It mourns and weeps.

Each sparkling tear suspended just beyond the trees  
Is mine,

While I am watching, lingering there.  
But one tear shimmers, shakes, and spends its light  
In one brief moment as it falls.

A cinder: living, glowing once,  
But dead and earthbound now.

— *Esther May Bogusch*



## "Bark like a dog, Ann Mary!"

by Barbara Scobie

Peg Cooper had just swished salts into the twins' bath water when the agonized screeching sounds began. Fragments of thought twisted about in her mind. "An automobile accident?" And yet she had heard no clamor of brakes being applied. "A child?" "An animal?"

She hastily checked the faucets, warned the twins to remain quietly in the tub until her return, and started for the back porch. By now it seemed obvious that the commotion originated in that area, and the mournful wails were those of Princess, the Coopers' dog.

A peaceful summer afternoon turned into a cataclysm of disorder and confusion. At the garage door Peg encountered the mother dog barking wildly as she circled the injured body of her pup. The older of two neighbor girls ran excitedly back and forth across the drive, pointing to her small, misshapen sister, "She did it. Ann Mary drowned the puppy. Ann Mary killed the puppy. She did it, Mrs. Cooper!"

At that moment the twins appeared in the doorway, wrapped together in a towel and trying to maintain an equilibrium made precarious by soapy, wet feet. "What's wrong with Princess, Mom?" "Oh, look at her puppy — there's blood on her puppy!" Disregarding the towel and the improvised semblance of propriety, the twins bounded down the steps and joined the group of screaming children and yelping animals.

The puppy lay in the drive near the garage. His injured head was plastered with mud, and blood-flecked bubbles popped from his nostrils as he struggled to breathe. The mother dog whined piteously, nuzzled her offspring, and looked beseechingly at Peg.

The twins shouldn't see the puppy like this . . . Ed has warned about letting Ann Mary and Ruthie play with the children . . . but what can be done? One has to be congenial with his neighbors. Peg wiped the palms of her hands on her skirt. She directed the naked twins into the house and ordered Ruthie and Ann Mary into their own yard.

Usually of a sullen, unimpressive manner, Ruthie could hardly contain her feeling of exhilaration. She continued her frenzied pacing, eager to give her account of the incident. With bewilderment clouding her face, Ann Mary stood apart, surveying the scene, as if she were trying desperately to comprehend its significance.

"What happened, Ruthie?"

"Ann Mary wanted the puppy to drink out of the mud-puddle. He wouldn't drink, so she pushed his head under."

Ann Mary whimpered and shook her head. Her thin body quivered with fright and she dropped on her hands and knees, huddling against the hedge that separated the two houses.

Peg managed to lock Princess in the garage and bent over the puppy. His head had been smashed and he had finally ceased to struggle. A numb feeling

of despair and shock turned to one of rage as she found Ruthie, eyes bright with curiosity, leaning over her shoulder.

"He's dead, isn't he, Mrs. Cooper?"

"Get back in your yard and stay there! I've had about all I can take for one summer!" Peg covered her face with her hands, overwhelmed by that old feeling of remorse and frustration. Ruthie and Ann Mary aren't to blame — they don't know any better. What can one expect of children who are allowed to run about the neighborhood with no discipline, care — no, not even affection?

\* \* \* \* \*

Peg had seen Ann Mary and Ruthie the very first day the Byrnes family had moved into the house next door. She had been pushing the children in the swing when one of them pointed at an opening in the shrubbery saying, "Look, Mom, there's a baby!" Two large eyes peered through the hedge and suddenly a small creature crawled into the yard. On all fours, it wiggled excitedly and then grinned. Standing up, the child announced solemnly, "I like to swing, too."

Peg stood still, one hand frozen to the rope of the swing, the other involuntarily clutching her child. Her first thought was, "What is it? A child — it's a child, but what can be wrong with it?"

And Peg's question had been repeated by each neighbor in turn as he was introduced to Ann Mary Byrnes. It was a self-introduction, as Ann Mary investigated her new surroundings before the moving van had unloaded the last piece of her family's shabby belongings. Ann Mary was unique. No other word could describe her so completely, and yet, so imperfectly. With her porcelain-like fragility, the child seemed as if she might shatter into a million pieces at any instant. Her tiny, elfin face displayed large, dark-circled eyes, and a tuft of short hair at the back of her head gave her the incongruous appearance of a young rooster. With stick-like arms and legs jerking erratically, and in a gait peculiar to herself alone, Ann Mary bounded onto a porch, scratched at the door, and announced to an open-mouthed householder, "I'm Ann Mary and I like cake!" Her older sister, Ruthie, finally appeared behind Ann Mary as she approached the last house on the block. After the first shock of seeing the child's small, pinched face, receding hair line and bluish complexion, the owner asked kindly, "Has your little sister been ill?"

"Her? Oh, no, Ann Mary hasn't been sick. There's just something wrong with her, that's all," answered Ruthie. She grabbed the hem of the child's skirt and unceremoniously hauled her away.

With lowered voices and significant nods of the head, the neighbors discussed the new arrivals, and because of her unusual physical appearance and tense, spasmodic mannerisms, Ann Mary became the chief topic of conversation. When it was learned that the little creature was not an infant but was of school age, a burst of speculation began. "Not quite right," said the elder women. "I've seen them like that — had the croup or fever when they were babies and just never grew." The younger ones had other suppositions. "Probably a hormone deficiency or some such thing. I don't think she's mentally retarded, do you?" And still another, "I hate to seem prejudiced, but are you going to allow your children to associate with the Byrnes girls? They run about like wild animals."

It soon became apparent that, allow it or not, the community was going to be exposed to the "Byrnes girls." They investigated every yard in the block, and upon discovering play equipment — a bicycle or swing — they, like prospectors, staked their claim.

As next door neighbors, the Coopers suffered most. The comparative serenity of their lives changed abruptly as Ruthie and Ann Mary took charge. They arrived on the back porch and pressed their faces against the screen as the Coopers sat around the breakfast table. They ransacked the garage, dropping Ed's tools on the floor and spilling paint on his work table. They snapped buds from the peony bushes and stuffed them into the mailbox.

Ed Cooper reported the first of the misdemeanors to the Byrnes family. Ruthie casually pointed to Ann Mary. "She did it. She's always in trouble." Ann Mary turned, wide-eyed, to her father, whereupon Mr. Byrnes grasped the frail child by her ears and shook her until she fell to the floor. Sick and defeated, Ed strode home, and the rest of the childish tricks were suffered in silence.

Peg Cooper's day was now spent in keeping watch over the twins, checking locks on the garage and basement doors, and patrolling the yard. One day she found the twins crawling on their hands and knees, uttering harsh, guttural sounds. "Ann Mary is teaching them to bark like a dog," explained Ruthie blandly, as Peg ordered the twins into the house and slammed the door behind her. Leaning against the sink, she pressed her hands against her eyes to shut out the eerie, animal-like scene.

And now the puppy — was Ann Mary capable of deliberately drowning the puppy, or had it been an accident? Another trick that had gone awry? Peg again saw the little girl huddled against the hedge, shaking her head as Ruthie excitedly volunteered the details of the puppy's death. And yet, it was Ann Mary who, with quiet devotion, had carried food and water to Princess and the puppy. On one occasion, Peg had stood at the garage door and watched the strange little girl tenderly cradling the animal in her arms, crooning softly as she rocked back and forth. "You are taking good care of the puppy, Ann Mary," she said, and was surprised to see the quick smile of shy friendliness.

Behind them, Ruthie's voice was harsh in its disbelief, "Do you really like Ann Mary, Mrs. Cooper?"

"Why, whatever made you ask such a question, Ruthie? Of course I like your little sister."

"But Ann Mary is always in trouble, Mrs. Cooper. Our mother says she is a real problem."

"Will I ever understand these Byrnes children?" Peg thought wearily.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ed was almost uncontrollable in his fury. "What next? The waste of it! Accident or not — what if she had murdered a child instead?"

As the neighbors heard of the incident they stood on porches and in yards, discussing the detail and surreptitiously glancing toward the Byrnes' house. "They're going to have to do something about that child before it's too late and she does some real damage."

Ann Mary and Ruthie sat on their back porch, idly tracing marks in the dust with sticks. Ruthie glanced at the women in the yard two doors down and then, with careful deliberation, rubbed out the marks with the toe of her shoe. "Bark like a dog, Ann Mary!" she commanded. The little girl jumped down on all fours and wriggled back and forth in quick compulsive movements.

"See that!" continued the neighbor sharply. "I tell you, Ann Mary should be put away before it's too late!"



# Left-Handed Leo

— Joe Little

I am left-handed. I throw left-handed, write left-handed, use silverware left-handed, and do just about everything conceivable with my left hand. But I have no regrets about my condition. No excuses, either. In fact, to be frank, I am quite proud to claim the distinction of being a "southpaw."

Of course, I have had to contend with some abuse regarding the subject, but that is only natural and easily forgotten. While I was in grammar school, for instance, I can recall my classmates on several occasions making sarcastic references to my writing upside down. But being a light-hearted, and often light-headed, youngster, I was quick to laugh off their innocent jests. I repeat that I am proud to be left-handed. For had I not been left-handed, I might never have made an impression on Sarah Bellum, and therein lies a tale.

My roommate, Binky Doyle, introduced me to Sarah at the first school dance of the season early last fall. I was shyly standing in a corner of the gymnasium, absently working a crossword puzzle in my head, when Binky tapped me on the shoulder. Turning, I was confronted with as lovely a young lady as my young eyes had ever encountered. "Lovely" is a word which simply does not do justice to this doll. Her tawny curls cascaded over her classic shoulders with the same rippling motion as a mountain waterfall. She had a tiny button nose, sparkling brown eyes, and a saucy smile which sent peculiar sensations pulsating up and down my spinal column with the irregularity of a cardiogram. It was love at first sight on my part.

"Joe, I'd like you to meet Sarah Bellum," Binky said warmly. He winked slyly at me and then vanished amongst the crowd.

"Hi, Joe," Sarah said, flashing a quick, friendly smile and extending her hand.

I clutched her hand eagerly. I made several unintelligible, gurgling sounds in my throat before I finally stammered, "I'm very pleased to meet you, Sarah."

When I began to feel resistance, I regretfully released her hand and strained earnestly, trying to think of some clever bit of small talk that would kindle this infant relationship.

"I'm left-handed," I suddenly blurted before I was fully aware of what I was saying.

Sarah drew back aghast, surveying me critically. Suddenly her eyes brightened and she exclaimed enthusiastically, "Left-handed? Oh, quick! When's your birthday?"

"Near the end of July," I answered cautiously.

"Oh, super!" Sarah shrieked, clasping her hands in sheer ecstasy. "A left-handed Leo!"

She clutched eagerly at her purse and began rummaging frantically through its scrambled contents. "I'm just crazy about astrology," she explained as her hand continued to probe the confines of her handbag. She produced a small black book and hurriedly began to scan its pages. Abruptly she paused to study me skeptically. "You are a left-handed Leo, aren't you?" she asked.

My reply was in the form of a convincing growl.

"Oh, here it is!" Sarah squealed giddily. "A left-handed Leo . . . you're kind, courteous, shy and loving." She regarded me dreamily. "That's so much nicer than just a plain old right-handed Leo."

I flashed a kind, courteous, shy and loving smile.

Then, as if momentarily seized, Sarah threw her arms around my neck and, with a voice which resembled the tinkle of a tiny bell, she breathed, "I love you."

I saw Sarah constantly thereafter. Together, hand in hand, we attended dances, parties, hayrides, movies and plays. We were inseparable, and I was in paradise. But, sadly, I must relate that I don't see much of Sarah anymore. She was pinned last month . . . to an ambidextrous Capricornus.





## ULTRA

*patt van dyke*

Sing! Sing a song of progression  
of thrusting movement with a greasy head.  
Sing of patterns and of space  
neatly boxed and squared and very right.  
Sing these things of modern man  
in measures true and meticulously melodic.  
Breathe not a word of what has been.  
For he of the past worked by candlelight —  
Rude were the boards of the stage  
on which he danced — sing not of him.  
Sing of the crispness of the new age,  
its polished pews and electric lights.  
Sing of huge cities and millions of ants —  
Ants are very modern and mechanized.  
What do you see in the prairie?  
Wind in grass makes such a disorderly movement.  
If you draw a square the lines should meet.  
For Heaven's sake, we must be consistent and organized.  
It is impossible to understand a square  
unless you follow the rules.  
And after all, and don't you agree,  
if it can't be understood —  
WHY  
BOTHER  
DRAWING  
IT?

## SORRY

It was two A.M. and the cafe was empty. The place was small and not well lighted, but it looked clean enough to him. He pushed the door open and walked in. For a second he eyed the "L" shaped counter and the two tables which were on the opposite side of the cafe. He started toward the nearest table, paused, then walked to the last seat at the counter and sat down. He stared impatiently at the clock that hung above the door. Seconds passed. He looked at the grill in front of him. It had lost its luster. Its aluminum shine had been dulled by smoke and grease, he supposed. He heard the waitress working in the back room. He waited a few more seconds, then coughed loudly, artificially. The waitress appeared through the swinging door, stopped before the metal sink and filled a glass with water.

"Hello," she chirped automatically as she placed the glass on the counter before him. The glass was wet and water ran on the tiled counter. "Menu?" she asked. Over her shoulder he saw a sign listing sandwiches. Hamburger and coffee, forty-five cents, it read.

"Black coffee," he replied, "and a hamburger." Turning, the woman took a cup from beside the coffee urn and filled it with the steaming fluid.

"Hamburger'll be ready in a minute," she said, holding the coffee out to him.

She took a red patty from the refrigerator, placed it on the grill and returned to the back room. A minute later she stepped out to turn the hamburger. When she dropped it back on the grill, the grease sizzled. She hummed a flat note as she placed a bun on the plate and stepped back to the grill. Warily she shifted her weight to her other foot as she stood, waiting for the meat to brown. Her back was turned towards him and he watched her hips roll under the green cotton dress. He shifted his eyes back to the water glass. He tapped it lightly.

"Excuse me," she said, pushing the plate before him. He straightened on the stool and breathed a sigh. His breath was heavy with alcohol and the waitress winced a little as she noticed it. She stepped back and stood for a moment, watching him. He took a few small bites from his sandwich. His throat was dry from smoking and he choked a little. She took the empty glass and refilled it with water. The glass bumped his plate as she set it down. The tinkle broke the silence.

"My wife died tonight," he said blankly. The woman looked puzzled.

"Sorry," she said, trying to sound sympathetic.

"She was only twenty-seven. The baby died too," he added.

"Oh, that's too bad," she said thoughtfully.

The man lowered his eyes, moving his head slowly from side to side. His lips opened as if he would speak, but he remained silent and stared past her at the pale green wall. His face was flushed and he looked tired. A street-car passed outside. When it was gone, the silence returned. More minutes passed. The woman tugged nervously at her apron.

"Have some dessert?" she asked.

The man took some coins from his pocket and counted forty-six cents into his left hand. Laying it on the counter, he stood and walked to the door.

"Goodnight," the waitress whispered. The door closed. "Sorry," she said, walking to the back room.

john brinker

## THE SOUL

### Palace

To blue and silver ideas:  
The artwork  
Of the countless reflections  
And aspirations of a mortal brain.

### Abode

To free the troubled mind  
Of earthly passions  
And problems.

### Urn

For lucid tears:  
The release  
Of an unsettled  
And broken spirit.

### Museum

To display in purple raiment  
The love  
Of a noble and loyal heart.

### Refuge

For pain and strife:  
The outcome  
Of unnecessary loss  
And sin in a meaningless life.

### Altar

To the beloved God:  
The quintessence  
Of a weak body  
And mind seeking understanding.

by **cynthia johnson**

# Spring

Elaine Ekman

She laid the receiver back in its cradle and struggled to hold back humiliating tears. She could remember the many times the ring of the telephone had aroused feelings of pleasure — anticipation, suspense, and finally relief, knowing she was hearing the voice she most wanted to. Her feelings had equaled those of a child hearing the bell of the Good Humor man.

But that was all past. They must be committed to memory, for now everything had changed. She felt something close to fear, and relief came only with the realization that the phone was not ringing for her.

But there was no relief this time. What she had feared had happened at last. She could hardly bear to think of it, but little by little, the memories swept through the barrier . . .

Was it only a year ago that it had all started? That year felt more like five, and yet, in a sense, it had sped by. She had to admit that it was the most wonderful year of her life.

He was a friend of her girlfriend's brother, and to her he was an older man. She hardly dared think he considered her old enough to take out, but he had, and he had shown her a marvelous time. He had not treated her like a child, and that seemed his finest quality. After that evening there were many dates, and it seemed that the world belonged to her alone.

She felt as though spring was created especially for her. The grass was sprouting, the trees were budding, and the sky was a heavenly blue. The rich earth could be contained no longer with joy for her. Even her heart skipped with all the little children reveling in the first signs of spring, and she had great difficulty restraining her feet from doing the same. The world was coming alive, and so she felt, was she.

She had new friends now. Quite worldly individuals who treated her like an adult. They were his friends and she liked them at once.

They did so many exciting things — things she had never done before. There were the evenings they spent dancing, the parties, and the plays. They went horseback riding and played tennis. When summer came, they went swimming and sailing; he had even taken her water skiing. There were outdoor concerts and, of course, the long rides in the country stopping only for a cool drink at a roadside stand. It was a fascinating summer, one she could never forget.

In October she watched the leaves fall, never feeling the sadness of autumn. The world was a mass of fairylike color — red, yellow, orange, green, and brown. The leaves crackled when they were stepped on, and it was hard to believe everything was dying.

Winter came with all its barrenness. People moved from place to place thinking only of the pleasant indoors. But not she. Even the cold winds could not blow the warmth from her heart.

Her thoughts raced ahead to spring when the world would once again waken. With spring would come the anniversary of their first year.

But then something happened. Oh! She should have known; she should

have realized. But it was such a little thing, hardly worth thinking about at the time.

It was unusually warm for that time of year, and the evening was particularly beautiful. They had gone to a movie — one she had especially wanted to see. She thought he was enjoying it as much as she, but afterward he had made some remark about the movie being only for children. She could barely remember his exact words, but he had never mentioned her age in such a way before. She had laughed it off and quickly forgotten the remark.

She had been hurt, though, the very next week when he broke their date. He said he was swamped with homework, that he hated to do it, but being so near the end of the semester, and all ... There was no reason not to believe him; he had never lied to her before.

From then on, however, his calls became less and less frequent. She no longer spoke to him every week night. If he called twice a week, it was a surprise. She alibied for him — it was because he was studying so hard.

They still saw each other on weekends, but he wasn't his old self. She couldn't quite put her finger on the difference, and after a while she stopped making excuses. Deep down she knew that the break was coming, that she ought to save her pride and step out first, but she possessed neither the courage nor the desire to do so.

The final occurrence happened sooner than she expected. Just last week one of her friends had seen him with another girl. The girl was older than she, quite pretty, and seemed very poised. At any other time, she would have overlooked the incident, but she knew this was the last link in the chain of events.

This girl, then, was the reason for all the other little things that now became so magnified. This was something she could not fight. There was nothing to do but wait for the fatal ring of the telephone.

And the telephone had rung. With a woman's fabled intuition she knew who it would be. She had dreaded this moment for so long, but now she wished it would be over quickly.

He had been very nice, polite as always. He had patiently explained all the reasons why, but she heard nothing except his statement that they had better see no more of each other. She had hardly said a word, but she hoped she had fooled him into believing that she thought it all part of the game.

And yet, it seemed hard to believe that the year was over. It was one to remember, even though her heart broke at the thought of it. She knew, however, with a flash of insight, that her heartbreak would not last, that no matter how great the hurt was, it would soon disappear. She knew that this was all a part of growing up and that it was not the last time it would happen.

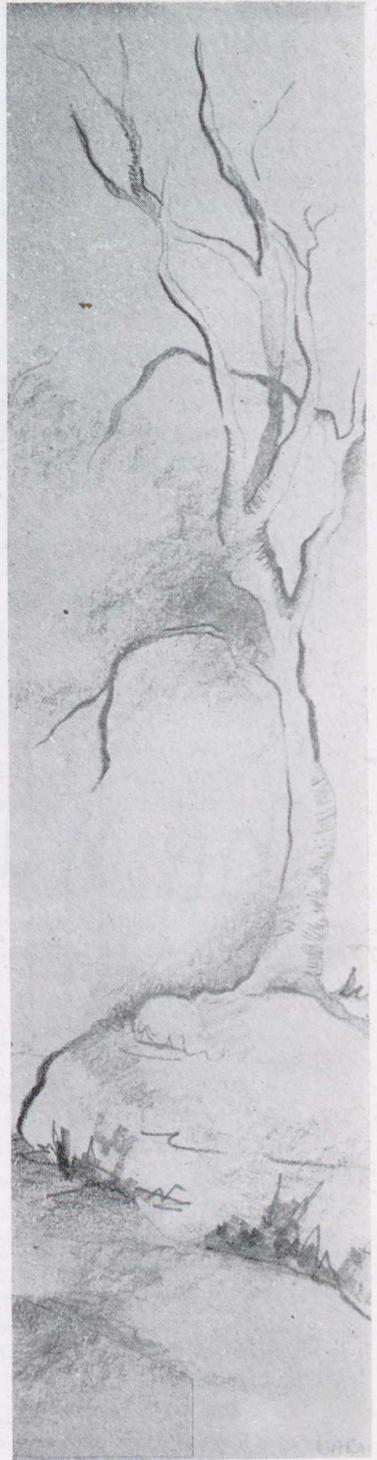
Once again, it was spring. The grass was sprouting, the trees were budding, and the sky was a heavenly blue. But this year she felt nothing; she could not even appreciate the beauty of the season.

Yet it was the spring that gave her the courage to dry her tears, hold her head a little higher, and prepare to break the news lightly.

## STORM

Angry, angry, the clouds came on —  
Huge, black, ominous.  
Forward they came,  
Their tremendous pressures rolling the world before them  
Into submission;  
And the rumble of their advance,  
Loud and deafening,  
Startled the birds from the sky  
And sent scared men into frenzied actions.  
For the briefest instant  
The earth was linked to the clouds  
By a jagged chain of white heat;  
And then others,  
And then a distant rumble,  
Swelling to a battlefield din,  
And then the climactic, axis-shaking crash.  
A cowed dog hid under a bed;  
A shaky hand lifted a shot glass.  
  
A dog barked bravely at the sun-burned postman;  
A child balanced defiantly on the corner-post of his bed;  
A man bragged of stemming a flood.

by lawrence eggleson



# he wanted to die



by George Smith

He reminded me of a wet dog in the middle of winter searching for a little warmth. That's the picture I got when I first saw him; I'll never forget it. He was dressed only in a thin pair of shorts and he was shaking all over. Maybe you could compare him to a drug addict trying to get rid of the habit and dying a thousand deaths in the attempt.

I was a new man on this job, but I had a little stockade work to my credit.

"Hey, man, gimme a cigarette," he muttered to me.

I paid no attention to the prisoner but kept on walking and looking over the situation in this new stockade on the outskirts of Seoul, the capital of South Korea.

We had just come north from Pusan the day before, our police company and one hundred G.I. prisoners. It was a trip to remember. The train averaged between twenty and twenty-five miles an hour over the one hundred and twenty mile run with numerous stops that I never could account for. It wasn't the speed that bothered us so much, but the bitter Korean cold was all through us as we stood between cars with our carbines on our shoulders closely watching the prisoners. As if this wasn't enough for a day, we were really low when we got our first look at the new stockade. It had been raining in Korea, and our new home looked like a Louisiana swamp with barbed wire stretched around a couple of tents.

The next day, after a restless, freezing night, the sergeant of the guard took me to the disciplinary segregation cell block and showed me around since this was to be my post. This was the second time I had seen him; all he was, was another prisoner to me. Since we were short of men I was to take charge of the cell block immediately. There were only two prisoners in the block; one was no trouble at all, and all they told me about the other one was that he had attempted suicide a couple of times and had been known to take dope.

"Guard, let me have a smoke," he murmured to me.

"No, I don't have any cigarettes. They don't want you to smoke anyway."

"Then gimme my clothes. I'm cold."

"I can't give you your clothes until the sergeant says it's O.K. That won't be until you learn to stop giving the guards a hard time."

I opened the cell door and looked at him. What a pitiful sight he was, standing in a corner trying to warm himself by tightly folding his arms and squatting up and down. I could imagine how cold he must be as I stood there shivering a little with a heavy field jacket on. What made it especially cold for him was the steel walls and concrete floor of the cell. You know how a car will get colder and colder without a heater in the midst of winter.

As I closed the cell door, I said, "I'll see about getting some clothes for you." He didn't answer.

Since this was a new stockade, the army hadn't got around to installing heaters in the tents and buildings as yet. Another inconvenience was that when a prisoner had to relieve himself the guard had to take him from his cell to the latrine.

"Gimme a smoke. I gotta have one. Please."

He was beginning to get on my nerves already. I decided to let him have a cigarette in hopes that it would keep him quiet for a while. I had read once that a smoke sometimes tends to ease an ex-addict's suffering. I guess maybe they let their imagination take the place of the real thing. Anyway, he was quiet for a while.

A little later in the day when they brought chow to the cell block, I fed my prisoners. The one that wasn't any trouble received a full meal, but the ex-addict received a restricted meal. If a prisoner is extremely difficult to handle, he may be punished by being placed on a restricted diet. Did you ever think what you would feel like at the end of a day when you were allowed only about 1500 calories to eat all day? This goes on for fourteen straight days broken only by one full meal every three days.

"I ain't eatin' this stuff," he yelled as he threw it out of his cell.

I could see the tension building up inside him as he stared at me with defiance and pure hate in his eyes. I could see just how lost he really was. Here was an American soldier about 3000 miles from home. Through some means, probably a Korean girl, he had become addicted to drugs, had been

caught and put into the stockade. He realized that this meant no more drugs and it also meant no cure or rest. As a result he had become so confused that he had even attempted suicide a couple of times. This got him into more trouble. As he looked at me I could tell that the factors causing him discomfort were being blamed on me. I represented authority; so it was my fault.

"Let me out. I wanna go to the latrine."

"O.K., but make it quick," I told him as I followed him back to the latrine.

When he reached the latrine he began walking around looking out of the barred windows.

"Hey, honey, come here," he yelled at a young Korean girl as she walked past the stockade toward her small village.

"You didn't want to go to the latrine. Get back in your cell!" I yelled as I pulled him back from the window.

Slowly he began walking back toward his cell. Then suddenly he grabbed an old, dull canteen knife from a sink, whirled around and shoved it toward his stomach!

I grabbed him, yanked the knife away, and shoved him against the wall as hard as I could.

"I ain't doing nothing. I ain't doing nothing," he whimpered as he cowered in a corner.

"Get in your cell!"

I quickly shoved him back into his cell and tried not to think about what might have happened if the knife had been of the usual kitchen variety instead of a dull army-issue canteen knife. The army doesn't exactly sympathize with a guard who allows a prisoner to commit suicide while under his supervision.

"Gimme a cigarette."

I didn't even answer this time but sat down and wondered why this prisoner wasn't in a padded cell in the hospital. Without a doubt, that's where he belonged.

It seemed like ten years later when my relief showed up, and I told him about the suicide attempt. I had seen prisoners fake suicide before, but here was one I believed to be sincere in his efforts.

"Guard, give me some clothes; I'm freezin'." It was the next day and I was back on duty. He had been awake all night sitting on the ice cold floor, naked except for a pair of tissue thin shorts. I finally received permission to give him pants and a shirt, and so he was quiet most of the day.

That evening the sergeant of the guard, a mild-mannered, easy going soldier from New York state, shoved a canvas cot into his cell to save him from the cold of the floor.

The next noon while walking from the mess hall in the rain, I heard an excited shout from the direction of the cell block. I ran to the cell block and knew something was wrong as soon as I saw the guard's face. His eyes seemed enlarged as if he had seen something he couldn't quite believe.

"In - - cell - - six," he stammered as he pointed to the cell.

The cell door was open. I ran in and looked. The first thing I saw was the prisoner's feet about thirty inches off the floor. Slowly I forced my eyes upward until they reached the torn canvas straps which had been part of an army cot but were now part of death as they wound ever so tightly around the prisoner's neck.

I often wonder what or of whom he was thinking as he knotted the straps about his neck, hoisted himself up, and kicked the bunk to one side.

## **THE STRANGENESS**

*PAUL KOKENIS KEANE*

The leaves crunched and rasped  
As I walked gently through them  
And crackled and clacked  
As they scurried along the quieted earth.

The breeze shook the trees,  
Husking and hushing as  
The sea on round pebbled shore,  
And gently ruffled my hair with wispy sound.

And then: . . . . sound changed . . . . earth changed . . . .  
and time stopped!

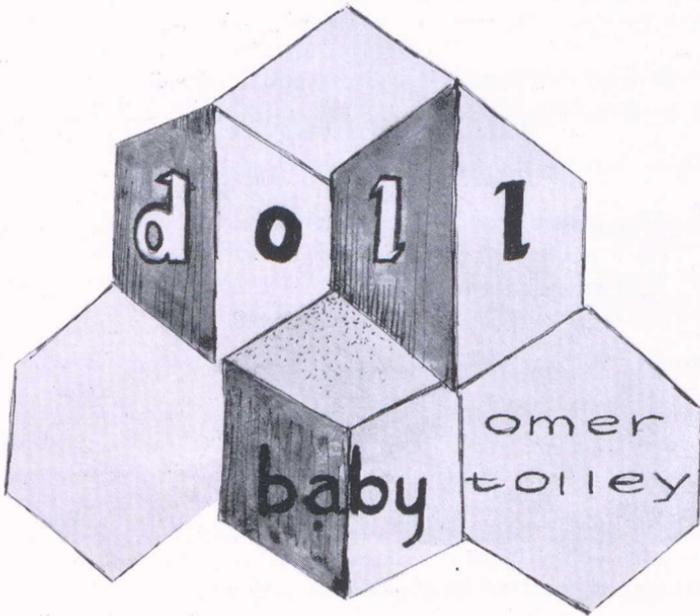
Sound was no longer sound, and earth was no  
longer earth

But all seemed suspended in strange serenity  
And I became absorbed into this Strangeness.

The trees now nodded  
Their silent branches in gentle awareness  
The crackling, clacking leaves  
Became a voice speaking a thousand secrets.

And the wind no longer wind  
Caressed my hair with Its cool warm fingers  
Singing and echoeing  
Its beautiful hallowed song of silent, serene  
souls.

Then so soon . . . . too soon,  
This brief moment of Strangeness ended  
And I returned to every day  
But already willing to seek It again.



"Mah name is Doll-Baby. Ah'm fo'teen y'ars old, mentally deficient, and sexy. Archie Lee and Ah have been married fo' two y'ars — but we ain't **really** married (giggle)!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Mah name is Archie Lee. Me an' Doll-Baby live in an old decadent Southern mansion. Doll-Baby's old decadent Southern aunt cooks fo' us. Ah own an old decadent Southern cotton gin that the Syndicate put out of business. We is po'. Ah is also somewhat frustrated 'cause we ain't **really** married (sigh)!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Please do not call me 'Wop.' My family came from Sicily — we are a very old people. I am the Stranger. I run the Syndicate cotton gin. I will tell the story."

\* \* \* \* \*

When the Syndicate cotton gin was burned, I knew at once it was arson — Archie Lee Arson. I had seen him in town the day before the fire — pawning his prized family heirloom, an autographed picture of Traveler, to get money to buy matches. The day after the fire I had a plan to ruin Archie Lee. I knew I would succeed — my family came from Sicily. We are a very old people.

I took all my cotton to Archie Lee's gin. He was expecting me. He was so excited that he slobbered on my coat — I had to beat him off with my riding crop. (I hate horses, but the mosquitoes here are so bad I have to carry a riding crop. I had brought enough cotton to keep Archie Lee busy all day. He called his wife, Doll-Baby. "Doll-Baby, y'all keep this gen'leman entertained while Ah gin out his cotton!")

Doll-Baby took her thumb out of her mouth and smiled seductively. She was the only thing that Archie Lee had that wasn't old and decadent. She would fit into my plan perfectly.

As the day wore on, my plan had not progressed too well. Finally I proposed a game of hide-and-seek. Doll-Baby squealed with delight and headed for the upstairs. I pursued her. Finally I cornered her in the attic. The attic was old and decadent like the rest of the house. Doll-Baby screamed and fell through.

I ran downstairs and found her in the dining room, dangling from the chandelier by one shoulder-strap. "Git me daown," she said.

"First sign this here confession that Archie Lee burned down the Syndicate cotton gin," I replied.

"Sho' 'nuff!"

I handed her the confession and a pen. She signed it. I reached up with my riding crop and pushed her strap off the chandelier. She landed on the back of a hound dog that had been sleeping in the middle of the table. He jumped off the table and ran through the kitchen door, Doll-Baby hanging on to his ears.

I smiled and put the confession in my pocket. Archie Lee entered. "Whar's Doll-Baby?" he snarled.

"I don't care, now that I have her statement against you. You're finished, Archie Lee!"

"Ah may be dumb, but Ah knows that Doll-Baby can't testify agin' me, her husband!"

"But you admit that you're not **really** married!"

"That's been took care of," Archie Lee retorted. "Ah had enuff left after buying matches to pay the preacher what Ah owed him. He's been sendin' us a bill every month since we was hitched!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Some day I'll get my revenge on Archie Lee — I know I will. My family came from Sicily — we are a very old people.



## SOLILOQUY I

by david dick

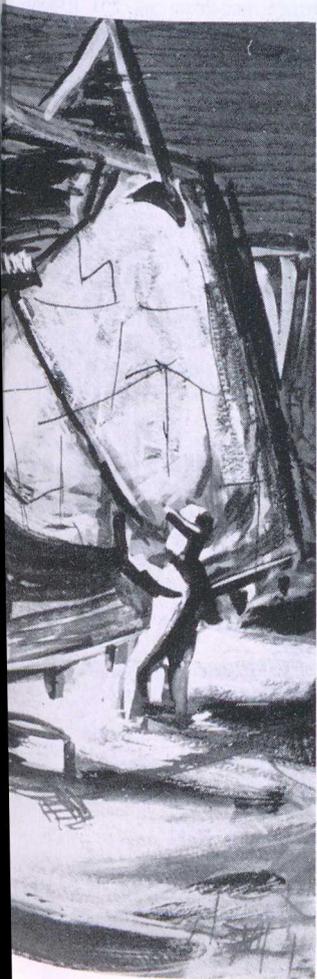
In my solitude as the fanciful years slip by,  
For a dozen shores my heart frolics, while dancing and gaiety revolve in  
perpetual play,

As robots of society enjoy a tasteless today.

And hidden away in some distant dark cavern,

My spirit and soul become restless to fight and conquer in the brawling  
alleys,

And seek the rainbow's gold.



# Goethe as a modern

by kathryn sims

It has been said that Goethe is modern — the most modern of all great authors — and that he touches the perplexities of modern life at its most relevant points, and has his wisdom for most of our ills.

I became increasingly aware, as I read Goethe's **Faust**, that he seems to portray characteristics of people, their personalities, and habits that are as universal today as in the eighteenth century.

Over the period of nearly two hundred years since Goethe began his **Faust**, we have changed little in our attitudes and philosophy of life. We still have the aspirations, the same prejudices, the same old fears, and the same faults common to Goethe's time. As we read **Faust**, we visualize in our mind's eye persons whom we have met, or have read about, or know well. We have the feeling of meeting old acquaintances on every page.

Goethe's individual major characters are vividly described so as to seem alive — we recognize their counterparts on every street corner — yes, even a Mephistopheles! But people in general in 1956 are not much different from those in the 1770's.

As you sit in your car in a neon-lit drive-in theater, your box of popcorn in your hand, your neighbors honking their horns for the show to begin, you might recall these lines:

The boards are firm, the scaffold is erected,  
And, open-eyed, the people sit and wait;  
A rare dramatic treat is now expected:  
They take for granted that it's something great.

As you sit through two full-length features, and five comedies, remember that the theater manager probably thinks, along with Goethe's Director,

Give much, please many: the applause is loud,  
And each goes home and says the show is striking.

Good business, isn't it? Our theater and movie owners realize all too well that

Some come because they're bored by night,  
Or see no more in us than masks and capers.  
Some, curiosities excite:  
Some come from gluttony's delight,  
Or, what is worse, from following the papers.

It is, perhaps, the feeling of any ticket-seller anywhere at any time that  
... nothing pleases me much more  
Than sight of crowds, when they begin to pour  
Wave upon wave, at half-past three or four,  
In daylight through our straight and narrow door;  
Or when they shove and fight towards the wicket,  
And nearly break their necks to get a ticket ...

Shall we turn our thoughts to more serious matters — matters of government and our reactions as citizens of this modern country of ours? Daily, I hear comments similar to these lines, very apropos to the situation in my own city:

No, Sir, the new-elected mayor's no good,  
And, now he's in, grows worse: I said he would.  
And what's he doing for the city, pray?  
Daily the fortunes of the place decline,  
While we must more than ever toe the line;  
But one thing's sure: there's always more to pay.  
Do you hear such remarks in your home town?

As we read our daily papers, watch the news telecast, and hear the radio news broadcast depicting wrangling, quarreling, and misunderstanding the world over, we give a prayer of thanksgiving, and realize with the Citizen

How good it is to live in peace abiding.

Perhaps a little too smugly, perhaps with too much complacency we agree with Third Citizen, a typical isolationist,

They're free to break their heads across, I say;  
Let all the world go topsy-turvy mad,  
But here we keep secure the same old way.

So we listen to reports, "Russia not desirous of war," "Russia exceeds in production of guided missiles," etcetera, etcetera, and our radios and television sets

... teach and babble undeterred  
— With fools there's not a hope of intervening —  
And when the people hear a sounding word  
They stand convinced that somewhere there's a meaning.

And as the political conventions commence, with all their color and fanfare, their blaring microphones prove only too clearly

The speaker with one tune upon his tongue  
Will win the day.

Speaking of communication, what media is more ageless, more modern, more reaching, than gossip? Martha's neighborhood was not much different than many in our time.

... they gossip so  
You'd think they'd naught to do the livelong day  
But watch their neighbors to and fro,  
And peek and pry, and so the rumors grow:  
One acts with care,  
But still they have their say.

Goethe depicts children, lovable, warm, mischievous, just as we know and love them. I have the impression that he held an affectionate regard for children and was intimately acquainted with them. I can see my own children during the holiday season, surrounding their grandfather as he sits in his easy chair beside the fireplace, as Goethe describes Margareta's childhood:

... children clustered in their loving gladness.  
And she, perhaps has curtseyed here and smiled  
With joy to take her grandsire's Christmas gift,  
And looked up, with the full cheeks of a child ...

Any parent can sympathize with Margareta, when as a young girl she cared for her little sister. Familiar words are these —

... I went through many anxious hours:  
By night its little cradle I would keep  
Close to my bed, and if it stirred or cried  
I woke from sleep  
To give it food, or take it to my side;  
Or, if it fretted still, I had to rise  
And dandle it about,  
And pace the little room to hush its cries.

Margareta tells of her duties as a homemaker, and we are grateful for our vacuum cleaners, our automatic washers and driers, and innumerable electrical aids;

But still, there's plenty to be done.  
We have no maid; the need to cook, and clean,  
And sew, and cater, keeps me on the run.  
Then there were chores or marketing to do,  
And so the same old thing the whole year through.  
With such a moil,  
One's spirits are not always of the best ...

But as we modern housewives defrost our frozen foods, partake of a fine meal cooked on an electric stove, and fall into bed after a busy day, we agree with Margareta:

And yet our toil  
Makes food taste sweeter, so that we are bless'd,  
And grateful for our rest.

As I read of the student and his conversation with Mephistopheles, I realize he is no different from today's student, perhaps leaving home for the first time, his check for tuition in his pocket, determined not to be homesick and to prove that the world is his to conquer:

I come with strength of heart and courage, please,  
And well provided with professors' fees.  
My mother pleaded hard against my going;  
But now I hope for something worth the knowing.

Yet, like many a freshman, he begins to have his doubts — his environment is new and unfamiliar, and home seems good:

And yet, I've half a mind, Sir, to go back:  
The walled-in close, and gloomy college hall  
Don't suit my mind and temperament at all.

As we become implicated in income tax returns, wills, business of real estate, we, too, voice the complaint that

They've statutes, clauses, rights, in such a smother  
As spreads from place to place the legal taint,  
And ties one generation to another  
Worse than a slow inherited complaint.  
Sense becomes nonsense, charity a nuisance,  
And grandsons learn to curse the lawyer's usance.

The profession of medicine is not neglected by Goethe — many a doctor establishes his following by the precept that

A bedside manner sets their heart at ease,  
And then they're yours for treatment as you please.  
A string of letters following your name  
Assures them that you far surpass your peers . . .

I am afraid that many people of today also share with the author the opinion

As for the younger generation's ways  
They never were so pert and overweening!

There always has been, and always will be a "younger generation," and there always has been, and always will be people who have the author's viewpoint.

I could continue ad infinitum with numerous examples of Goethe's modernity and his human understanding of others which make his writing universal. Then, too, we could discuss at great length the problems which beset **Faust**, his soul-searching, his attempts to understand life — these problems are problems that all of us face today. We experience the same frustrations, commit the same follies, and search for the answers that troubled him. Martiaí says however:

Oho! That's enough! . . .  
We've written to the very end of the parchment.  
Down to the wooden stick that rolls it up,  
And you want to go on  
And on  
As tho you were not completed! . . .  
That's enough, little book,  
That's quite enough!"



# TRENCH FOOT

by William Lindsay

The steady tropical rains dripped off the canvas that was stretched out, making a crude tent to protect the nearly exhausted soldiers resting underneath. Some of the men were stretched out; others smoked or talked in low tones. One soldier sat with his helmet between his legs, studying his muddy, soggy boots. He pulled his legs up close to his body and began to pull at the mud-encased laces.

"Hey, Castner!"

He looked up.

"What the hell are you doin'?"

"Takin' my boots off; waddaya think?"

"Leave 'em on!"

"Baloney! Leave 'em on; my toes are burnin' up; they're drivin' me nuts.

I gotta get these damn boots off and put on clean socks. They itch like the devil."

"You'll get a chance later; leave 'em on."

"What the hell for?"

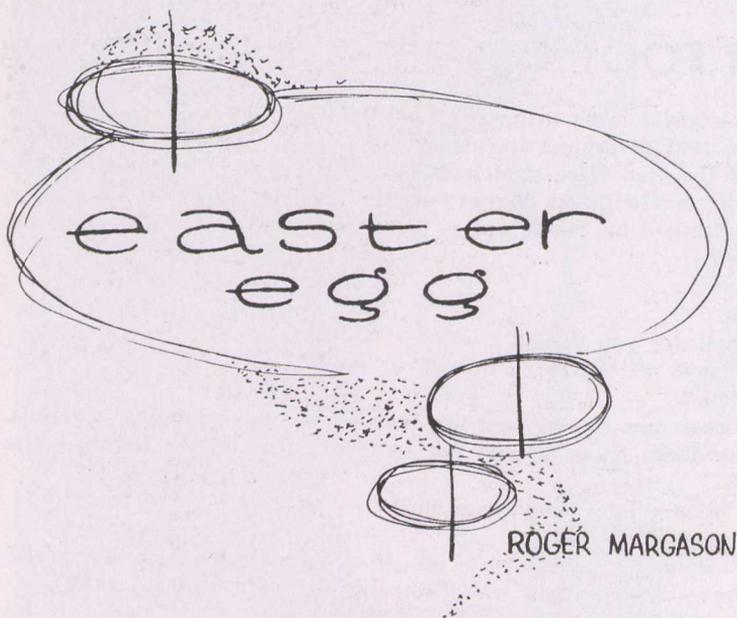
"You heard me; damn it, leave 'em on. If we gotta get out in a hurry, I don't want to have to sit around while you dust off your stinkin' dogs."

Harry stuck his feet straight out in front of him. "The bastard," he thought. "I'd like to smash him in the mouth with my rifle butt. I'd bet if one of those other guys started to take off his boots, he wouldn't say a word. You bastard," he whispered aloud.

"You say somethin', Castner?" The sergeant moved like a wounded tiger across the wet ground; he was crouched, but his back still rippled the canvas cover; he straddled Harry's legs and stuck his face up close. "Listen, Castner, I hate your guts, and, God dammit, one more move out of you and I'll tear ya apart. Ya understand me?" His face was damp and ugly; the black bristles stuck out and his teeth were stained yellow. He shouted, "Ya understand me, Yella-belly, ya understand me?" He turned and recrossed the low tent, sat down, then glared across at Harry.

Harry dropped his gaze to his boots. His face was flushed pink and he could feel his heart pounding in his chest. "The bastard, the dirty bastard," he thought. "Maybe I shoulda got up and had it out with him. Next time his mouth opens, damn it, I'll close it for him." He looked down at his feet. Inside his boots, his toes writhed, hot and wet.

The rain continued and it soon became apparent that they were going to stay put for the night, but still they sat without conversation. Harry watched the man sitting next to the sergeant, he was taking his boots off. "Damn it, I'm takin' 'em off," he thought. His feet itched and burned even more now. He tore at the laces, but the soggy leather tangled and tightened into knots. He worked feverishly; sweat stood out on his brow. Finally the knots gave way. He pulled the laces out, spread the damp leather and pulled the boot off. The wet cotton sock was pulled down to the end of his foot — around his toes. He pulled it off and looked at his toes. The skin was white and cracked. He massaged the burning, itching toes and sighed with pleasure and relief.



By the time Edmond J. Purdy reached the uncomfortably clean plant of the Yummy-Good Candy Corporation, a small riot was in progress. The ten feet of carefully tended ground between the building and the sidewalk, which was proudly referred to as "the gardens," was packed like a five dollar box of chocolates with people. The crowd flowed over the sidewalk and washed back and forth across the street as policemen tried, unsuccessfully, to break it up.

"E.J." signalled the chauffeur to go around to the alley separating the Yummy-Good holdings from the Wooffie Dog Food factory. His face wore its usual master-of-all-situations expression, but his mind was troubled. Of all possible times for things to go wrong, it would have to be at the height of the Easter-egg season. It was all the fault of those young research men, he'd wager. Only last month they had persuaded him to let them try to improve the Peek-ins in time for the rush. After all, progress is progress, but what more can be done with peek-in Easter-eggs?

The chauffer, a big man with a squint acquired from a lifetime of gazing at stop-lights, opened the door and E.J. stepped out of the car and into a service elevator.

He made it to his office on the third floor without being seen. Fortunately, it was empty. Miss Mudge was there, of course, but after eighteen years she was considered a piece of office equipment.

"Good morning, Mr. Purdy," she said with the same intonation she had used for the past eighteen years.

"Good morning, Miss Mudge." His voice was not so calm as hers, but then he had more to lose. "Well, Miss Mudge," he said, removing his topcoat and scarf and placing them in the closet with his umbrella and black homberg, "what seems to be the difficulty?"

"It's the eggs, sir. The Peek-ins."

"A-hah! And -- ah -- what is **wrong** with the Peek-ins?"

"Well, sir, the fifteen-cent size; the children-in-the-garden model? ----" she placed the eraser end of her pencil between her teeth — a sign she was thinking of how to phrase what came next.

"Yes, yes?"

"Well, sir, it seems that they are real children in a real garden."

Edmond J. Purdy sat down, abruptly. Miss Mudge continued, cautiously.

"Now the twenty-five cent size, the farm-house-and-brook — are you all right, Mr. Purdy?"

E.J. flickered an eyelash, imperceptibly. Relieved, Miss Mudge went on.

"It babbles."

"**What** babbles?"

"The brook."

"Oh."

"The seventy-five cent small-country-village is really very quaint, but there appears to be something unusual going on; you can see people running around. Now, the three dollar fifty cent special — the typical-American city, ----"

"That will be sufficient, Miss Mudge." E.J. sounded like Marley's ghost. "Get me those research men. Get them here at once! They're responsible. I don't know what they've done, or how they've done it, but they're the ones." The last part of this speech was mumbled rather incoherently and seemingly addressed to no one in particular.

"Well, sir, it might be that new machine they installed last week to increase the Peek-in production. They ----"

"**Get** them, Miss Mudge." E.J.'s voice suggested that he was going to play Vesuvius to their Pompeii.

Miss Mudge quickly and quietly left the office.

After a moment, E.J. got up from his chair and walked across to the window. The street was a solid mass of black for two blocks in either direction. He wished now that he had not been in such a hurry to distribute the Peek-ins, to "beat the competition by at least a week." He wondered if the murmur coming from the crowd below sounded anything like the brook in the twenty-five cent egg.

Suddenly the sounds of their voices were cut off as if with a scissors. The black mass became mottled with the white of upturned faces.

E.J. raised his head very, very slowly. He did not have to look up — he could guess what was there.

From a gigantic hole in the sky a huge brown eye stared down, quizzically.

## THE SUN

*Cynthia Johnson*

The sun is golden butter  
Spreading  
Sunshine over a stale and flat world  
Melting  
A ray into every crack and corner of the earth  
Hardening  
On the icy ground and in early morning air  
Covering  
And concealing all darkness and strife  
Reflecting  
All beauty and the loveliness of creation  
Glazing  
Rooftops like golden toast  
Flavoring  
And enriching Life.

## PAGAN'S SONG

*Theresa Moscinski*

What strange and glorious powers do you hold  
That make men bound to linger in your spell?  
The thund'rous roar of demons in the cold  
With fiery rays and flashing light you quell.  
The shrouded evening god awakes, alarms  
The babe who questions darkness with his cries.  
The old who praise your mystifying charms  
Still revel in the beauty of your rise.  
Oh tell me, Sun, the nature of your quest  
In giving lady Earth her crown of light.  
In what forbidden city do you rest?  
Who keeps your flame aglow throughout the night?  
Immortal Sun, your secrets none can draw  
And man can only stand afar in awe.

## DEBUT

MARY ENDRES

A ballerina shyly stood outside  
A cold and crystal stage of hardened snow  
With backdrop grey and bleak; the only sound  
The whistle of the chilling winter wind.

*Shy and tender ballerina,  
Shivering outside the door,  
Do not fear, Oh do not fear  
To dance upon this icy stage.*

With pointed shoe she stepped upon the snow,  
And then drew back with sudden shivering chill.  
But where her foot had touched the hardened ground  
A tiny spot of warmer brown appeared.

*Come, gentle ballerina,  
Again come on the stage;  
You alone can drive away  
The darkness and the cold.*

And so she came, all clad in tender green,  
And whirled and sang. And as she faster flew ---  
In ever larger circles gaily danced ---  
Her warmth and greenness filled the lighted stage.

**NOISE**

by verne l. martin

It whispers, it blasts, it soothes;  
We abhor it — yet we embrace it.  
The throb, the roar,  
The scream, the yell.  
The mingling of voices,  
Human and machine,  
Creates a tension unbearable.

Alone without noise — no sound!  
The quiet grows over all,  
And we are smothered.  
We hear only our thoughts  
That scream to find expression  
While we are alone, and they die.

The harsh cacophony of noise  
Is like blood to the soul.  
We cannot escape to solitude and quietness.  
We need the world, the people, the noise  
To create our life — to grow.



by sally s. meaders

One, skipping along, saw  
The earth was bright,  
Beautiful.  
Splashing sunlight drowned all darkness.  
Larks warbled lyrics.  
God was Kind.

One, shuffling along, saw  
The earth was black,  
Ugly.  
Sodden shadows mired all light.  
Owls moaned requiems.  
God was Cruel.

PENDULUM

One, strolling along, saw  
The earth was varied,  
Living.  
Light and shadow mingled.  
Birds chirped.  
God was Right.

The broken pieces of a soul  
Lie scattered on the classroom floor;  
A blob of living, breathing flesh  
Moves on, then pauses at the door.  
It eyes the pieces one by one,  
Then vaguely wonders if it should  
Return and mend the broken soul,  
— And then it wonders if it could.

And so the mass of flesh moves out,  
And wanders through a spotless hall  
Alive with white fluorescent light,  
And vaguely wonders — if it could  
if it would.

by nancy bergman

# NIGHT

laverne  
ravlin

# ERRAND

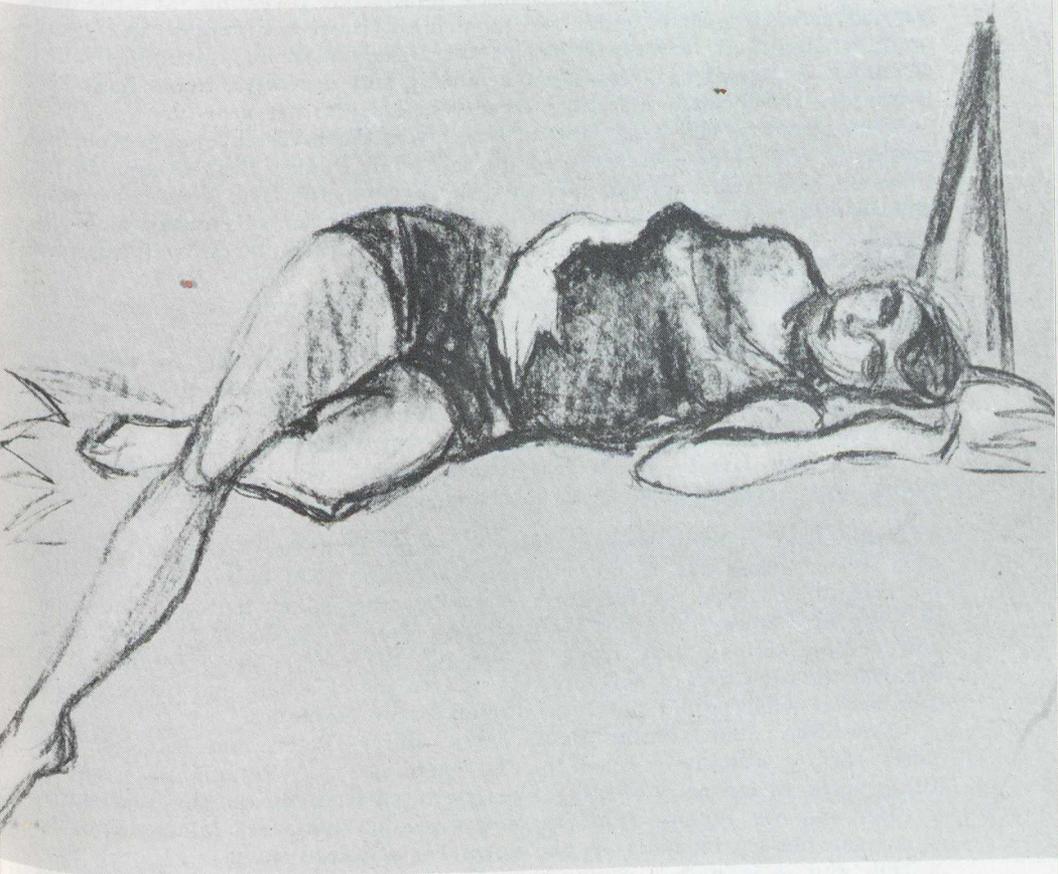
Through a warm mist and the darkness of early morning, I walk urgently to my destination a block or more away. An instinct born of habit guides my steps over the wet grass of the hospital grounds. All is still and quiet. Even the croaking of the little green and gold frogs is gone from the shrubbery nearby. The stillness is ominous. I glance toward the isolation unit on my right. Did I see a flickering light? No, I must be wrong, for now there is only a somber shadow. A drone high overhead warns me not to switch on my flashlight. The main building looms before me; the grey stone is obscured by the night. I find the entrance and pass through, shutting the door quickly as I keep in mind the black-out regulations. The long, wide corridor seems endless. I am conscious of the swish-swish of my uniform as I pass through the sleeping hospital and enter the pavilion that leads directly to the maternity ward. I leave a quietly breathing hospital behind and anticipate a scene of expeditious activity ahead of me.

Suddenly, through the glass enclosure of the pavilion, I see a flash of lightning and then another. In one instant I see vast, yellow-tinged clouds rolling turbulently out of the south like billows of smoke from an inferno. Thunder and high winds engulf the land with tremulo. Jagged barbs of lightning change to quivering flares that illuminate the surrounding area. Trees stretch their limbs overhead and bow grotesquely before the fury of the wind. A majestic camphor tree glides forward, exposing its roots to claw the air like monstrous tentacles. I listen in vain for the crashing sounds to reach me. Am I watching a silent film accompanied by a titanic organ? I want to stop and ponder the magnitude of the storm, but I think of an infant wanting to be born this night. And I hurry on.

As soon as I close the door behind me, I can see beams from flashlights darting about as nurses carry on with their affairs, much too intent to watch the tempest outside. I realize that the black-out precautions have been assisted by power failure, and I give a prayer that the auxiliary power will come through in time. I switch on my flashlight and glance at my watch already pinned to my pocket. Can it be that only four minutes have passed since I was called?

Later I stand by a bassinet watching a newly born baby sleeping calmly, his protest at birth soothed by warm oil and soft blankets. I think, "What a night to present yourself to the world. Right now you are safe from the storm raging outside your window, from the war being fought outside your world . . . . May this always be true, little one."

I retrace my steps; the storm blows over. As the sun comes up, I sleep.



# A Twentieth Century Nightmare

Peter Davies

Little Petunia, her eyes opening wider and wider, silken hair dancing about with static electricity, and frock puffed out revealing fat little legs, toddled across the floor under the admiring eyes of her mother and grandmother. However, it was neither of the three mentioned attributes which Granny commented on. "My what beautiful, soft skin little Tunia has," said Granny as she scooped the petite three-year-old into her arms.

"Oh, of course she has beautiful skin," was the invariable reply from her mother. "Why, I have never used anything but Puffle's Skin Cream on her since she was born." As she said this, she held up the blue jar of rare balm and showed its every angle, much to the dissatisfaction of Granny who preferred to believe that the skin was just another attribute derived from her side of the family.

"Now, Daughter, how you go on about that new-fangled jar of goo!" exclaimed Granny in a contemptuous tone.

"Just try some of Puffle's Skin Cream today, Mother, and see ten years disappear from your face overnight. Why, it's unbelievable. Rush down to your drugstore right away and buy the large economy size. You'll never regret it," lectured her daughter in a very authoritative manner.

"It's a little late for me to lose ten years or to do any running to drugstores, dear," replied Granny as she carried Petunia out of the room.

Petunia, at sixteen, was watched by more than two pairs of admiring eyes as she looked out upon her devoted company. Her eyes were still wide but accentuated by a skillful touch of mascara, her silken hair was now kept in place by a spray, and her matured legs were concealed from view by a powder-blue formal. But again, it was not the eyes, hair, or dress which engaged the attention of her admirers; it was the clearness and lustre of her complexion which could never be duplicated by cosmetics.

"Now Ron, John, Philip, Paul, Larry, Harry, Peter, and Rudolph, my dance card is absolutely filled for the evening," said Petunia in a sweet, lilting voice, as ten pairs of green eyes glowered from the surrounding walls.

"Her and her Puffle's Skin Cream complexion!" snarled Jealousy Greene, as she ran her scarlet nails up and down her sequined purse.

"Oh, but it is such a divine complexion," cooed her fellow wallflower, and all the gentlemen present seemed to agree wholeheartedly.

"Why didn't my mother use Puffle's Skin Cream on me," wailed Jealousy as a tear trickled slowly down her dark, dry skin. All that long evening, Jealousy and her other non-Puffle-using friends watched with envy as Petunia's beautiful complexion passed from one masculine arm to the next.

Not too many years later, Petunia found herself on the terrace with Carleton, the banker's handsome son. The soft beauty of the May flowers were reflected from her large, blue eyes, the moon radiated from the sheen of her hair, and the rustle of her delicate white chiffon dress was the only sound which broke the silence of a long, rapturous stare.

"Of all the beauty of this evening, Petunia darling, nothing compares with your incomparably delicate complexion. It has the richness of the marble in my father's bank and the softness of an old dollar bill," gasped Carleton in a passionate outburst.

"Oh, Carleton dear," whispered Petunia, "all that I am, I owe to Puffle's Skin Cream. It's the skin cream that the stars all use."

"Will you, Petunia with your beautiful Puffle's complexion, be mine forever?" asked Carleton as he flashed a diamond which all but blinded Petunia.

"Oh, I will, I will," sighed Petunia as her complexion glowed with excitement.

Shortly after their long, beautiful South American honeymoon, Petunia and Carleton sat contentedly in the tasteful sitting room of their new mansion. The life below the equator had turned Petunia's complexion into the most golden of tans, which offered a fine contrast to the newspaper which presently enveloped her. Suddenly, she started from the chair, crumpled the newspaper into her hands, revealing a frenzied look, and slumped back into her chair with a heart rending wail. "Carleton, what am I to do! What am I to do!"

"My dear, darling Petunia, what can be the matter with you?" said Carleton in an anxious tone as he looked into her lovely, but troubled face.

"The Puffle's Skin Cream Corporation has gone bankrupt. Do you understand me? Puffle's has closed," groaned Petunia as she cradled her head in her arms and rocked to and fro.

"Now, my dear, there are other skin creams on the market. I'll get you the best that money can buy," he said in a reassuring tone.

"You don't understand! You don't understand! There can be no substitute for Puffle's. Oh, what am I to do? What am I to do?" As she said this, she retreated to the solitude of her dressing table.

Not many months later, Carleton grimly stood on the threshold with a suitcase in his hand. Suddenly, a woman with a very youthful figure, but with a face which was as wrinkled as a dried orange peel, bolted into the hallway.

"Carleton, Carleton, please don't leave me! Please stay!" Petunia screamed as she flung herself before him and grasped his knees.

"I'm sorry, woman, but I no longer love you. I only married you for your beautiful complexion, and all is gone. We have nothing more in common. We must part," he blurted out as he pulled himself loose and rushed out the door.

Thirty years of neglect left its imprint on the mansion which had housed Petunia and Carleton. The bricks had begun to crumble, and the shutters hung at rakish angles beside the blank windows. The shingled roof had begun to bald as one by one the shingles curled up and dropped to the littered yard. The once well kept lawn had long since given up to burdock and field grass, and the neglected shrubs had turned the remainder of the yard into a veritable jungle.

However, despite the air of desertion which pervaded over the house, the neighbors insisted that they had seen several times a shriveled, ugly, old woman peering out from the tattered draperies. Indeed, one neighbor was fond of relating the time that she had seen an old woman with large, sunken eyes; matted, grey hair; and a ragged, faded dress; standing at the window running one gnarled hand over a wrinkled, sallow cheek, and piteously shaking in the other hand an empty blue jar.

# Kindergarten at 18

BY ROSEMARY HAKE

I was finally home after successfully completing my first year at college. "Successfully," of course, meant not flunking out. I'm afraid I possessed the rather superior "I can lick the world, with my right hand tied behind my back" feeling common among those who have survived their freshman year.

Diligently I was seeking some sort of employment. One reason was to help me while away the idle summer months; another reason was to insure myself of a second year at college.

One morning I got a call from the grade school principal. He said that he understood I was studying to be a teacher and he wondered if I'd help him out. Mr. Larson said he knew my ability would certainly make me more than equal to the task he had in mind, and, after sufficient "buttering-up," he got down to the reason for his call.

The kindergarten teacher had broken her ankle and he wondered if I could "help out the last week?" "It's necessary to continue classes," he explained, "because graduation and rhythm band practice are all slated for this week and they are an absolutely essential part of the commencement exercises."

I accepted, of course. I knew that I would be able to handle the job. Really, I was more than adequately prepared. My Fundamental Psychology 101 course would enable me to understand the children; I'd be able to communicate quite well with them due to Fundamentals of Speech 100, and when things got dull I could always — thanks to Freshman English — amuse the group by imitating my Professor's attempt at quoting Chaucer in Middle English. Yes, I was well equipped to take on twenty classes of fifty each rather than just one class of twenty-two children. Besides, I was bigger than any one of them.

The week end passed and when Monday morning dawned I stood with Mr. Larson outside room 100. Mr. Larson gave me a rather general outline with three main topics and a few notes under each one. He said I should try to follow their general order but to improvise on the nature in which the events were to be carried out if I could think of a better method. I thanked him and read:

## I. PUTTING AWAY OF WRAPS ETC.

A. Each child knows, by the color, in which bin his clothes are supposed to go. Have them put them there by row. (15 min.)

Fifteen minutes seemed a ridiculous waste of time to me. I thought I'd just collect all the "wraps etc." and have them tell me what color belonged to them.

I'd collected the sweaters, overcoats, boots, marble sacks, head scarfs, popsicle sticks, and hats, and after doing so found out that though the children knew the bins by the color they didn't know the name of the color. Redistribution produced a grand mix-up and a few fights. Finally, forty-five minutes later, I arrived at:

## II. PLAYTIME

### A. Outdoors, if nice. (1 hour)

It wasn't nice so we played inside. I thought the group could find sufficient amusement for one half hour (I was running thirty minutes behind schedule) by utilizing the playroom's sandbox, slide, balls of all sizes, and miniature village. Playtime proved to be an eventful half hour. I had wiped up seven noses and one puddle (Harry was a nervous child and prone to accidents of this sort) when I was called upon to rescue Helen, who was lying prostrate at the top of the slide, screaming that she was afraid. I tried verbally to convince her to come down; Billy tried physically by beating on her hands to make her let go. Neither technique worked, but Billy's did produce louder screams. I kept asking myself, "What would my Fundamental Psych. course advocate in this situation?"

Tossing aside reverse psychology theories, I decided it might be best to go up and get her. I literally peeled each child off each rung of the slide's ladder and ascended. When I reached the top Helen decided she would try after all and whizzed down the slide.

At that moment, when I was standing alone at the top of the slide which was surrounded by all the tots, Mr. Larson stepped in to see how I was doing. What I was doing was wondering if I looked as foolish as I felt.

I got down, gathered up my little brood, returned to room 100, and read:

## III. SHARING TIME

### A. Let the children say anything they wish.

### B. Never stop them because this a very important opportunity for them to vent many of their frustrations. (1 hour)

"Well," I said, "who has anything to tell us for sharing time today?"

Martha began, "Frank Smith pushed on the bus this morning."

"You always tell that," interrupted Frank hastily, "I got a real good thing to say. My Daddy bought me a new tank because I helped Mommy take wallpaper off. He said that I was a good boy."

I thought the latter "share" was the type of thing we should pursue so I asked if anyone else had gotten anything new, or had anything new happen.

Tommy's hand shot up but Valerie began talking.

"My Momma says she's too fat and she's on a new diet and I might get a licking tonight 'cause I sassed her this morning."

This last thought made Valerie think a little about the evening's probable outcome, and she became lost in reverie.

I turned to Tommy and nodded.

He began, "Well last night ..."

Then Sylvia interrupted. I guess she decided that her story would be more beneficial to the group, and told us about their new baby and how her mother let her watch when she washed him and when he ate, but that she didn't like to watch her change his diapers because ...

"Oh that's fine," I interrupted, "but I do think Tommy wanted to say something."

Tommy, who was fairly bursting, blurted out, "My Momma and Daddy had another fight last night and ..." (Apparently he was trying to find words to describe the incident).

Each little face conveyed an interest much more pronounced than when I had read **Billy Whiskers** to them. Every one of them waited patiently for

Tommy to elaborate on his initial statement. However my thoughts during his pauses, were very jumbled. I feared everything he might say as I had visions of the PTA descending on me when the story was repeated at home. My only stable thought was "Never stop them — vent their frustrations — Never stop them — Never stop them."

The noon bell interrupted Tommy's thoughts, the class's fascination, and my despair. Though each little countenance bore a look of supreme disappointment, I'm sure mine imparted a picture of pure, wonderful relief.

We got into our "wraps etc." in record time, lined up and marched out to the tinny piano's rendition of "Praise All Praise". (I'd hated that piece when I was in grade school but today it sounded like music of and by the seraphim.)

On the way home that noon I was seriously considering untying my right hand.



## CREATION

*by Donald Voss*

"Let there be light," cried man in triumph  
And there was light.  
And darkness lay beneath  
As if to cover the abyss.

Man saw the light that it was evil,  
For in that void could ought but evil live?  
The Garden emptied —  
And man called it progress.

The twisted trees and barren fields  
Appear beneath the clouds.  
The vibrant green is gone,  
Enclosed in death's gray hand.

Plants bearing seeds of every kind are sterile.  
The hermit crab walks upon the sands,  
Alone untouched by power of man.

There is no shrub or plant on earth,  
No one to till the soil,  
For man mocked God and  
Molded man into the dust.

# LONG WEARING QUALITIES

by Merle Schroeder

"While your Pa goes to the bank, we'll go in here and pick out a skirt for you. You need a good serviceable skirt for school. Brown, I think. Something that won't show the dirt." Ma grasped Martha's elbow, guiding her through the crowd into the doorway of the Acme Dry Goods Company.

"Ma, can't I have something pretty for a change? Serviceable! I hate that word."

As she spoke, a section of the revolving door separated Martha from her mother. Either Ma did not hear the plea, or she chose to ignore it, for she was still talking in the same tone when she stepped out of the wedge-like compartment that she had occupied for a brief moment. "Size 12, I think. Maybe you'll be able to wear it next year, too, if we take it in a little bit now."

That was Ma for you, always thinking of thrift, always being practical. Ma never wasted even her glances on pretty things. She judged everything by its price, by how much wear it would give, and by how much work it would save. Martha looked down at her heavy black oxfords with the rubber heels. Ma was right. They would last forever — perfect companions for the proposed serviceable brown skirt.

If only, just this once, she could have a red skirt like the one in the window of the Quality Shoppe across the street. Martha drew a deep, longing breath and let it out quickly as she inhaled the moth-ball odor that seemed always to hang in the air at Acme.

Ma was forging ahead through the shoppers, leading the way to the Junior Misses Ready-to-Wear department. Martha lingered for a moment at the scarf counter, fondling a paisley silk neckpiece draped about the neck of the display dummy.

"Come on! We can't keep Pa waitin'." Ma had turned back to summon the girl. "I never could see no sense in folks wanting to hang rags around their necks."

"I think they're pretty, Ma." The girl gently stroked the soft, bright silk once more before she turned dutifully to follow her mother.

"Pretty, but useless." Ma spoke with finality, putting an end to the discussion. She had reached a rack of skirts labeled "Reduced," and had begun a determined search through the size 12's.

Martha idly flipped the hangers on another rack, watching slyly her mother's deliberations and catching her breath as she saw her mother pull forth a thick, nubby tweed, brown with black flecks.

"Oh, Ma! Not that! Please not that! I hate brown and black together. Ma, could I, just this once ..."

Her voice trailed off. She couldn't put her wishes into words. Though she knew it was useless to coax Ma, she pulled from the rack a bright scarlet skirt and held it up to her waist. Maybe Ma would melt a little if she could see how gay it was. Martha turned to the three-way mirror, holding the skirt so that it would cover the blue serge that she was wearing. Her eyes followed admiringly the black soutache braid which outlined the hem.

Martha could see by the reflection in the mirror that Ma was right behind her. The woman was squaring her shoulders, drawing herself up to her full five feet, rejecting the choice by the very rigidity of her body. Her face was stern and disapproving, her thin lips compressed into a straight, severe line. When she spoke, her words were cold, decisive.

"Young lady, that would be in the cleaners all the time. It's too light. It shows all the spots. Anyway, it's too flashy and too expensive. Your Pa ain't tossing them mail sacks 10 to 12 hours a day just to make money for you to throw away on giddy clothes. Remember, you ain't Miss America of 1929. You're a schoolgirl."

Another reflection appeared in the mirror. It was Pa, looking dishevelled and frantic. His eyebrows were raised into two pointed arches as though they had been frozen that way by a combination of fright and bewilderment. He stood toying with his hat, trying to speak and not knowing how to start.

"Ma," he blurted. "We're ruined. Wiped out. Everything we've saved — everything's gone. All our sacrificing and scrimping — for nothing. The banks, they're closing. We can't get our money. They say the stockmarket has crashed."

He mumbled on, choking, incoherent. Martha and Ma stared at him, Martha still clutching the bright skirt. Then Ma went wild. She did something she'd never done in all her life. She forgot all about Economy and Rainy Days and Long Wearing Qualities. "Shut up, Pa," she said. "It ain't the end of the world. I don't know nothing about stockmarkets and Wall Street and such, but I know it ain't the Millennium."

She twitched open the catch on her shabby black purse and reached to the bottom for her flat wallet. She drew a wrinkled five dollar bill from the wallet and handed the money to Martha. "Girl," she commanded. Her sharp chin jutted forward defiantly, and her eyes shot out flashing sparks that ricocheted off the rims of her thick glasses. "Buy your skirt — the red one."

THE POET

by NANCY BERGMAN

*Shimmering moments  
(like fireflies dropping their gems on the dark)  
softly entice him and teasingly ask to be held.*

*Laughing and dancing, they easily dart from the ungentle touch,  
but he wants them too much.*

*And wondering worlds linger to watch  
— while petal-sweet fingers tenderly fold  
— while ethereal lights are placed with a kiss  
in eternity's crystalline jars.*

*FRAGILE MOMENT*

*We laugh ...*

*And the sunlight from a thousand summers*

*Congeals*

*To just one golden day.*

*We cry ...*

*And glass dreams shatter.*

*Broken fragments*

*Reflect the sunlight,*

*Like passing images*

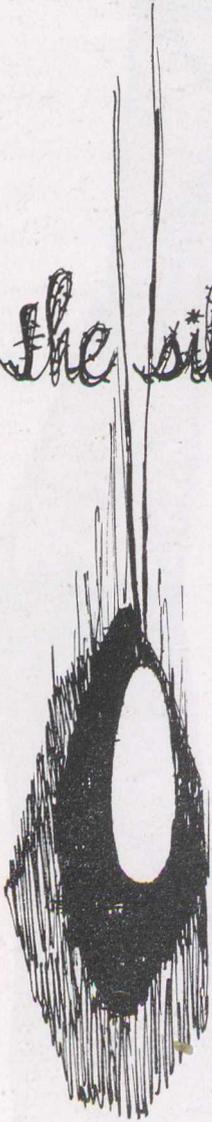
*Upon a pool.*

*by NANCY IMELMANN*



jeanne hopkins

# The silver pendant



A pair of gnarled, shriveled hands clumsily clutched the handles of the old primitive plow, hands rough and yellowed with grime, whose nails were worn even with the stiff, blunt fingers. With all the feeble strength she could muster, she bore down assiduously on the rough handles, seeking to push the steel prongs deep into the rocky earth. She trudged on and on down the borderless field, a miserable figure, a wretched, soulless body.

Around her were other women exerting what strength they possessed over similar plows; women whose bodies were thin, bony, dirty; faces so gaunt and drawn their eyes sunk like glazed marbles in cadaverous sockets; teeth rotted away to the gum from malnutrition; matted hair hung in dark strands about bent shoulders.

The muscles in her back and arms were knotted in a persistent aching which had now become a part of her natural being. Through colorless eyes she could faintly make out the border of the field in the distance.

As she pressed closer and closer, the big wooden posts supporting the omnipotent barbed wire loomed ominously. At last, reaching the end, she rested her head gratefully on a post, hoping to regain a bit of strength before trekking back down the field. No sooner had she done so than the lash of a rawhide whip on her half-naked back sent her hurtling to the ground. Here she lay, an abject heap in the dirt.

"Get up!" the guttural tongue commanded.

Her bony fingers clawed the earth. She sobbed inwardly, tearlessly, as the rawhide spoke a second time. Painfully, she pushed her body erect, blood oozing into the folds of her clothing from the fresh gashes across her back. At the point of a gun, she was prodded back to the main camp and thrown into a damp, dreary underground rat hole. It was a small, poorly ventilated vermin infested hole, with dirt walls, dirt ceiling, and a trap door.

After the brutal shove down into the hole, she collapsed on the damp floor, hearing the trap door fall into place, not wanting to look up into the animosity of the Captain's cold, cruel face. This dogmatic brute who had lashed her so many times, had mercilessly brought death to many of the women. He was perfunctory, inhuman, with a complacent smile glued to his thick lips. Every woman in the camp trembled at the very sight of him. Although she had been here only a few days, she was quick to realize that he was hated and feared by everyone. No one in the many camps she had been in had treated her so brutally, so inhumanly, as the Captain.

She recalled the fateful day so long ago when the enemy soldiers had invaded her humble, yet happy country home. She had seen her own husband shot to death. He had stubbornly refused to answer the questions of the Nazis. He shook his head when they asked him over and over, "Where is your wife?" They searched the house, the barn, and jabbing through the hayloft with pitch-forks, had flushed out his wife and their seven year old son, Karl, and they were impounded at the camp at W.....

For several months she had kept Karl with her among the five hundred odd prisoners at the camp. Then, that unforgettable day when they were separated! Her precious son had worn about his neck the silver pendant inscribed: "Michael Kustrov," his beloved father's name. This never ceasing question was implanted in her mind, "What had become of dear Karl?"

It must have been fifteen or twenty terrible years now that she had been shunted about from camp to camp. The war must be over, but how was she to know? Time was unaccountable.

Suddenly from above, the voice of the Captain bellowed orders — doubtlessly to lessen her bread allotment and to increase her field labor.

The trap door yawned open, bringing in the daylight and the Captain, who clumped down the rickety steps of the ladder. Towering over her, hands on his hips, he glared down, commanding her to rise.

"Brieg!" he shouted above. "Get ready for this one. I'm bringing her up!"

She recognized that order — DEATH!

When she failed to stir, he prodded her hard with the toe of his heavy boot. Stooping to draw her roughly to her feet, a silver pendant fell through the open collar of his uniform, dangling around his thick red neck, before her horror stricken eyes.

"Ka---rl!" she mouthed with parched lips — and slumped unconscious to the ground.



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