

*The*  
**SOWER**



*Spring—1948*

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**ELMER M. RASMUSSEN**

*Department of Education*

*Dana College*

**BLAIR, NEBRASKA**

## THE SOWER



*Sower of inland plains  
fling the whistling seed  
against lusty spring winds;  
thrusting it  
into the humid earth womb.*

*Sower of winged words;  
rising before dawn,  
swinging your arm over the world,  
release your thought  
into the lash and roar of winds,  
send your seed singing  
into the westering night.*

—Norman Bansen

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## FOREWORD

The contributions to this the third volume of the **SOWER** are the results of our earnest desire to develop creative literary abilities in the students at Dana College.

It has been our aim to sow a variety of seeds in both prose and poetry, seeds for a growing understanding of the best that has been written through the centuries and seeds for a growing mastery of the techniques of personal expression. We look forward to the continuance of interest on the part of our students in cultivating and increasing their literary endeavor and so producing fruits that will give them and others lasting enjoyment.

Viola M. Thiel

Nellie F. Falk

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# THE SOWER

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Dana College

Department of English

Spring 1948

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THE SOWER

1942

Spring 1942

Department of English

University of California

**The Winners of the Langland Awards**

**For Prose: Peter Thorslev, Jr.**

**For Poetry: Charles J. Christensen**

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## Resistance

AIDA LIMJOCO

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Shadows huddle in the corners of the vast cathedral. Thick darkness clings to the ceiling and drapes over the remote statues. The altar silks and marble gleam only faintly beneath the red glow of the perpetual lamp, struggling against the dark. The acrid, lonely smell of candles and the sweet, heady smell of incense oils float among the dust motes, filling the church with perfumed sadness. Now and then the echoing silence is relieved by a creaking pew, or more softly, by the gentle plop of a raindrop dripping from a dark casement window. By the communion rail, the plank coffin stands, flanked by two flickering candle stubs. In the hesitant light, its bareness and starkness are mercifully relieved, attaining somehow a quiet if lonely dignity. In the pews the silent mourners kneel in darkness, mutely looking into the casket.

For here in the coffin lies the unrecognizable dead. Here, wrapped in a concealing shroud lies the raw heap, divorced from the valiant spirit that was the boy. That mangled body was tested by rack and fire, and although the young life has gone from it, it has won. That body is now only a symbol of the fierce strength of the spirit, of the loyalty and devotion of the boy. Now, lying in state in the lonely cathedral, it is receiving the reverence of those who loved him.

To the left of the coffin kneels the mother, her face occasionally illumined as the candle flames quiver in a furtive breeze. The faint yellow glow gleams momentarily in her eyes—and they are dry. The burning of unshed tears brightens them to a fierce hardness. Sorrow crouches in her brow as she mourns her lost son; agony writhes in her clasped hands for his agonies. Pride dwells on her set lips as she marvels at this valiant fruit of her womb. But there is no fear.

To the right of the coffin kneels his wife. The candles reveal a face so young that the traces of baby roundness still cling to her cheeks. The gathering tears in her eyes drop slowly, glinting like separate jewels on her cheeks. Unheeded, they spatter gently on

her clasped hands and form tiny rivulets into the darkness. Her lips tremble with compassion for her husband's agonies. Loneliness sits on her brow for a lost beloved. In her heart there is a heavy pity for her unborn child. But there is no fear.

In the deep shadow kneels the father. His face is lost in the darkness, but there is pride and defiance in the set of his shoulders. His hands are clenched before him. There in the shadows, too, kneel his brothers and his friends, with quiet courage. Their shapes, darker than darkness, seem huge and immovable, waiting and waiting. But there is no fear. No fear.

The mourners kneel in the dark, a black mass heaving and shifting occasionally. Defiance stares in the dark with quivering expectancy. Soon the priest will come; soon the rites will be said; soon the candle flames will give a last leap in defiance of the grey morning light that will push through the dark, and they will sputter out in a pool of melted wax. Soon it will be over.

\* \* \*

The clink of bayonets sounds in the greying light. From the open door the morning comes creeping into the church, picking out with unfriendly fingers the kneeling figures and bare plank coffin. As boots drag on the floor and a saber rattles, the bodies stiffen at the pews. By the open door, the officer glares with satisfaction at the mourners of the dead underground spy. The High Command was wise in giving permission for his funeral rites. These are stubborn and defiant people, hard to break. Even knowing that gathering like this was extremely dangerous, yet they came. Well, let them be fools. Here they all are, ready for the picking. But in the heart of this officer is fear of this hardy people and a dread foreboding of what is to come for him.

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## *Happiness Is But a Phantom Shape*

CHARLES J. CHRISTENSEN

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Happiness is but a phantom shape  
That I run after when I have no courage.  
Loneliness and haunting, bitter dregs  
Are all my life is made of.  
I know now I was never meant to be happy.

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## Bill

HERBERT A. HJORTSVANG

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Steps clattered briefly on the porch, and he entered, thrusting aside the heavy canvas flap that covered the entrance to the tent.

"Tom, get your butt off the sack, see what I've got!" He unbuttoned his bulging khaki shirt and drew out two small dark bottles. He smacked his lips. "Got this down at Tanduary this afternoon—only seven pesos a pint."

Tom sat up on his cot and rubbed his eyes.

"What's the idea of busting in and waking me up?" The luminous dial of his watch glowed faintly in the tent, dimly lighted by one 40 watt bulb hanging from the crosspole. "It's three in the morning." He looked at the third cot. "Say, where's Bill?"

"Hah, we won't see that guy for a couple of days unless the captain goes and gets him out of Bilibad." His body shook with laughter. "Funny thing about Bill—met him a couple of hours ago in Manila—some Chink dance hall on Rizal extension near the Chink cemetery. He got in a fight with a nigger over some Chink doll." He paused and pawed through the mass of clothing and papers piled high on his makeshift table. "Say Tom, you got a corkscrew? No?" He stepped to the side of the tent and struck the neck of a bottle against a two-by-four. Glass sprinkled on the floor. "Mmmmmmm—this ain't bad stuff. Here, have a drink."

Tom waved his hand. "No thanks—what happened to Bill?"

"Funniest thing." He laughed again. "As I was saying, he got in a fight over a China doll. You know where that dance hall is. That's where we had the platoon party about three weeks ago—Hoi Toi and his Hep Cats. Well, Bill was making good time with the babe 'til this nigger walked in. I was there, and he looked as big as a house. A big buck, that's what he was." He took a long pull at the bottle. "Another dead soldier and seven pesos shot." The empty bottle thudded out on the hard ground of the dry rice paddy on which the tent was located. "This nigger and a couple of his buddies come in—quartermaster. I knew because they all

had a wad of pesos thick enough to choke the top kick's fat neck. You know how these uppity niggers are, don't you, Tom?"

"Yeh? What did they do to you guys?" He lay watching the drinking man, who had opened another bottle and was well into it.

"Nothing, only they came to our table and sat down without our invite. Then they started this old line about being American Indians and special night fighters. The babes took it in like whiskey; and Tom, you should'a seen their eyes light up when them bucks pulled out their rolls. Man, Bill and I didn't count anymore. We only had a measly thousand pesos between us. Next time I go to Manila I'm going to have enough dough with if I have to sell this tent to some Flip."

"I thought only Bill had a babe, who's the babes?"

"I picked up another one of them bitches."

"You and Bill are nuts."

"I know it, but what else is there to do around this hellhole?"

"Plenty—but nothing but whiskey and women will satisfy you guys, especially you."

"OK, Tom, cut it out; I can go to the chaplain and get my card punched any day. Lay off; you're always preaching."

"OK, go ahead—what happened to Bill?"

"Lay off?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Well, we ain't backing down from no niggers. So Bill and me laid into them. Bill got the buck with a chair and the other guy didn't put up much of a fight."

"So why is Bill in the guardhouse if there wasn't much of a fight?"

"Well, the M.P.'s had a patrol out near there and they heard the ruckus. Soon's I heard a jeep pull up in the courtyard I figured it was the M.P.'s, so I scrambled out the back way."

The man on the bed sat up and looked clearly at the speaker who now sat on a crude chair unlacing his boots.

"And Bill?"

"The fool, he ain't got no sense 'less I show him the ropes. He's still wet behind the ears, a dumb kid. Tom, the guy goes back after the fight and makes up to the babe again. Can't figure that at all. I wouldn't look twice at a woman that even spoke to a black nigger. What do you make of Bill, Tom? Ain't he crazy?"

"I wonder if he is, I wonder if he is. Maybe we're the crazy ones."

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## The Marriage Vow

PAUL SIMON

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Picture, if you will, an ideally matched couple. One member of that couple is World Peace, the other is World Freedom.

World Peace is a very elusive young creature. Elusive, young, and beautiful — everyone likes her and wants her. Yet it is surprising how seldom she has visited. Even a so-called Christian nation such as England has fought in seventy-eight wars since the year 1500. France has fought in seventy-one; Spain, sixty-four; Russia, sixty-one; Austria, fifty-two; and so on down the line. You see, World Peace is madly in love and will not stay long unless her mate is allowed to stay. Her mate is World Freedom.

World Freedom is strong and virile — the strongest force for good the world has ever known other than Christianity, of which he is a direct product. World Freedom is powerful, and the steady throb, throb, throb in his heart is the steady throb of a free press. This free press which is the heart of World Freedom is the freedom which underlies every other liberty. It was natural for World Freedom and World Peace to go together, for the heart of World Freedom goes together with peace so perfectly. No two nations who have had a free press have ever fought, for a free press leads to mutual understanding.

World Freedom is a faithful husband and will not stay unless World Peace stays. And she is faithful also. Today people have formed organizations whereby they hope to lure World Peace here without World Freedom, but their efforts are doomed to failure unless they awaken to reality. The vast majority of all peoples in all lands want World Peace, but unless they are allowed to express themselves and govern themselves there will always be a few who will wage war, a few who see that they can gain by war — gain at the expense of the many. It is not a pretty picture but it is a realistic one.

And while Russia's big bear gives Czechoslovakia and Finland a smothering hug; while Palestine seethes with turmoil; while little men in the United States refuse to give freedom to minorities; while some nations stifle a fighting free press; while China's millions grovel like crazy swine in a muddy, bloody war, World Peace and World Freedom stand off to the side, hand in hand, coldly rejected by the world, their thoughts now on their marriage vow:

"Until death do us part."

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## Desolation

FRED BRENGELMAN

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Of the high, haunted hill men name Wherefore  
And the lonely, lost crag they name Why  
And the deathly, chill cavern called Coldness  
And of chained, sobbing Life and her cry....

\*\*\*

I said to my soul, Seek your soul-mate:  
Leave your softly lone sleep and your dream  
And your lethargic solace in Ancience—  
Save you pulsating life out of Seem.

My innocent soul at my bidding  
Arose from her pale bed of mist  
With her white feet all naked as lilies  
And her rose petal lips were unknissed.

But she fell at the high hill of Wherefore  
Nor ascended the lost crag of Why,  
And she crept in her cavern of Coldness  
And her red, bloody feet and her cry.

And she sobbed, and she shook with her sobbing,  
And her acrid tears steamed on the stone.  
Oh, they froze; when they fell they were frozen,  
And no one made answer her moan.

She is lost, and she wails in her lostness  
In the deathly chill cavern of Frost,  
And no one makes answer her moaning  
Nor hearkens nor cares she is lost,  
Save one, who contemning casts embers,  
Disdaining to share in her cost.

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# Our Garden Grew at Night

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

LOIS MARGARET GIRTZ

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Cast of Characters:

Sylvia, a fairy

Roscoe, an elf

Breda, an old fairy

A host of fairies and elves

Setting: In a woodland glen.

SCENE I.

*As the curtain rises, the fairies and elves are flitting onto the stage singing.*

Chorus: Down the moonlit lanes resounding  
Chick-a-chirp-a-chick the crickets call.  
On the ferns and wood stumps pounding  
Listen to the dewdrops fall.  
Leave your sweet and mossy couches:  
In the glen now join our play.  
We'll dance until the dawn approaches,  
Dance, dance, dance till break of day.

*(From the circle two leave the group almost simultaneously—a pretty young fairy, Sylvia, and an old fairy, Breda, and go to sit on some mushrooms.)*

**Breda:** Good evening, child. Why do you leave the merrymaking?

**Sylvia:** 'Tis a lovely evening indeed to dance but I cannot get my mind to dancing. (She gazes out smiling, as if she recalled some pleasant thought.)

**Breda:** Ah, can there be other than the gay dance in the moonlight that catches your young fancy?

**Sylvia:** (animated) Oh yes, you'll not tell a soul, will you, Breda?

**Breda:** Goodness no, child!

**Sylvia:** Well, this afternoon as I was sipping nectar from a honeysuckle vine at the cottage of old Dame Peters, I overheard her tell her little granddaughter how wonderful it was to plant a garden and have the feel of the rich earth and the thrill of seeing little buds unfold into flowers and leaves.—And do you know what? I've decided to have a garden all for myself.

**Roscoe:** (coming up just as Sylvia finishes her last line—sarcastically) So, you want a garden all your own? How sweet, sweet Sylvia!

*Our Garden Grew at Night*

**Sylvia:** (getting up and stamping her foot indignantly) Yes, I do, and I'll not let you in on it either, Roscoe.

**Roscoe:** Much I care about gardens. You should leave well enough alone; there are plenty of gardens about and plenty of flowers in the woodland for us all. —Come and dance with me.

**Sylvia:** No!

**Roscoe:** Come on, the lines are uneven.

**Breda:** Go, child.

**Sylvia:** All right. (They both go and join the group.)

SCENE II.

Curtain

*Two nights later.*

(*Roscoe is sitting on a mushroom. The sound of merry-making comes from off-stage. He sits with his face between his hands brooding. He takes one fist and hits his knee. Breda walks in.*)

**Breda:** So, Roscoe, you're alone again tonight?

**Roscoe:** (snaps) You needn't be as sharp as a sting-weed!

**Breda:** My, you certainly are as ugly as you look.

**Roscoe:** I have nothing to be jolly about. This is the second night I am without my partner, and merrymaking pleases me not when I cannot participate in it.

**Breda:** Tsk, Tsk!

**Roscoe:** Stop being annoying and tell me where she is.

**Breda:** I don't suppose it had occurred to you that she is planting a garden?

**Roscoe:** (jumping) Well, snapdragons! Why hadn't I thought of that?

**Breda:** You were probably too busy feeling sorry for yourself.

**Roscoe:** (glancing about elfishly) Ah huh! I'll fix her. She'll be sorry.

**Breda:** Don't become too—(stopping and listening) Hush, here she comes.

(*Sylvia enters.*)

**Roscoe:** My, my, what have we here! —And right on time—right on time, that is, to join the last promenade.

**Sylvia:** (sweetly) I'm sorry, Roscoe, truly I am; but I have been planting my garden.

**Roscoe:** That is very noble of you, I'm sure.

**Sylvia:** (obviously) Oh, Roscoe, you should see it—(she starts to sing).

I've a garden all my own  
To water, weed, and hoe;  
And in it marv'lous seeds I've sown  
That someday big will grow.

*Our Garden Grew at Night*

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In my garden there will be  
Flowers of every hue,  
Growing gently there for me—  
Pink and white and gold and blue.  
Just tonight when I was there,  
And fireflies flashed around,  
I saw a sign—oh, Roscoe dear,  
Of green things in the ground.  
Someday, when the time is right,  
You can go with me  
To my friendly garden site  
And all my flowers see.

*(During the song Breda walks away. Roscoe tries to remain stern, but when she is through he breaks out into a sheepish grin.)*

**Sylvia:** (intriguingly) You will forgive me, Roscoe?

**Roscoe:** Yes, if you'll not stay away again.

**Sylvia:** I'll try not to.

**Roscoe:** Come then, morning will too quickly drive away the cricket and frog musicians, and we will not even get in on the last dance.

*(They smile at each other and he takes her hand. They run off the stage together.)*

Curtain

SCENE III.

*The next night.*

*(Roscoe is pacing the stage angrily and Breda looks on.)*

**Roscoe:** Just like a woman; you can't believe a word they say.

**Breda:** Don't fret.

**Roscoe:** Well, I'm rather tired of being left out of the games every night—anyway, she promised—(he mutters to himself) that old garden!

**Breda:** Be careful or you'll think something you'll be sorry for.

**Roscoe:** I'll not only think it, I'll do it—and stop meddling.

**Breda:** You'll regret it.

**Roscoe:** I'll fix that garden. (He sings.)

At eventide when crickets call  
We always come and play.  
We hasten to the fairy ball  
And down the moonbeams' rays.  
My little dance I dance alone,  
For Sylvia is not here.  
She will regret what she has done—  
Of that I have no fear.

Curtain

SCENE IV.

*The following night.*

*(As the curtain rises, everyone is dancing except Breda, who sits watching. Roscoe and Sylvia are very grave as they flit about curtseying and bowing. All of a sudden Sylvia puts her hands to her face and starts out of the circle, sits down on a mushroom crying.)*

**Roscoe:** (coming over, in a forced tone) Well, what's the matter?

*(Sylvia just looks at him and sobs afresh.)*

**Breda:** (snaps) Silly question—you already know the answer.

**Roscoe:** I didn't ask you to interfere.

*(Breda slowly gets up and moves off the stage. Roscoe sits on the mushroom next to Sylvia.)*

**Roscoe:** (shyly, after a pause) Sylvia—(pause) Sylvia, did you find your garden rows messed up?

*(She nods her head and a sob catches in her throat.)*

**Roscoe:** (entreatingly, and a little sheepish yet) I shan't do it again, Sylvia. (No answer.) Please, dear, smile; I can't be happy unless you are.

*(She gives him a feeble smile.)*

I'm very sorry—so please do forgive me. And I'll tell you what—I'll help you fix it and we'll work on it together. Then we can both come and join the fun.

**Sylvia:** (with a big smile) Oh, Roscoe, dear, it will be such fun. And I know you will love it. Things are so nice when they grow.

**Roscoe:** Come, we will join our playfellows, and tomorrow we will plant our garden.

**Chorus sings:** Down the moonlit lanes resounds, etc.

*(They go hand in hand to join the group. Breda ambles back on the stage, yawns, and looks bored, sits down on a mushroom.)*

Final Curtain.

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## Reconsecration

CHARLES J. CHRISTENSEN

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There is no God, he said.  
I looked down into the depths of despair  
And saw that it was true.  
I looked up at heaven to shout my defiance.  
There was a pinpoint of light.  
Oh, no, no, I cried, I do believe,  
Lord, yet I do believe!  
The depths were covered and there was only light.

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## Beatrice

PETER THORSLEV, Jr.

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I walked down the avenue beneath the tall elms on either side of me. The leaves whispered and rustled in the cool evening breeze, and as the street-light shone through the trees it left irregular blotches of shadow on the ground. The busy murmur of the city sounded far-off and foreign. Only the click, click of the taps on my shoes punctuated the evening stillness.

It had been on a night such as this, in Kingo four years ago, that I had last seen Beatrice. Trees were there, too, souging evergreens and shivering poplars. The light of the fire cast irregular and dancing shadows on the grass and fallen needles in the clearing, and instead of the far-off city there was now the murmur of the river, as it flowed over its rocky bed.

The fire-light had framed her face in a halo of golden hair and added to the light already dancing in her eyes. The sanguine redness of her lips and cheeks was deepened by the warm glow of the fire. Her shapely body was outlined to its best advantage in informal slacks and sweater. In her hands she fondled a little cluster of fall asters which had grown in the little clearing.

She talked of the deep, still beauty of the night and of the soothing sound of the river, a sound which I thought scarcely distinguishable from her own voice. Then she laughed, for the pure joy of living, and her laugh sounded as free and spontaneous as the sound of the little spring which bubbled out of the rocks beside us....

The roar of the street-car broke in on my thoughts, and I stepped inside and took my place in a seat by the window....

It had been four long years now, and I had thought of her, dreamed of her, and longed for her as I had longed for Kingo and the bright summer sun and the cool autumn haze and the hikes to the river and the skating parties in the cool, crisp winter.

She had gone to a neighboring city to work, but now she was here, visiting her aunt. I had asked to take her to the first concert of the season, and she had been very happy to consent. Her voice had sounded so, even over the telephone. She would like the concert, I knew—music with the ring of laughter in it, or music sombre and slow, but with depth and soul.

I got off the street-car and walked to her house. She came

to the door, ready to leave. "Hello, Peter. So nice of you to ask me. The first concert of the year, and I've always wanted to hear John Carter." She was dressed in a fashionable fall coat, but it hid her figure and did not flatter her. She had painted more than was necessary, I thought, and there was an exaggerated color in her lips and cheeks, not the color so natural before. The fresh, clean features were the same, with the sparkling blue eyes, just as I had recalled them so many times in the years since I had seen them last.

We walked into the noisy streets, and the loud, harsh sounds of city traffic drowned our voices. We stepped into the street-car and took our places. She made small talk to break the silence between us—talk of the dress of the woman opposite, and of how nylons were so hard to get.

The street-car rattled to a stop, and we stepped off, entered the hall, and took our seats. The soloist came on the stage, and when the applause had subsided he began to sing. Song followed song—some operatic with fiery passion, others soft and warm, homespun pastorals—so reminiscent of Kingo and all the things there that I had known and loved.

As the final encore, Handel's beautiful "Where E'er She Walks," faded into the applause, I looked down at Beatrice. She was looking across the aisle at a woman's hat—a nonsensical creation of fluff and feathers that had caught her eye. As we rose to leave she remarked that it was a perfectly adorable hat, and that she would have to buy one before she left the city.

We hurried out into the street, and when we were again seated in the cafe over our coffee, I asked her if she had heard from Kingo lately. "Oh, yes, the place has really been buzzing since I left. They say that Gordon Petersen is going to marry Vera, and—oh, yes, Bessie Jensen is leaving for the city to work, she says, but I have my own opinion on that...."

She left me puzzled and bewildered. Could this be the girl I had known? I asked her if she could remember the days in Kingo—the picnics we had had—the rides on our horses to the river—the skating—"Oh, surely, I remember, but that was all so very long ago—and so very—countryish, don't you think? Now as I was saying...."

I took her home, and as I said good night, I tried to keep the disappointment in my heart from showing in my voice or face. "It's been a lovely evening, Peter, and I do hope I'll see you again before I leave."

The street-car screeched to a stop, and I stepped on. The late

evening crowd pushed around me, jabbering and chattering to each other. I got off the car and walked again down the dark avenue. The night was colder now, and I felt chilled in spite of my coat.

The girl who had danced nymph-like through the woods, so much a part of the beauty, and yet even more sparkingly alive—the girl who rode side by side with me into the wind, her hair floating behind her and a laugh and a shout on her lips as she goaded her horse to go even faster down the sunny road—my Beatrice.

Now my Beatrice was still in Kingo, and somewhere among the fall asters along the river-bank or around some evening camp-fire I would find her yet.

The leaves over my head whispered among themselves, and the street-light shining through the trees made irregular blotches of light on the fallen leaves at my feet. Suddenly I felt no longer alone; someone was walking hand-in-hand with me. The far-off sounds of the city became the deep murmur of a river, flowing over its stony bed....

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## *Kitten in the Snow*

PHYLLIS HANSON

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Kitten, on the barn door sill,  
Stretched forth his furry paw to see  
What this strange whiteness might be.  
His tail twitched, his green eyes glowed,  
Snow settled gently on his paw,  
And then before his eyes he saw  
It disappear. He shook his head,  
Bewilderment in every line  
Of tense, small body. He ventured  
Cautiously into the white.  
He sank, and struggled with affright,  
Regained his footing, thought it fun.  
Head up, tail up, started to run.  
Then, tired, found his sill again  
To rest and watch; for now he knows  
The touch, the taste, the look of snow.

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## Music for Dreaming

JAMES OLSON

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It is very peaceful lying alone on the beach with the moon shining full upon my sun-tanned face, my mind filled with the thoughts of Tristan coming over the waves to Isolde. The sand, after being bleached by the sun until it is too hot to step on, is finally cool and is oblivious of the waves which are continually covering it with long, sustained sweeps. Soon the rhythmic pattern of the breakers lulls me into a deep, tired sleep. The soft melody begins as if coming from the sea. The slow, deliberate rhythm combines faintly with the never-ending swells as they begin to weave their mystic pattern in much the same way that a snake charmer hypnotizes a cobra. Slowly the piercing sounds of the music invade my dreams, and I begin to feel that I am a complete slave to the music. I begin to claw the sand in a vain attempt to escape the unknown fate, but finally I lie back in quiet resolution.

It is dark now, and the continual pounding of the waves has become faster and faster; the rhythm of the music is more pronounced, and with every beat I feel my impending doom come closer. As the dark blue water reaches its wet fingers inch by inch up the sloping beach, the piano begins the long march up the scale. Then the violin enters with a melody and weaves an ever-increasing tempo, building and adding, note by note, the climax that never seems to come. I am tense with fright as I see large, ominous waves everywhere I look, and yet the water does not touch me. As I lie upon the sand feeling completely hypnotized by the heavy emotional progressions of a composition that seems to terrify my every sinew, I am suddenly awakened by a swell which engulfs me with its startlingly cool foam. I sit up and look around. The tide is coming in, and I am just too far down the beach. The music that I had imagined does not disappear; it still keeps ringing in my ear; it still keeps building that gigantic climax which soars impassioned to the greatest heights and then drops back into a whisper, love's exotic experience, mingling with and slowly becoming one with the surge.

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## Summer Morning

CHARLES J. CHRISTENSEN

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It is early morning, calm, peaceful, and I am walking down an old winding lane, deep in the woods of a small island. The long, cool green blades of the grass hold up the heads of the buttercups, and the torn scarlet shreds of the trilliums wave defiantly at the wind. The dusty gray wheel tracks are scarred with the trails of land snails and beetles. Now and then, as the lane uncurls itself, a venerable old boulder pokes out his mossy head to taste the mottled sunshine.

Along the sides, low shrubs are bursting into bloom, filling the dankish air with spicy incense. Raspberry bushes already hold the baby berries in their arms. Occasionally, a tiny clearing opens up, and the hypocritically tender browns and greens of the poison ivy proudly arch their thrice-crowned heads.

Above the bushes rise the dark, heavy boles of the oaks and maples, standing like slaves before the ethereal, slender, white-clad birches. High without a branch they reach, till at the very top the green breaks out in greater fullness. Among them stand their bushy, winter-furred second cousins, the pines, the firs, and the hemlocks. The ground lies covered with the musty brown and black of last year's leaves.

A grass-choked winter cross-hall slips sneaking out of the trees around the bend. I stop and gaze down its murky length; it seems the trees make a perfect Gothic cloister arching up from the virgin lawn below. I think, I wonder if that's where God takes His Sunday-afternoon walks. I'm going down it some Sunday, and see if I should meet Him. But the wind is rustling through the trees and combing the grass, and the indistinguishable rumble of the surf calls me on.

Now among the trees the bone-white, rounded stones begin to appear, warning that I am coming. Above the ever-growing-louder, distant thunder of the water, I hear the chattering of a squirrel, and far away a phoebe whistles blithely, "pee-wee, pee-wee, pee-wee." A crow calls stridently and mellowly from deep within the woods. The burr of a nuthatch sounds. Now and again comes the skitter of a falling leaf, or the skipping clash of a dead branch falling.

## Summer Morning

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Off to the left, the forest falls away to the beach, and here in the open field-like clearing stands an old log fishhouse, its brown walls shaking with the throb of the white-capped, oily green water frothing on the pebbly beach. But I, not stopping, turn and go farther into the woods.

Here the smell of cedar hangs heavy on the air. The dark green cedar fronds droop everywhere as it squats low and stunted along the ground beneath the maples and the long-needled pines. A deer track suddenly appears on the road, wends its cloven way along with me, and then suddenly shifts back among the trees again.

The boom of the water fills the air completely; only a single line of trees above the rising rocks along the edge of the road blocks the way between us, and I get tiny glimpses of it now and again. Gradually the trees open out into a circular clearing at the top of the point. They form a single row of cedar and pine on almost all sides like soldiers standing guard around a camp. The rocky, broken floor is covered with moss and lichens. At one side lies a rotting heap of old fish nets, turned a dirty gray with age. I cross the nook, and pushing my way through the undergrowth, find myself standing on a low-slung rocky cliff. Among the crags grows a tough, wiry, little shrub with a few green pointed leaves. Nestling close to the leaves lie clusters of small deep pink flowers. In the quiet pools among the stones below, tiny fishes slither and dart; I can almost touch them if I lie down and drop my arms. The water in them rises and ebbs slowly as each breaker thunders in, and with it rises the gray-white foam gathered around the edges.

The rocks stretch out from the point in a long irregular peak—some little and almost buried, others of them huge, greenish boulders that even the largest breakers fail to cover. The great waves come roaring in, rising higher and higher as they approach the shore. The top suddenly folds over and turns white; just then they hit the rocks and all the wave turns white, raging and boiling over the stones, sending spray ten and twenty feet into the air. It reaches the cliff where I stand, and soon I am almost drenched. The day is warm; the sun beats down upon me and turns the grayish foam to dazzling, holy white. The churning lake is dark green and blue, sparkling in the sun, and dotted with tiny white-caps. Far across the bay I see, in hazy mists enshrouded and blurred, the mainland. In the middle of the lake, a freighter steams ever-so-slowly past; a thin thread of smoke clings wistfully to the horizon, and then disappears.

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## *Does the Earth Know*

CAROL MENGERS

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Does the earth know? Does the earth know?  
When the chill wind blows and strips the leaves from the shivering trees,  
When the frost comes and kills all living things,  
When the dark clouds gather in the sky  
When come coldness and darkness and death,  
Does the earth know?

Does the earth know?  
That spring will come again,  
That the sun will shine warmly and brightly on the verdant earth,  
That flowers will spring in brightness and glory of youth,  
That Winter and Death will be forgotten in the gladness of new life,  
Does the earth know?

Does my heart know?  
When despair and disappointment come,  
When sorrow's chill wind kills the flower of Hope,  
When all my dreams are scattered like dead leaves in the grip of a hurricane,  
When I am pushed back and crushed to earth,  
Does my heart know?

Does my heart know?  
That hope will spring again,  
That dreams can never die, that life is never crushed,  
That death is but a sleep, that life will rise again,  
That finally my soul will dwell in the garden where nothing dies?  
My heart, you know.

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## Happiest Celebrants in City New Year's Were 'Ex-Drunks'

DON POH

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If you're one of the millions who hear but never quite believe stories about people who don't drink but still have a good time New Year's Eve, just string along for a while—I'll vouch for their truth.

If you are one of those who have heard that miracles don't occur in the world today, just string along for a while; I'll tell you a story of men who do believe in them—and have considered themselves directly affected by a miracle.

At a big convention in one of this country's cities recently, one of the top men in one of the nation's best known concerns told his listeners that for the first time since Christ Himself walked on earth, brotherly love is being practiced. And it is being done by a bunch of 'ex-drunks' who call themselves Alcoholics Anonymous.

Well, that organization had a terrific New Year's Eve party Wednesday night and never touched a drop. Coffee was the beverage of the night. Games were on the entertainment schedule, and laughter was the password. Traditional noisemakers were passed out just before the clock struck the final hour, and at midnight bedlam broke loose. The New Year was started off with a dinner of scalloped potatoes, ham, home baked beans, buns, pickles, ice cream, cake, and coffee.

The boys and their wives were having fun. A person could tell it by the looks on their faces. They weren't worried about the "morning after." Nor were they wondering if they would get home in one piece.

For many of them, it had been a different story—weeks, or months, or years ago.

What is Alcoholics Anonymous? Better known as the "AA", it was started some twelve years ago by two men. They recognized alcoholism as a disease and set up a simple program to cure it. The name of the organization tells the story. No one can join unless he is an alcoholic who wants to be cured. And as far as the outside world is concerned, he is anonymous. No member's name is disclosed—ever.

The organization operates out of New York. Each individual chapter has only one officer, a secretary, whose sole purpose is to keep his group coordinated with the central office. The hat is passed around at meetings instead of having a system of dues. The only expense comes with the week of immediate hospitalization required when the 'cure' is begun. They operate on the basis that it takes a drunk to cure one.

There are about 50,000 AA's in the United States and Canada today, and over 600 of them have been processed through the Green Bay, Wisconsin, chapter. It is one of the most active in the country. The local group was formed six years ago with only a couple of members, but its growth was rapid. In the last four years alone, it has processed over four hundred alcoholics, a success for which it gives the local hospitals much credit. There are a few who go back to their old ways, but eighty-six per cent are cured.

Green Bay, the first chapter north of Milwaukee, is also a center for sub-groups. It has been responsible for starting groups in Oshkosh, Fond du Lac, Appleton, Sturgeon Bay, Sahwanan, and Manitowoc, and it has drawn people from a one hundred fifty mile radius, including Manistique, Michigan; Wausau, Stevens Point, and Wisconsin Rapids. A novel, and in this case selected, group has even been formed inside the prison walls of Waupun.

The story of one of the members is the story of all of them—once a slave to alcohol, then miraculously cured, now enjoying a simple, genuine happiness. They tell each other their stories. They encourage the new members. As a special guest, I was privileged to hear some of them. I say 'privileged' and I mean it. These AA's are men who have had the courage to regain a lost pride. Talking to them, one can easily see their high sense of life's value. These people were victims of disease. They had the stamina to fight it off and become cured. I doff my hat to them again when I think of the thousands of alcoholics in this America who do not have the backbone to admit their plight and allow themselves to be cured.

Stepping from that room out into the street was another thing. As the door closed behind me, a young woman staggered by. I stood in the shadows and watched her groping hands search for the neighboring door handle. Someone inside hollered, "We're closed!" The bundle of fur and warpaint stood as though numbed for a moment, then moved on.

Reprinted from the *Green Bay Press-Gazette*.

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## Christmas—Atom Age

AIDA LIMJOCO

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This is a Christmas in the atom age:  
The din of wrangling, bitter and confused, is heard,  
As some stand up and preach the creed of hate,  
And other men of love,  
And other men of godlessness,  
And other men of Christian fellowship.  
And in the meeting halls of men  
The ghosts of warriors writhe, anguished and anxious, yet  
    unheeded,  
As men threaten and cry defiance,  
Dancing with Spectre Death upon the brink of chaos  
With dangerous steps.  
And through the desperate nations death gauntly stalks,  
As men take blood upon their hands once more,  
As countless starve and fall.  
And they still die as they had seen  
Brothers and sisters, mothers, fathers, sons,  
Die before them.  
Death is still common company in our midst,  
In the cold hills of Europe  
Soaked in the blood of centuries of war,  
In the hot hills of India,  
Steeped in the tears of centuries of strife.  
The battle of survival is still fought  
Upon the hearths, the marketplace, the fields,  
Through queues and ration cards and hunger riots,  
And some are killed and some survive  
To fight again.

This is a Christmas in the atom age:  
The peal of church bells, urgent yet triumphant,  
Pours through the heavens, sweeping all the earth,  
Over the bristling mountains and the armed plains,  
Over the rubbled cities and the ghostly towns,  
Over the numbered graves and the unnumbered cross,  
Over the hungry hearths,  
The lean, tired fields,

Over the raucous nightclubs and bright neon lights,  
Over the bustling cities, boom-rich towns,  
Over well-ordered villages,  
And fat farms.

The paths and roads to church are walked by men,  
Candles are lit and quiet prayers said,  
And hymns are sung.

The fearful and the hopeful look to God,  
Sick with the knowledge of their own futility,  
They turn once more to God.

And tapers glow from shrine to shrine,  
As millions voice their mighty praise  
Of a Child Redeemer,  
The skies resound with the myriad tongues:  
Gloria, Hosanna, Halleluja!

So let us pray:

Dear God, O God!

Thank God for these: our lives,  
And one more chance for men to rise  
Above man's inhumanity to man,  
A chance for Christians to remember Christianity.  
And God, O God!

Give us this day—this

And the hundred thousand million billion other days unto eternity—  
Faith,

And wisdom, strength, and hope,  
And Christian love for fellow brothers....

And the dead, O Lord, let us remember,  
Should brutes and beasts rise up again,  
And vicious leaders, devils, greedy men;  
Should the four horsemen ride once more  
Hell into our world,

Let us remember the voiceless dead  
Who gave their lives

For freedom.

One word—

It has been bought with 'blood, and sweat, and tears'  
And countless sorrows:

Man's dignity grovelling in the mud,

Seemingly never to rise again—

Oh, and the children, Lord!

So young, yet old in pains and sights beyond their years,

Centuries old in an age of slaughter,  
Of mental giants harnessed to destruction—  
Oh, save them, Lord!  
And look! The limbs lie splattered on the earth still wet with  
    blood,  
And man rolls up his sleeves and whets his knife,  
Crying of war!  
Oh save us, Lord!  
Look upon us and spare us!  
Thou, Lord, art our salvation,  
Thou, Lord, our lasting hope,  
Be merciful to us  
This Christmas,  
Atom age.

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## *A Father's Lament*

CAROL MENGERS

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Now I have a problem  
The answer I can't tell.  
On days when I must wake the kids  
I have to yell and yell.

"Now, children dear, you must get up.  
You cannot sleep all day.  
It's almost time for school to start.  
You should be on your way."

But holidays and Sundays  
When I could sleep so well,  
The children rise at five o'clock  
And yell, and yell, and yell.

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## *Interlude at Tarlac*

HERBERT A. HJORTSVANG

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Dawn had just passed and morning was arrived; cooks and their Filipino helpers were preparing breakfast when a guard entered one of the tents and bent over a sleeping figure.

"Tom, Tom!"

"Ugh, go way."

"Tom, off your rusty dusty. It's six."

The guard shook the mosquito netted cot heartily. Tom woke suddenly and blinked in the slanting orange rays that peeped through the open flap of the tent.

"Hold it, Bill. You don't have to shake so hard. I'm getting up."

"OK, roll out then. I just woke George. He's down at the shower now."

Tom stumbled sleepily out of his narrow cot, tearing a huge gash in the patched netting as he did so. He took a towel and soap from a crude makeshift table next to his cot. Sleeping figures still occupied each of the eleven cots as he passed down the narrow aisle of the tent and pushed aside the flap.

The rosy hues of morning had crept up from the eastern horizon, stole swiftly over the parched Philippine plain, and brought clearly into view long, waving grasses rising from the slightly hummocked earth. Here in Central Luzon, not far from the small town of Bambam, was located the army camp. A rest camp where men of a Signal Company were gathered for a brief rest and re-grouping before heading for occupation duty in Japan.

"Hi, Tom, how's the old head this morning?"

"Shut up. It's busting wide open as usual."

Tom dropped the towel from his shoulder and stepped up on the platform.

"How's the water, George?"

"Cold as usual."

"Yuh all set to go as soon as we get breakfast?"

"Sure nuff, honey chile, all set."

The rising sun shed its glowing rays on the trim bodies of the soldiers. Both, bronzed almost to blackness by fifteen months in the South Pacific, were about the same height, and both had short-cropped brown hair. They were of about the same age,

## *Interlude at Tarlac*

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young men of twenty-one or two years. But here the resemblance ended. Tom was lithe, wiry, of a type that can be found most often in our western cattle states, although he came from a small city in mid-Ohio. George was of a heavy, muscular build. The cords of his powerful arms stood out prominently as he bent to soap his legs.

"Tom, here comes one of them Filipino women from the village."

George looked shy as he motioned with his hand in the direction of the small native village located on the other side of the camp.

"So what? I think they like to see a real man for a change. They're always dropping around whenever I take a shower."

The men eyed the woman as she passed down a caribou trail near the shower. She gave the men one brief glance and looked away.

"Shucks, she's an old timer." Tom looked disappointed.

"Come on, let's finish up and get dressed." George rinsed the soap from his body and turned off the slight stream which flowed by gravity from the 700 gallon Navy pontoon tank mounted on top of a wooden stand next to the shower. He rubbed his body till it glowed while his companion finished his shower.

"Well, I feel a little better now. If only I could wash all that tuba from my guts, I'd feel ok."

"Tom, I never saw a guy drink like you. Why don't you take it easy on that stuff? Remember those signs we saw in Manila, the whiskey scoreboard? Remember them columns? Dead and blinded?"

"George, you just ain't grown up in spite of the fact you've been around with me since Crowder down in Okieland. I can drink anythin' that's put out. Tuba, jungle juice, raisinjack, or V. S. Q. don't make any difference to me. My gut is cast iron." He pounded his clenched fist into his stomach.

George said nothing, but he noticed his companion's face was hard, with sharp, deep creases in the forehead and wrinkles spreading from his eyes. Tom was getting to look old for his age, more so than the average soldier of his age in the company.

Tom had finished his shower, so the two men walked back to their tents and hurriedly dressed in khakis. When they met a few minutes later, both carried haversacks on their backs and loaded carbines.

"Where are you guys going this morning?" The first cook on duty slapped huge, heavy flapjacks into their metal mess kits.

## *Interlude at Tarlac*

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"Goin' out towards that mountain over southeast and see what's going on that way." Tom reached for the thin, blood-red Australian syrup.

"You guys got a long, dusty way to go. Say, here's a couple of 'K' rations that Sergeant Cavanaugh told me to give you. Better fill your canteens before you go."

"Thanks, cookie, but George and me never forget nothin'. I got something here better than water." Tom shook his haversack, and glass tinkled.

Breakfast was a quick affair, as both men were in a hurry to leave. By the time they had finished, the C. Q. had blown reveille, and men were moving about in their tents and coming out to wash in the steel helmets that served as wash basins on stands before each tent.

Tom and George waved goodbye to the men coming out of the tents as they walked down the company street.

"Tom, lay you five to one you won't be back tonight!"

"Don't worry, Sergeant. I've got a good boy with me. George will see I get back OK. No more bad time for me."

Tom scowled back at the first sergeant.

"George, some day when I get back in civvies I'm going to run into our dear first sergeant, and it won't be a happy day for him. He's always got to wise off just because I took off a couple of times. Heck, 145 days bad time ain't so bad."

"The sergeant isn't such a bad fellow, Tom, if you give him half a chance." He sighed. This day wouldn't be much fun if Tom was going to get into one of his bitter moods. Today was too lovely to start off in a bad fashion.

The men walked on quietly, each deep in his own thoughts, and soon the camp was far behind, hidden behind a slight rise of ground. All around them was irregular plain, land slightly rising and falling, and eroded in places by the heavy rains which fell frequently during the rainy season. No rain had fallen for a week, and the ground was already hard and cracked deeply. The deep grasses rustled and bent before their feet. Off in the distance, about ten miles away, a single mountain rose from the plain. Its near side was deep in shadow, but the outlines were sharp and distinct.

George looked around carefully, and a worried look came over his face.

"Tom, do you remember those Japs who came into the replacement depot at Bambam last week and killed those Filipinos. I was just thinking. None of our troops have been out here be-

*Interlude at Tarlac*

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fore. What if some Japs are still hiding out around here? We're all alone."

"What you worried about? I'm with you, ain't I?"

"Yes, but — ?"

"Yes, nothing. I can take care of any Jap or two that might be out here. There ain't none left that got any guts anyhow. Quit worrying all the time. Look, George, we've been going over an hour now. Let's stop and take a break. I feel thirsty."

The men walked ahead a few steps and sat down in the shade of a small, stunted tree. Several small, gaily-colored birds flew out of the branches of a nearby tree, chattering madly as they went.

"George, see them birds. Well, I'm going to show you some good shooting. Watch this." Tom stood up and grasped his carbine, and working the lever arm threw a cartridge into the chamber. "I'm going to get that bird on the top limb. About one hundred fifty feet, I'd say." He aimed quickly. Before the flat crack of the report died away, the bird came plummeting out of the tree. Crack! The other bird followed his mate to the ground.

"Nice work, eh?"

"Ya, not bad shooting at all. What kind of birds were those?"

"Durned if I know. They look like sparrows with a fancy dress. George, that calls for a drink. Here, take a bottle out of my bag."

George handed the bottle to his companion.

"Here, what's this? Take a drink."

"No, thanks. I had enough last night to last me a long time. I don't really care for the stuff, anyhow."

"Go ahead, a nip won't hurt you. Go ahead."

"Well, just a short one to please you." He took a small swallow and screwed his face in a grimace. "Whew, that's hot."

"Sure, it's good stuff. Got it last night from some guy over in the village for a couple packs of cigarettes. He makes it himself."

"I need some water before my throat burns right up." George reached for his canteen and drank thirstily. "What, did you finish that pint already?" He looked at the empty bottle lying on the ground before him.

"Sure, don't want to lose any by evaporation. I got three more pints with anyhow."

George looked away.

"Think I'll go over an look at those birds you shot. You want to come with?"

"Naw, I'll sit here and watch you. Hand me my bag before you go."

## *Interlude at Tarlac*

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"George walked slowly toward the tree, stepping carefully so as not to trip in the gashed earth. Here the erosion was worse than he had noticed before. A small stream trickled slowly through its deep bed just beyond the tree. When rains came it would swiftly overflow its banks and cover the near-by land.

He looked back. Tom had another bottle in his hand. Today wasn't going to be the pleasant trip he had anticipated. Perhaps he should tell Tom he wasn't feeling well. Then they would have to go back. No telling what might happen if Tom got drunk. He could get mighty ugly when he had too much to drink. He looked carefully beneath the old gnarled tree. There, lying just off the ground, borne up by the tough, thick grass, the body of one of the small birds was resting. George kneeled down and gazed at the torn and bloodied little body.

"I'm sorry, little fellow. You never harmed us but just flew merrily up in your sky making pretty melody and looking so free. And then we had to cut off your song. I'm sorry. Sleep well."

Something thudded into the tree trunk near him, and George automatically threw himself flat on the ground. Somebody was shooting at him. Japs! He had better get to Tom. He raised his head slowly from the grass and peered over the waving tops. Tom! Tom was shooting at him. Another bullet thudded into the tree. George snuggled down further into the deep grass.

"Tom, cut that out. It's not very funny!" he shouted angrily.

Two more flat cracks broke the quiet.

"You drunken fool! Stop that before you hit me." He felt sweat begin to roll on his forehead. He heard Tom laugh.

"Don't get your dander up. Drunk or not, I'm the best shot in the outfit. Stand up and I'll part your hair for you. Come on, stand up!"

That drunken fool. George wondered why he had ever let himself be talked into coming with Tom. He should have listened to the advice of those who knew. No wonder most of the men shunned Tom unless they wanted to drink the whisky of which he had a never-ending stock. Maybe he could talk Tom out of this madness.

"Tom, what do you say we cut out this play? It isn't funny."

"Stand up, so's I can part your hair for you. Then I'll cut it out and not before."

"Are you crazy? You might hit me. I'm staying here until you promise not to shoot." There was silence that seemed like hours. George could feel his heart pounding violently against his chest. Above, the sun climbed through the heavens, about a

third of its daily journey past. The clouds stood firm and white against the deep blue sky. Ages passed, and finally he heard Tom bellow, "Yeh, I won't shoot, go ahead and get up, you chicken."

George rose slowly and wiped his forehead with a handkerchief. "Tom, you had me scared there for a minute."

He looked up—and froze. Back where they had rested Tom was facing him. But he didn't notice Tom; his eyes could focus on only one thing—the blue nose of a carbine pointing directly at him.

"Tom, Tom, don't!"

"Don't move, don't move an inch if you don't want to get your head blown off your neck. I'm parting your hair like I told you I would."

George swallowed. His body had turned to ice, he couldn't move to save his life. There was silence, except for the rustling of the waving grass. His heart pounded and throbbed, it hurt to breathe.

George didn't hear the report, he didn't feel a warm trickle stealing down his face. He saw Tom coming to him, wavering and indistinct as if in a haze. He sank to his knees, his limbs seemed to have no power.

"George, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to hit you."

"Tom knelt beside him and roughly probed with his fingers through the sogged hair.

"You ain't hurt bad, it's only a gash on your head. You'll be OK."

George was silent, his head on his chest.

"Did you hear me? You ain't hurt bad. You'll be OK."

"Yeh, I'll be OK." My, he felt weak.

"Wait, I'll get some whisky and clean out the gash. I got a clean towel in my pack,—I'll fix you up as good as new."

They rested there by the tree and the tiny brook while Tom swabbed and bandaged the gash. The bloody towel felt heavy wrapped about George's head, Tom walked nervously up and down on the grass before him, smoking one cigarette after another.

"Sit down, you make me nervous walking up and down. We better get back so I can get to the medics."

"Sure, George. sure. Gosh, I'm terribly sorry this happened. I was drunk or crazy. You were right. I didn't mean it. Will you forgive me, George? Will you forgive me?"

George looked up at his companion. He looked nervous and frightened. Maybe this would do Tom some good; maybe he would learn a lesson. This was the first time he had ever heard

Tom sincerely sorry for anything. He wasn't hurt so bad anyhow.

"Yes, Tom, you're forgiven. I hope you learned a lesson out of this?"

"I just thought, George, that the Captain will be wondering how this happened. I know I did a bad thing, but if the Captain finds out just what I did, I'll get the guardhouse for sure."

"Yeh, I guess that's true."

There was silence for a long minute.

"If you won't report this, I'll give you a hundred pesos. I got them with me right here. See."

He pulled out a wallet and although he turned away, George could see a large stack of Philippine currency.

"Here, here's a hundred pesos. You won't say anything now, will you?" He almost whined in his anxiety.

"Don't worry, Tom, I won't tell on you. I'm not the chicken you told me I was. We can say it was ricochet."

"Gee, thanks, George; that's mighty white of you. You don't want the money? Well, OK, but if you change your mind, just let me know. You're a swell guy. I've changed my opinion of you a lot. Say, there's half a bottle left. What do you say we split it before we go. It'll do you a lot of good. After all, I can't help you all the way back. We've got a long walk."

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## *Sonnet on Disillusionment*

CHARLES J. CHRISTENSEN

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The tender kiss of spring is on the fields,  
The sun burns warm in azure, fleecy skies.  
The harbinger of life anew now flies,  
Rose-breasted; sings of the mate whose nest he shields.  
And a turbulent river powerfully wields  
The strength of winter snows; in fury cries  
Its choked and muddy water—in hate tries  
To conquer loving earth, which, helpless, yields.  
Such is my life in this poor faulty world;  
The cheerfulness which shines forth in my face  
Is but a seeming fairness of my youth.  
Hate, fury, sorrow, passion, love are hurled  
In roaring springtime flood—and without grace—  
Cover my soul with ugly muddy truth.

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## Your Greatest Unknown

PETER THORSLEV, Jr.

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What is your greatest unknown? Is it what your mark will be on that final Latin test that's just around the corner? Is it what your sweetheart would say if you should ask her that all-important question? Or do you perhaps spend sleepless nights just wondering what other people think of you and of your actions? No, your greatest unknown is probably one of which you are not consciously aware—yourself.

Introspection, or learning to know yourself, is not a much-loved term. When we think of introspection, we usually think of extreme introverts, or antisocial philosophers, or of hermits. Socrates' classic motto "Know Thyself" is considered an archaic expression with no practical purpose, and few think of the wealth of meaning behind those two words. There is still a great deal of truth, however, in what Bacon wrote in his essay "On Great Place," even if he did write it in Latin. "Death lies heavily on that man who is too well-known to all the world, and dies unknown to himself." We can practice introspection and not go to extremes. Like good wine, a little of it is very healthful and also very pleasant.

Although introspection has its main use in our becoming better acquainted with ourselves, it is also our first and best means of getting to know others. We can never project ourselves completely into others' minds and see how they operate, see the motives for their actions, and feel their every emotion. We can look objectively into ourselves, however, and see all of these actions and attitudes. It is our only chance to gain valuable firsthand psychological knowledge. Unless we really know ourselves, we can never hope to know others.

An essential prerequisite for introspection, of course, is honesty. We will not acquire a bit of knowledge of ourselves if we have preconceived notions of the superiority of our abilities, or of the purity of our motives, or are inclined to look at what is sordid and mean and paint all our motives as dark as possible. When we look within our minds and analyze ourselves, we must

do it rationally and objectively, considering and weighing our good and bad alike on the best of balances, that of honesty. Of course, people often hate to admit their limitations, and when introspection shows them a sorry picture of themselves, they immediately stop observing and defensively lay the blame on others, rather than on themselves.

Blaming others for our faults has never made us one whit better. On the other hand, if we work on the basis of sound knowledge of ourselves by honest introspection, we can subject our minds to our will or "conquer our souls," and then enrich our whole life by molding, improving, and developing our personalities.

Of course, for all this study, another essential prerequisite is the knowledge that our personality is not a static thing. On the contrary, it is a living, changing thing, and we must study it as such, restraining changes for the worse, and promoting changes for a better personality. This moving principle is the very life of our souls, and it is one thing which makes introspection interesting. On the other hand, it is one great cause of a lack of understanding of ourselves because in the modern world we have so little time to consider ourselves and our own souls. We rush madly to keep up with the world about us so that we find it impossible to keep up with ourselves.

You can always recognize a person who for some reason or other doesn't know himself. He finds it hard to make a decision, especially a personal one, and when he does arrive at one, it is usually only with the help and advice of others who probably know him better than he knows himself. He cannot stand quietness when in a group and can never be alone for very long. He continually seeks light, frivolous company. If at any time he is left to himself, he is afraid, or bored, afraid of the unknown, or bored with that which he does not understand.

On the other hand the person who has studied himself objectively and honestly and has molded his personality, filling in its lacks and smoothing its harsh corners, has learned to be interesting to himself. Instead of his mind being a dark and dreary prison, filled with unknown horrors, his mind is a pleasant home for his soul, plentifully supplied with the clear, cool light of reason. His mind is a treasure house for himself and for all those around him. He knows that to be interesting to other people, he must first of all be interesting to himself, and that the person who has learned to live with himself has learned to live with others.

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## Important Roses

CLEO D. HANSON

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Saturday morning eight year old Terry counted the contents of his little bank.

"Two dollars and thirty-five, thirty-six, thirty-seven cents. Hm! Still not enough," he declared thoughtfully. "Have to get some job today or I won't have enough for her birthday present."

As he systematically put the coins back in the bank, he thought of six beautiful red roses that he was going to get for her birthday—his mother's birthday. As he plinked the last coin in the bank he resolved, "I'll earn the rest of that money somehow—and I'll get it in time too. There's all day today left."

He put his bank in the drawer, slipped on his well worn sweater and hustled over to Dr. Andersen's. He had cleaned out the doctor's garage once last year and he received a whole dollar for it. He thought maybe Dr. Andersen would need it cleaned again. And if he got a dollar for the job again, it would swell the important fund.

Terry parked his bicycle at the curb, then walked timidly up the steps to the doctor's front door. He hesitated a moment, then bravely thrust his arms forward to ring the bell. He rang again but no one answered. Sadly he turned away, walked down the steps and out to the street. He started to mount his rickety bicycle, then paused as if wondering which way to turn.

Dickie and Benny, his playmates, rounded the corner from Tenth Street and stopped their bicycles by Terry.

"Goin' to play today?" inquired Dick.

"No, guess not."

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing."

"Well, what's cooking?"

"Well, thought maybe I could work for Doc today but he's gone."

"Yeah, he left for vacation."

"When?"

"Yesterday."

"For how long?"

"Two weeks—he told my dad."

Terry's heart sank.

"C'mon. Dick and I was just on our way. Gonna play off the tie today."

"No... I ah... I'm going to try to get a job."

"You worked las' Saturday. Can't you play ball today? We need you at shortstop."

"No. Think I'll go up to the North store. Maybe they need help."

"Well, we gotta get goin'. If you decide to come down, bring your ball."

"Say, you can take my ball if you wanna."

"Where is it?"

"Home. I'll ride with you to the house and give it to you."

The three boys mounted their wheels and started for Terry's house. While enroute, Dick asked Terry, "How come you goin' to work today?"

"Been saving for something—for Mom."

"For who?"

"Mother—her birthday today."

Dick hesitated, then understandingly said, "Oh."

As they coasted up to Terry's house, Terry said, "I'll get it in a second."

Terry dashed to the back porch, got the second hand ball and brought it out in front.

"Stuffin's comin' out, but it's O.K. for warm-ups, or in case you lose Skip's ball in the weeds again."

"Sure," said Dick, "Thanks."

Dick and Benny climbed on their bicycles and headed for the diamond. Once away, Benny remarked, "Terry's O.K.!"

"Check," returned Dick.

Terry pedalled toward the store, his mind largely lamenting the fact that his one big prospect was gone. His main ray of hope was a job helping at the grocery store.

He carefully parked his bicycle, rolled down his trouser leg and walked straight for the door. He paused a few seconds before entering to straighten his shirt collar and to smooth back his hair with his hand. Then, drawing himself up to full size, he entered. He saw Mrs. Warren by the vegetable counter, so he made his way over to her and asked, "Do you need some help today, please, Mrs. Warren?"

"Hello, Terry. Why, come to think of it, Mr. Warren said just

a few minutes ago he needed some help. Go to the back room and see."

Expectation leaped inside Terry as he confidently marched to the back room. Mr. Warren was signing an invoice. When he finished he turned to meet the sparkle in Terry's eyes. Half startled he said, "Oh, hello, Terry."

"Hello, Mr. Warren....ah"

"Got some more pop bottles today?"

"No. I thought maybe I could do something for you today—work for you. Mrs. Warren said....ah"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I did want some help today, but I'm afraid you're not strong enough."

"I'm pretty strong, Mr. Warren. Look."

Terry picked up a sixty pound box of canned goods to demonstrate.

"Yes, but I'm expecting a whole truck load of potatoes this morning sometime, and they have to be carried downstairs. They come in hundred pound sacks, you know, and that's really too much for your back."

Mr. Warren was right.

Terry's expectation deflated itself, but he tried to hide that when he asked, "Is there anything else you need done today though?"

"Guess not, Terry. But say," added Mr. Warren as he reached for his billfold, "Did I pay you for delivering those hand-bills? I can't remember."

"Yeah, last Wednesday. It was forty cents."

"Oh, O.K. then."

Dejected, Terry turned to leave, pondering where he would go next. When Terry was almost out of the store, Mr. Warren suddenly called, "Terry! Did Terry go yet? Terry."

"Coming, Mr. Warren."

"Since you were asking about work, I happened to think. I'm going to play golf tomorrow; do you want to caddy for me?"

"I...I don't know. I never caddied before."

"Nothing much to learn, and you can ride out with us."

"Well...I needed the money today."

"I can give you a dollar or two in advance if it's really important," offered Mr. Warren."

"Well...at what time tomorrow?"

"Oh, come over about 9:30."

"9:30? No, Mr. Warren. That's Sunday School time. I can't go tomorrow."

"Well, it's up to you, Terry. I just thought I'd offer."

"Well, I want the work all right, 'cause I want to get something for Mom, but ah...I know she wouldn't like it."

"Your mother, you say?"

"Yeah, you probably didn't know, but her birthday is today."

"Her birthday...?"

"Yeah, you see..."

"I think I see, Terry. That's O.K. I think you're a fine boy."

Still wanting to help, Mr. Warren said, "Come around next Saturday."

"Well, O.K., Mr. Warren. Thanks."

Next Saturday would be too late, if Terry was to carry out his plan. He took his bicycle and pedalled home slowly. He sauntered into his room, took the bank from the drawer and sat down on the bed. He started to shake the coins from the bank, when he suddenly jumped to his feet. "I've got it," he shouted.

Five minutes later he pulled up to the "Cycle Shop," walked in, and inquired, "You buy used bikes here?"

"Yeah, sometimes, if we're sure they ain't been stolen."

"Well, mine is all mine, but I want to sell it. How much?"

"Le's have a look."

"It's out here."

"Hm. Kinda old, but guess it's worth, ah...four dollars."

"O.K."

"Here's the money."

Eager hands took the money even though it was for the last thing Terry owned, his bicycle. He walked briskly to the flower shop, clutching the money in his pocket. Carefully he picked out six of the prettiest roses on display.

"To whom shall I have them sent, and what shall I put on the card?" the clerk inquired.

"I'll take 'em myself, but write 'Happy Birthday, Mother' on the card," answered Terry solemnly.

When he arrived home he carefully placed the roses on the library table before a neatly framed picture of a kindly faced woman.

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## Epigrams

LOIS MARGARET GIRTZ

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Snowflakes—cold, unreal—

Feathery links  
Binding my soul's flight,  
Chaining my body's freedom,  
Chilling my heart....

A good dawn—

A poor man's hope for a better life unfulfilled;  
Money to the rich man's hoard  
    Toil, tears  
    Headaches, heartaches, ...  
The fever and fervor of a sick world heightened.

A good dawn....

My memory—

An unrecorded history of my life  
    Defeats and sorrows,  
    Triumphs and happiness.  
        —convenient, embarrassing—  
Elusive like quicksilver.

Black—throbbing, living

In the country—  
    stove polish,  
    the rich earth,  
    work boots,  
fence posts and windmill silhouetted against the fading  
sunset.

In the city—

sedans, sophistication,  
the gay derby,  
stockings—  
soot, shadows of a tenement,  
dirt on small children's faces,  
coal yards—  
fresh ink on the morning edition.

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## Arbo Fire

PETER THORSLEV, Jr.

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We walked single file down the trail, and the dust, powdered fine by many tramping feet and the hoofs of pack mules, rose up in choking clouds and stung my nostrils. I was tired. I had worked twelve hours the day before, and the long, cold ride in the open truck had left me stiff and sore. I had snatched a scant hour of sleep on the floor of the bunkhouse at the ranger station, and woke more tired than before.

I watched my worn lumberman's boots scuff the fine silt as I placed one foot wearily before another. The heavy tools pulled at my arms, and my belt, weighted with a "double lunch" and a canteen, tugged at my stomach. A shout to "clear the way" broke in on my thoughts, and I stepped off the trail and watched the string of mules plod by, loaded down with heavy tools. The tinkling bells added to the discordant ringing in my head, and the harsh oaths of the driver cracked and snapped like whips over the backs of the weary beasts.

They passed, and we resumed our march. A weather-beaten sign at a fork in the trail cheered us with its message: "One-half mile to Arbo Mountain." I rounded a promontory, and there was the fire on the side of Arbo Mountain just across the valley. A sudden excitement welled up in me. A few black snags poked their ugly prongs out of dense clouds of smoke, and here and there was a little burst of fire as a pine burst into flames and burned for a few moments like a Roman candle.

The trail before me dipped down into the valley, down the barren hillside into the pines below, like a worm returning to its burrow. We followed it down, and by-passing the fire-camp, we followed a newly-blazed trail up to the fire. I walked up the steep hillside, across the logs of the heavy windfall, my caulks biting into the wood, making patterns of pock-marks in the soft pine.

The trail became more steep, and my breath began to come in short, hot gasps. The sweat trickled down my face, dropping off my nose and running into my mouth. The taste of it was biting and acrid. We reached a little stream, and I halted momentarily to fill my canteen. Cold water—icy cold—washed over my hands and cooled my dusty, oily boots. I took a few swallows and the cold ached in my mouth and throat.

I started again and forced myself up the trail. Halfway up we relieved the former crew and began vigorously to cut the line from where they had left off. The windfall was dense, and except for the undergrowth and groups of saplings and a few scattered giant Ponderosa pine, the ground was bare of growth.

Taking my place at the head of the line, I began to do the clearing for the trench. The little prickly spruce saplings and the lithe white pine fell beneath the sharp blade of my Pulaski. The chip, chop, chip, chop of the Pulaskis and the high-pitched zing of the saws behind me furnished a rhythm for the work. Now and then I stooped to grub out a stubborn root with the flat end of my tool.

At one place the fire burned very close to the line on which we were working, and the scorching drops of sweat on my bare arms and back dried into little white crystals of salt. The light of the sun, filtered through the hot smoke, gave a weird orange hue to trees and shrubs, and the bushes which were as yet untouched by the fire, seemed all aflame—burning brightly, yet not consumed.

There were no "fives," but at the stroke of noon a shout went up the line, and I dropped to the cool damp earth. From my belt I took one of my lunches and mixed bites of warm soggy sandwiches with long draughts from my canteen. Then I lit a cigarette, damp with sweat, and the smoke blended a new smell with that already clinging to my clothes and hanging in the air.

I forced myself back to my feet and again went slogging slowly up the hill. The quick strokes of the Pulaski sounded dully on a fallen log or else rang out and sparked when my tired, flailing arms made the blade miss its mark, and it hit a hidden rock.

Five—six—seven more hours dragged slowly by, and at last I met the gang coming down from the top of the fire. When I had severed the last log I looked up and smiled at the grimy, smoke-blackened lout who stood before me. The sweat running down the soot on his face made it a grotesque, yet comical mask.

I dropped down again into the trench, and loosening my belt, I unfastened my second lunch. Just as I finished I saw a branch of dark, ripe berries above me and, picking a bunch in my grimy hands, I ate them. They were good. Still juicy, and only slightly baked, they reminded me of a well-made huckleberry pie.

The night welled up from the valley and, creeping up the mountainside, finally covered us. The last gleam of light was leaving the mountain-tops, and we were not relieved. I fastened the miner's lamp to my hat and, taking my post, stood watch along

## Arbo Fire

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the line. The thin pencil of light from my lamp searched out the trench before me.

The fire was quiet then. Only occasionally a low murmur quickly grew into an angry roar as the fire devoured a clump of scrub spruce and then, finding no more fuel, subsided as quickly as it had risen, leaving only a pile of glowing embers. A few tall snags pointed gnarled fingers at the stars and, as the night wind rose, they sent out long streams of sparks like comets' tails.

I no longer felt tired. The cool night air and the restless slumbering of the fire intoxicated me. Having dipped water from a muddy spring, I boiled a can of coffee over a glowing log. The coffee, scorching hot and strong, burned my tongue and sharpened my numbed senses. I jumped to my feet with a start as a snag, with its roots burned through, came crashing down across the fire line, all too near my head. Hastily I covered the glowing log with damp, cold humus, and the embers steamed and made little eruptions in the packed earth, like volcanoes in miniature.

At last the cool, wan light of dawn began to frame the blackened mountaintop in greyish mist, and the ringing shouts of the relief gang floated up to us out of the valley. Relieved of our posts, we began the slow trip down the trail, plunging into the dark, damp forest below.

Suddenly I was very tired. My feet seemed dead and weighted, and my hands hung limply at my side. The moving figures before me floated as in a mist. As we neared the fire camp the smell of fried eggs drifted through the trees, and the dancing light of the harmless cook fires made a clearing in the darkness.

Groggily I fell in line for breakfast, and after filling my tin plate, I sat on an old gnarled root and ate. The food was good, delicately flavoured with the taste of open cedar fires.

Having eaten, I picked up my canvas sleeping bag, walked out of the firelight, and found an open space among the trees, with a soft mattress of moss and fallen needles underfoot. I took off my grimy clothes, stiff with crystalline sweat, and the cool mountain air bathed my naked body, soothing my aching legs and tired back. Quickly then I slipped into my bed and, looking up, saw the first early light of sunrise illumine the tops of the tall pines about me. The stillness of the dawn was accentuated by the far-off bustle of the camp and the wireless operator's voice beginning to chant the morning report: "Arbo fire to Arbo base; Arbo fire to Arbo base—Over."

I sank into the soft flannel blanket and sleep closed in and overcame me.

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## The Hill

AIDA LIMJOCO

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Suddenly I was awake. The darkness was close around me, an oppressive blanket I could not fight. It pressed against the pit of my stomach and wrapped itself around my heart. My limbs felt heavy and tired. What was wrong? A sigh trembled through me. Oh yes, last night. As an experimental tongue licked the thin salt crust of a tear on my lip, I remembered. I remembered the angry voices, the passionate crying of my brother, my own shrill defiance. I remembered the upraised slipper and the sting of it. Resentment welled in my heart. Dry sobs shook me as I hugged self-pity. Passionately I hated all of them and wished that I were dead. I hated being at the plantation, living in the "nipa" house and having to do heavy work that I never had to do in the city. I hated sleeping on the split bamboo floor on woven grass mats. The cold hill breeze chilled my bones as it came through the floor and slipped through the chinks in the grass walls. The thick darkness that crowded through the window frightened me as I thought of our little hut, lonely at the foothill. Even the gas lamp at the corner of the room was no comfort. Its flame, turned low, flickered forlornly and helplessly against the night. Oh, to go home to running water and large rooms and warm beds and electric lights . . . a sleepy sigh passed through me.

The shaking of the blanket woke me again. What now? The patch of sky that showed through the window was still black, but outside the mosquito net I could see figures busily hurrying. My mother paused long enough to tell me we were going to pick the cotton on the near-by hill. Rebellion welled up in me again. What were they so excited about? Why did I have to get up? Heavily I threw my blanket off and ducked through the netting. The breeze through the bamboo slats under my bare feet was chilly, the mountain mist through the window was cold and damp against my back. Hurriedly, I slipped into my overalls. In the kitchen, I warmed my hands over the fire Mother had started on the clay stoves. It was a good fire, spitting and crackling and roaring.

Mother had the rice pot on the stove. As I crouched, warming myself before the fire, the pot cover began to dance. The rice was boiling over. Bubbling water was pushing against the cover and streaking down the side, disappearing in a splutter as the flames licked it. I hurriedly pushed the cover aside and, in doing so,

## The Hill

tipped the pot. The fire fizzled out. Why did everything have to happen to me, I thought angrily as I transferred the pot to another fire. The pot, the fire, the air, the hill—none of them wanted me there. I hated them and they hated me. I hated the eggs nudging each other in another boiling pot—boiled eggs tasted like blotter anyway. The dried meat sizzling in fat on a hot pan disgusted me. I dislike wrapping the food in banana leaves, and I detested black sauce. But Mother happily packed them all in a basket and we were ready to start.

The hill mist wrapped me with clammy tentacles as soon as I stepped out into the night. Even the bamboo railing of the steps was icy and unfiendly. I felt the earth, steeped with the black, moist night, yield underfoot. Father carried a lantern to point the trail and we all followed behind him. At first I stumbled, but as I got used to the dark, the trail became easier to follow, looking gray in the mist and bounded by the dark of the hill grass on either side. Every ruffle of the grass was a snake to me, every bush a monster. The bobbing of the lantern ahead seemed to get farther and farther away from me, but my short legs could not seem to go any faster without stumbling. The trail to the next hill stretched endless before me.

The sky was greying when we arrived at the cotton fields. It stretched before us, vague and dark. Father assigned a row for me to pick before breakfast and went off to get busy himself. Slowly and heavy-footed, I walked down the row, halfheartedly picking off the soft grey-white blobs. Every so often, as my fingers touched the wet leaves, I shivered inside. Even the feel of the moist cotton balls in my hand tingled my scalp and prickled my skin as my hair stood up at the roots. Thus it was that when my father came back, I had barely started my row. He took the basket off my arm and sent me off, saying that if I must sulk, I might as well sulk guarding the food. Resentment and rebellion smoldered in me as I walked off. I had not been sulking, I inwardly screamed. Could I help it if the mist and the dew and the cotton were all against me, fighting me? I am not going to guard any food basket, I told myself. Half frightened and half defiant, I slipped among the cotton rows to the trail, shadowy as it disappeared up the misted hill. I looked back to the cotton fields. Through the thin haze, I could see vague figures stooping and standing like wraiths swayed by the wind. I could hear voices like muted echoes, muffled by the mist, distant and bodiless. The soft, disembodied sound of laughter came to me, floating in the smoky veil. Let them laugh, I told myself. I'm going up that hill, and if something gets me, it serves them right. With feet dragging

and arms hugging my thin shoulders, I started up. I stared with fascinated horror at every bush and tree as it floated out of the mist at me. I stared at the tall, thick, sharp cogon grass that leaned over the trail and cut like sword blades. Oh, why did I come this way? If I get hurt and maybe killed, what then? But I could not go back ignominiously. If they laughed at me, I would die.

At the top of the hill, a large flat stone stood by the trail. I stood near it in cold misery. Perhaps, I thought, if I slip back, no one will notice that I have been gone. A sudden breeze sprang up, and a spark of brilliance at my foot caught my eye. The grass had quivered, shedding some pellets of dew. Streaks of light glanced on them. Surprised, I looked up. Why, the sun was here! Its red rim had appeared on the ridge of the next hill. I clambered on top of the stone. Oh, look at the layers of red and pink clouds and the bright streaks that pierce them! The dark shadows on the roads and the trees had disappeared! The light was fast filling the air, skidding brilliant sunshine into the mist. I watched the earth come out of the mist, bright washed with dew, and clean. I saw the glistening red and orange and yellow of the weed flowers, silvered with wetness. I saw the tall trees wake to the sun and spread their leaves to the light. I saw the cogon grass by the trail, a sparkling green webbed with the dew. Out below me at the valley floor the sugar cane fields stretched in neat military rows. Somewhere a bird kept importantly announcing the day, its shrill call going wheet-o-wheet at impatient intervals. I could taste the clean, cold air as I breathed it. I danced a jig on the stone, drunk with the passing of danger, with trees free from shadows and friendly, with grass generous in jeweled dew and shimmering colors, with air brisk in the brilliant sun, with multi-colored sky almost at fingertip reach above me.

Suddenly I was hungry. I remembered the sweet coldness of raw sugar cane juice and yearned for a mouthful. I longed to pick a stout cane off the valley floor below, peel it in long strips with my teeth, and bite chunks of the fresh, white, juicy pith. I could almost feel the sweet juice drooling in my mouth and sluicing down my throat. I ached for it, but the cane fields were too far away. Besides, I could hear my father halloing for me at the foot of the hill. It was time for breakfast! At once, I forgot the sugar cane! Hot sweet rice wrapped in steamy fresh banana leaves, good crisp meat, eggs, and fresh-picked tomatoes from the plants growing between cotton rows were waiting for me down there. Oh, I was hungry! With a yell that I was coming, I screamed with delighted laughter as I ran down the trail.

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## The Little Men

CAROL MENGERS

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He was just a little man,  
A galley slave, pulling an oar with thousands of little men,  
Straining to avoid the sting of the overseer's whip,  
Driving a ship laden with luxuries for a fat, pompous Cæsar.  
But Paul, who had come to set the world upside down,  
Told him of the Christ Who bled and died for all —  
Yea, even for little men.

He was just a little man,  
A peasant, paying indulgences and fees  
To swell the coffers of the Pope,  
Thinking only what the priest told him to think,  
Bound to a system that told him how to pray to God.  
But Martin Luther came, and by God's help,  
Defied the Pope and freed the little men,  
Reaffirming the truth of the Scriptures that the just shall live by  
faith,

That every little man has his own way to God.

He was just a little man.  
A black man, working in the fields of corn and cotton,  
Supporting on his weary, aching shoulders the system that gave  
an easy life to his master,  
Toiling day after day with no vision of future happiness.  
But Lincoln, the Great Liberator, came  
To strike the chains from the black man's heart and soul,  
To release the little men from slavery and bondage and make  
them free.

There are little men today.  
Innocent victims of the war machine,  
Children with pleading eyes and bony, outstretched fingers seeking  
for food.

Knowing not the reasons for their ravaged land,  
Knowing not the hate and greed that brought it on,  
Knowing only pain and cold and hunger,  
Stark terror and death.

What will *you* do for the little men?

You who turn from your well-laden tables with no thought for  
the starving.

You, who don't even take the trouble to cast your vote for Democracy,  
Who would let all the world succumb to forces of evil and terror  
If it didn't touch your easy life.  
What will you do for the little men?  
What will you do with the Christ who died for little men?

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## Conflict

PETER THORSLEV, Jr.

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My reason tells me to love, but moderately, with only half my heart, retaining the rest as insurance against certain loss. It is so much easier that way, saving me from pain and hardship.

My heart tells me that to love with only part of me is worse than not to love at all. I cannot gain unless I give. When the cool wind blows, white moonlight flatters life and love, and hot blood pulses through my veins, I should spare no part of me, but thrill to feel love given without reservation and returned.

My reason also tells me to resist that which I hate—fear, greed, intolerance and injustice—but only moderately. Passive resistance is the best course—a course in which I keep my mind free from smirch of passion and restrain my anger within the cool, inflexible and rational bonds of moderation. My heart tells me to wage war on that I hate, a cruel, relentless and passionate war, with all the tools I have at my command—to give myself wholeheartedly to the fight, and not to lay down my arms until the field is mine. Finally, my reason tells me I must compromise. High ideals of love and charity for all mankind, of brotherhood and equal rights, are good in theory, but in practice I must yield a little. Rome was not built in a day. High ideals, unflinchingly held, are for fanatics, not for me. But my heart tells me that I must hold to these ideals without compromise—to deny them is to betray myself.

Perhaps someday when I've grown older and more mature of mind, and the flames of youthful passions have subsided to glowing embers—then I'll see the value in the cold laws of logic and reason, and will search always, carefully and with due consideration, for the Golden Mean. Then I'll sacrifice myself to reason, and it will be my guide.

Until that day arrives, I'll listen to my heart.

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# Like a Thief in the Day

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

CHARLES J. CHRISTENSEN

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## Cast of Characters

ELOIS, a housewife, quiet and mousy; she is proud of her baby; otherwise she has not much to say.

ANTOINETTA MAE SMYTHE, very gracious and highly cultured, (she thinks), but affected and artificially "refined" in her mannerisms.

MARIE, a housewife with a dry, ironic sense of humor; she is fond of saying odd, startling things.

BURGLAR, an odd little fellow; he seems tired and uncertain. There is more behind his actions than he shows; he is frightened, and attempts to cover up with an exaggerated harshness. He lacks experience.

THOMAS KENN, a neighbor. He has been fixing a bad tire and comes to borrow a wrench. He is sarcastic and often outright insulting.

SALESMAN, full of talk. He doesn't have much to say in actuality, but he uses a great many words to say it. Has what he considers a new "line" and is very anxious to sell a vacuum cleaner.

## Scene

The living room of Elois's house. It is the middle of the afternoon in midsummer. The sun shines in through the windows and doors.

*As the curtain rises, the stage is empty. There is a door backstage center, which opens to a porch. The stairway to second floor is backstage right, and the door to the dining room and kitchen are at right. A davenport to left, and two overstuffed chairs at right; several ladderbacked chairs are against the wall backstage. The bell to the doorbell is above the landing in the stairway. Antoinetta Mae and Marie come up on the porch and ring the doorbell. Elois, looking a bit tired and disheveled in a house dress and big apron, comes in from the kitchen to answer the door.*

Elois: Why Marie, Antoinetta Mae, hello! Come on in. (*Apologetically*) I just this minute finished hanging out the baby's

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wash, and he's sound asleep. (*She seems a bit flustered, dusts off her apron with her hand, etc.*)

Marie: Thanks, Elois. Now don't make any fuss, we know how it is with a baby in the house, don't we, Antoinetta (*impishly*).

Antoinetta: (*Gasps, then covers with an attempt to be facetious*) Speak for yourself, Marie! All I know about children is how to raise them, because not having any, I've had time to give it some thought! (*Laughs affectedly; no one else laughs.*)

Elois: (*Pause, then hurriedly*) Oh, sit down, why don't you—and take off your coats and stay a while. (*Sinks down in the overstuffed chair at right front, while the other two sit on the davenport.*)

Antoinetta: By the by, have you heard about the burglarious individual who entered Mrs. van Gueysen's house last night, turned out all the drawers, and then stole all their silverplate? Of course, her sterling was at the bank, but he left several thousand dollars worth of beautiful antique linen damasks on the floor, and never even touched her Ming vase. Can you imagine? (*She speaks with the relish of the gossip, and emphasizes "linen damasks" and "Ming vase" so the other two will know she knows about them.*)

Marie: (*quietly*) Yes, I heard. Isn't it wonderful that her lovely things weren't taken? She enjoys them so much.

Antoinetta: The whole thing reminds me of Comic Opera—so dramatic. But I'd like to see him walk in on me! As she begins this speech, a man is seen sneaking up the stairs. When she finishes speaking, he stumbles on the steps of the porch, then recovers himself. The two women on the davenport sit up, somewhat startled. Elois jumps to her feet in alarm. The man seems much more frightened than they are and rushes in, carrying a length of clothesline over his shoulder and a gun in his hand. Antoinetta squeals and falls back on the davenport.

Burglar: (*Desperately attempting to control himself and sound self-possessed*) Shut up, lady! And sit down. And (*ferociously*) stick 'em up—do you hear me, stick 'em up or I'll shoot! (*Waves the gun around dangerously. The women sit down, hurriedly putting their arms up in the air. They wear scared looks on their faces—particularly Antoinetta, who seems hardly able to control herself. Elois is more worried; Marie seems very self-possessed all the way through. The man puts his gun in a holster such as a child might use, takes out his knife, and cuts three large pieces off the rope, with which*

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he ties the women to chairs: Marie to the overstuffed chair in which she sits, and the other two to straight chairs which he pulls out from the wall.)

Elois: (suddenly) Is that my clothesline? What did you do with my clothes? I just finished washing them, and now I suppose you've got them all dirty!

Burglar: They are on the grass. (More gently.) They won't get dirty—they were almost dry anyway. But I had to have the line, you know.

Marie: (matter-of-factly) I can see where you would. I can't imagine anything more necessary to successful burgling than a clothesline. All the better burglars use them.

Burglar: What?

Marie: That's true. Why, only yesterday I was reading an article in a nationally known magazine about burgling, and this author was of the opinion that all good burglars habitually carry clotheslines. And I've seen them advertised in *Better Burgling*, *The Sing-Sing Review*, and the *Safebreakers' Digest*.

Antoinetta: (Half whispering) Marie! How can you say things like that?

Marie: It's easy, really. I just open my mouth and out they come!

Burglar: O.K., lady, where's the silver. And quick. I haven't got all day here. (A man comes up the walk, unseen by the burglar, who has his back to the door. This man comes dressed in greasy coveralls. He rings the doorbell, which bursts in on the last speech of the burglar, who grabs his gun clumsily and starts for the door.) A peep from any of you, and I-I'll shoot! (He opens the door, holding the gun behind his back.)

Thomas Kenn: Do you suppose I might borrow one of your wrenches? My car . . . say, who the dickens are you?

Burglar: Come on in—er, I mean, stick 'em up! And go sit down in that chair! (Kenn goes and sits in one of the straight backed chairs at left. He is angry, and shows it. The burglar cuts off another piece of the rope, which he has thrown by the door, and attempts to tie up Kenn. Kenn starts to fight the burglar, and in the scuffle the gun is accidentally discharged, but harmlessly. The baby starts to cry, seemingly from upstairs. The burglar is badly frightened, but keeps his head and his gun. Kenn submits himself to being led to the chair. The baby continues to cry, but not so loudly as at first.)

Elois: (angrily) Now see what you've done! You've gone and woke up my baby. I should think the least you could do was

*Like a Thief in the Day*

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to consider him. And another thing, you've got nerve, walking into my house in broad daylight, stealing from other people. Why don't you get a job and earn your living like decent people do? And you can just untie me now. Don't you hear my baby crying? Untie me!

*Antoinetta: (taking courage from Elois)* Yes, why don't you? Just who do you think you are?

*Burglar:* You shut up, sourpuss. It's women like you that drive men to drink.

*Antoinetta:* Well, I never!

*Marie:* I agree with you both perfectly. "Trust thyself; every heart vibrates to that iron string."

*Elois:* Honestly, Marie, how can you? *(To the burglar)* Do you hear me? Untie me! *(Starting to cry)* My baby's crying, can hear him?

*Kenn:* What's the matter with you? Didn't you ever have any children?

*(The baby stops crying.)*

*Burglar: (Simply and slowly)* My little Jimmy died when his mother did, the day he was born.

*(No one says anything. The baby starts to cry again. The burglar goes over and unties Elois who goes upstairs. The burglar stands in the landing, keeping his eye on the people he has tied up. A man comes walking up the sidewalk just after the baby stops crying, and he rings the bell as Elois comes in carrying the baby.)*

*Burglar:* Sit down and shut up. *(He goes to the door.)*

*Salesman: (briskly)* Good day, good day. May I take just a few minutes of your time to introduce you to my vacuum cleaner? It's not just to show it to you, it's to sell you one, and it won't take five minutes, it'll take half an hour. And I'm not trying to work my way through college, nor to help people have a good cleaner; I'm out to make money. *(Rather insincerely, but with an attempt at engaging frankness.)* But I know you'll want to see this vacuum cleaner—it's one of the best on the market, and I just want to show it to you—is your Mrs. home—and may I come in? *(Opens the door and walks in.)* Thank you. And now may I—*(astonished)* what the dickens is going on in here?

*Burglar: (Coming out of a daze.)* Stick 'em up! Put down that cleaner and sit over there. *(Points to chair beside Kenn.)*

*Salesman:* Well, I hope you realize this is highly unethical. I shall have to report you to the Fair Trade Commission for

such goings on. You are interfering with a salesman in pursuit of his duty, and furthermore . . .

*Kenn: (interrupting)* Who pulled your chain? You darn fool salesmen have caused me more trouble—if one of you hadn't sold me a bum tire, I wouldn't be sitting here now, looking for a wrench!

*Marie: (interestedly)* Is that what you are doing? My husband always keeps his wrenches in our house. —Unless you're hiding it on your wife?

*Antoinetta: (archly)* If that isn't just like a man. Spreading his tools all over the neighborhood, and then blaming his wife for it! Hmph!

*Kenn:* Now see here, you withered old upstart! In the first place . . .

*Antoinetta:* I am not an upstart. I am Antoinetta Mae Smythe—of the Smythes (spelled S-M-Y-T-H-E)—and my grandfather was the first man in this town. Of all the nerve!

*Kenn:* If you don't like it, you can always get up and go home. Ha!

*Burglar:* If you people will shut up for a while and let me do some talking! I have work to do.

*Marie:* Times are pretty hard, aren't they, when a poor honest thief can't make a living.

*Burglar: (Desperately)* Will you shut up and . . .

*Salesman:* If you want something helpful, try my vacuum cleaner. It cleans your rug like a thief cleans a safe, and it's safe for your best rugs; it keeps the dirt as tight as a burglar in a cell. And it sells very cheaply. Ha! Ha! *(No one else laughs.)*

*Antoinetta: (Witheringly)* I detest simpering advertising!

*Kenn: (At the top of his voice.)* Can it, will you! All you do is talk, talk, talk!

*(Baby starts to cry again.)*

*Elois:* There, now, you've made the baby cry again!

*Kenn:* I did not!

*(They burst into a general argument, the baby crying all the while. Marie only does no talking; she is enjoying the spectacle completely. The burglar stands a minute, then shakes his head, throws up his hands, and walks out muttering while the din continues unabated.)*

FAST CURTAIN

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## Red Marble

PHYLLIS HANSON

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Barbara Sue sat on the front steps, banging one scuffed moccasin against the boards with monotonous regularity. Her small red mouth was drawn up in a pout, and her one grubby hand toyed with a partially unbraided blonde pigtail that was missing a ribbon. Her once white T Shirt was stained with dirt and had a long rip on the shoulder. Dusty blue jeans were rolled sloppily up to her knees, exposing dust covered legs and soiled blue anklets. Her blue eyes were stormy as she gazed over at the corner of the yard where her little sister Nelda was playing.

"Barbara Sue, stop banging your foot against that step this instant. And come in here and get cleaned up. You look like a little pig if I ever saw one," scolded her mother's voice from the doorway. Barbara Sue didn't move. She just sat and stared at Nelda.

"Just look at Nelda," her mother continued. "She is only four years old but at least she has sense. She doesn't go out and play baseball with the boys and come home all dirty. And she doesn't go around banging her feet against steps. I surely wish you would try to learn a little from your little sister."

"Nelda! Nelda! Nelda! That's all I hear," thought Barbara Sue resentfully. Life hadn't been so bad until that little brat came along. But now it was Nelda this and Nelda that until Barbara Sue thought she would scream. Of course Nelda was pretty, with her big dark eyes and naturally curly hair, and she was very sweet and sunny tempered. But did everyone have to look at Nelda and say, "Oh, what a lovely little girl," and then turn to her and say, "she doesn't look at all like you."

"Barbara Sue, did you hear me?" Mother's stern voice brought Barbara out of her reverie with a start. "I told you five minutes ago to come in and wash. Look, Nelda is already at the gate to wait for daddy. You'll miss him, if you don't hurry."

"Well, he wouldn't miss me. Not if Nelda is there," Barbara Sue burst out rebelliously as she strode into the house as fast as her nine year old legs would carry her. "Neither of you would miss me as long as Nelda is around. I hate her! I hate her!" Barbara Sue's voice rose passionately.

Her mother stared at her for a moment. Then, in a voice ominously calm she said, "Barbara Sue, you go upstairs and take that bath, then get into bed. No supper for you tonight, young lady. And I'm going to send your father up to see you as soon as he finishes his supper."

Without another word, Barbara Sue turned and fled up the stairs to her room. She knew perfectly well what her mother meant. Well, she'd just show them that she didn't care either. She'd run away, she thought. It seemed that ever since Nelda had been born there had been no place for her. When Nelda was a baby, she couldn't do anything because the noise might wake the baby. And now she still couldn't do anything. She was always the one who made too much noise, got too dirty, and didn't hang up her clothes. She couldn't behave nicely like her little sister and not play baseball with the boys. She didn't do everything she was asked to do at once, as Nelda did. No, it seemed that she didn't do anything as well as Nelda.

She crossed her room and looked out of the window. Daddy was just coming up the street, and Nelda was running to meet him. "Hi Daddy," Barbara Sue heard her call. She saw him lift the little girl into his arms and heard him say, "Hi, Sweetheart. How's my best girl today?"

"He didn't even ask for me," Barbara Sue thought. Her sturdy shoulders squared in resolution. She picked up her piggy bank, shook it, and dumped the handful of nickles and dimes into her blue jean's pocket. Quickly, she gathered another T shirt, another pair of jeans and a pair of anklets from her dresser drawer, wrapped them tightly in a bundle, opened the door of her room and stood still to listen. Good, they were all in the kitchen eating supper and would not hear her. She took one last look around the room, then grabbed her beloved baseball and thrust that into her pocket also. She crept cautiously out of the room and down the stairs. Luckily, the outside door was open to let in the cool breeze of the summer evening, so she slipped quietly outside without making a sound. Once clear of the house, she began to run up the street. She hadn't run very far before she heard footsteps pounding behind her and a boy's voice called, "Hey, Barbie Sue. where are you going so fast?"

"Oh, hello, Johnny." Barbara Sue slowed her steps. "I didn't see you," she continued. She looked at Johnny. He was dirty too, and probably hadn't had a bath since the baseball game either. His shock of red hair hadn't been combed, but his smile showed that he was glad to see her. He was a nice boy, she

decided. He fell into step with her now, and they continued on together.

"Going out to play baseball, Barbie Sue?" queried Johnny.

"Nope," was the monosyllabic reply.

"Going downtown?"

"Nope."

"What have you got in the bundle?"

"Clothes."

"Clothes! Why?" exclaimed Johnny. "Are you taking them to the cleaners?"

"Nope, I'm running away."

"Running away," repeated Johnny excitedly. "Why? What for? Do you think that's a good idea?"

"Well, no one at home loves me anymore. All they think of is Nelda." It was a flat statement now, there was no passion in it. She spoke deliberately, "I hate Nelda."

"You don't either hate Nelda. You can't, she's your sister," Johnny contradicted her flatly.

"Why does she have to have big long curls and beautiful brown eyes? Why does she have to do anything people tell her to do? Why can't she ever get dirty or play baseball? Why does everyone always tell me to act like she does? Why does everyone like her more than they do me?" Barbara Sue snapped off the questions at the bewildered Johnny.

Johnny shook his head. "I don't like her better'n I like you," he said. "I can't see that she is good for anything much. And she isn't so pretty. I like blonde braids and blue eyes a lot better'n any old brown curls and brown eyes."

"Do you really, Johnny?" Barbara Sue asked shyly.

"Yes, I do," Johnny continued. "And gee, I'm sure going to miss you after you've run away. What will the team do for a pitcher?" He stopped morosely and dug one bare toe into the ground. "You don't think you could manage to wait a little while longer, do you?"

Barbara Sue stopped too. She looked at Johnny. He really did look unhappy, she thought. Seeing her hesitation, Johnny spoke again, "If you stay, I'll give you my new red marble, Barbie Sue."

His new red marble, Barbara Sue thought. She had wanted it only that morning. Johnny must like her very much to offer her that. A feeling of contentment came over her. She didn't really want to leave home. She didn't really hate Nelda. She just wanted Mom and Dad to remember that they had two girls.

She sighed. Well, even if they forgot, there would always be Johnny. He liked her. He liked her more than he liked Nelda, more than he liked anyone. It grew to be almost a song in her heart. "Johnny likes me," she whispered under her breath. "He likes me enough to give me his new red marble."

"O.K.," she said aloud. "I'll stay."

"Good, that's super," Johnny replied. He slipped the red marble into her palm, but closed his hand over hers. Silently, they turned and started back up the street, two dusty figures in the grey summer twilight.

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## Love and Hate

PETER THORSLEV, Jr.

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He walked quickly down the sidewalk. The snow was piled in drifts in the gutters and the wind was icy cold. In the window to his right a sign read, "We cater to servicemen," and khaki THE SOWER—4821

officer's uniforms fitted handsome models snugly. Martial music blared from the loud-speaker on the corner, and every now and then a voice announced, "Enlist now in some branch of the Canadian Services, and add your strength to the thousands of men now fighting for freedom and our democratic rights."

His notice from the draft had come a few days before. "Report on Wednesday, Dec. 17th," it had read, "at 9118 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta." He had never thought about war very seriously before, not as it applied to him, at least. He had heard the slogans, "Enlist now for your country needs you," and "Our freedom and our lives are at stake. Join the army and help fight the cruel forces of Naziism which are devastating the world," but he had not thought of himself, or perhaps he had not wanted to. He had been busy with his studies at the University—but now his notice had come.

It had precipitated a quarrel with his father the night before. His father had been a captain in the army in the last war, and although he had never gone overseas, he had always wanted to go. He heard with blank surprise and growing consternation of his son's doubts about war.

"But, Father, war is hell. It's no way for civilized people to settle their differences—"

"It's gone too far for peaceful settlement now, Robert. They've invaded Austria, Poland, Belgium—killed helpless civilians with their murderous weapons—"

"But Father, sure we're fighting evil forces—wicked, hellish ideologies, but is this the way to fight them? By shooting and killing the people who hold those views? By using their own methods, bombing indiscriminately—?"

"Yes, we're fighting forces of evil, Son, and you remember what Bishop Powell said last Sunday—"

"Sure I remember what he said, and that to me is the worst hypocrisy of all. Ministers who preach that we should love even our enemies and yet that we should shoot and stab them—can you kill a man you love? And preachers who tell us that we must wage wars to fight and kill and yet their own gospel says that we must fight only with the peaceful weapon, the almighty power of love—"

"But can't you see that it's for king and country you'll be fighting?"

"For king and country—yes—who is the king but some figure-head of a vast and sprawling empire, held together by force of arms and the bonds of the almighty British pound sterling—and my country—isnt it—shouldn't it be—the world?"

His father had looked tired and old. The lines in his face deepened, and his white mustache had quivered a little. He hadn't spoken another word but had turned quietly and left the room.

It could not be much farther now, another three blocks or so. A crowd was milling on the sidewalk. They were shouting and waving union jacks. A small brass band was marching staunchly down the street, and a group of veterans of the last war following—amputees. They were riding in open trucks, and he could see empty sleeves pinned to their sides, or short stumps where their legs should have been. He felt suddenly sick to the stomach. He turned and walked quickly on.

Then there was Vicky, too. He had thought she might understand. Vicky had always understood him, and she loved him, he knew—her dark brown eyes had told him so many times before.

He had told her about the draft call when they were sitting in the Grill after the show. She had been sorry, in a way, but he could see the excited patriotism in her eyes. He had barely

mentioned his doubts, however, when he saw the expression on her face freeze, and a look of cold hostility rise in her eyes. She had asked to go home, immediately. She had two brothers in the service, and both of them had volunteered for overseas service, so he really couldn't blame her—and yet, he had hoped that she might understand.

He stood before the large sandstone building now. A huge portrait of Churchill in neon lights glowered at him from above the entrance. He opened the door, and walked down the tile hallway into the first office. Twin portraits of the King and Queen, in all the splendour of their coronation, hung on the wall behind the man at the desk. The officer wore a khaki uniform—just like the one in the window of the store down the street, except that this one was bedecked with campaign ribbons of the last great war.

The officer looked up at him and made a mental appraisal of him as he snapped the questions at the boy smartly.

At last the voice of the man behind the desk came to the question which would require Robert's decision. "Your religious affiliation?"

"Anglican," Robert answered quickly.

"Then you are not a conscientious objector?"

A silence fell on the office. Confused ideas seemed to be racking his mind, tormenting him. He could visualize the court—the angry eyes of the audience of fine, patriotic citizens—the cold, passive stare of the judge, as he pronounced the sentence. Then long hours in a C.O. camp—in the deep forests of British Columbia, or the wilderness near Hudson Bay. These things he could face. These things he would bear gladly, but—

"Speak up, man, this is no time for day-dreams. I have a good many men to interview before five-thirty. Are you or are you not a conscientious objector?"

Then he could see his former friends, now young men in uniform. They would be jeering—he could almost hear their angry taunts in his ears. And his father—he could see his face before him, a little man, old and tired, weighed down by the desertion of his only son from the principles which he held so dear. Then Vicky, too. To think of her was worst of all. He could see her again turning from him, with that look in her eyes that was like a slap in the face—

"No, no. I don't think so."

"This is no time to be making up your mind, young man. Will you abide with that decision?"

"Yes—I will." There was a curious ringing sound in his ears, and his hands were cold, clammy, and damp.

"Well, that's all here. You will pass down the hall, first door to your right, for your physical examination. You will register at the door. After we have filed your records, we will send you a notice as to your classification, and you will be given five days in which to settle your estate, after which you will report at the Prince of Wales Armory. Good-day."

Robert entered the dressing room and removed his clothes. Then he joined the line of men waiting for the doctor's examination. There were all sorts of men there, sturdy farm boys, with a still somewhat active sense of modesty, and sinewy labourers from the city factories, and there were the office workers and business men, some fat, with greasy pink skin, like that of a freshly plucked fowl.

As the doctor completed the examination, he noted, "You look a bit strained and tired, but that's a quite normal reaction to the times, I suppose. You'll be all right when you get into regulated army life."

He dressed and walked quickly out into the street. As it was past five o'clock, the early twilight of mid-winter had settled over the city. The traffic roared down the busy street, and the hurrying people jostled and pushed one another. The winter wind was becoming stronger and colder, clutching at his body with icy fingers. He pulled his overcoat more tightly about him and hurried on.

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## *Half the Alphabet Away*

VERLAN J. HANSON

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Berta Anderson scurried through the quieting corridors to Room 211. She held a tremendous armload of books cradled in her arms; her chin was clamped over the topmost of these to keep her small French grammar and the little book of English Poetry from slipping. To complicate matters, the heel sling of her new ballerina shoes had worked itself loose and threatened to slip off entirely if she didn't correct matters soon.

Something like that was always happening third period Thursday. She always felt prickly inside, and in consequence, spilled ink, dropped books, tripped, and was late to class. It was in study hall, and in study hall only, that she saw Hap Ryerson, to whom she had devoted herself after seeing him in the lead of the sophomore play. That had been two years ago. They had had Latin Two together and Civics, and twice they had done geometry homework together. But now there was only study hall.

In study, as in all their classes which they had shared, the same catastrophe prevented a ripening acquaintance. They were separated from each other by half the alphabet.

Miss Morrison, who wore the smartest clothes even if she was thirty-five, was already at "Garson, Gregory, Gunner" when Berta eased herself through the rear door, which was plainly labeled "Out." She balanced her books on an upraised knee while she stretched to bring the door shut quietly. It was an uncooperative door and creaked ominously. The sudden noise unnerved Berta; her knee waggled slightly, enough to send the English Poetry, the Dictionary, American Government, Shakespeare and four notebooks of various sizes sprawling across the rear of the room.

The silence was shattered by laughter, bassoon guffaws, soprano shrieks and a hodge-podge of giggling. Miss Morrison removed her harlequin glasses and tapped the tortoise rims against the desk very softly. It was enough. Miss Morrison stared at Berta and Berta stared at her books.

"You have created a disturbance, Berta," Miss Morrison said, as if Berta didn't know. "You have entered the room by the rear door, dropped your belongings, and you are late."

Berta's pale cheeks turned dark scarlet. She couldn't decide whether to stand politely or to gather her books and take her seat.

The eyes of all the class were upon her, even Hap's. His lips were tight as they tried to repress a grin. Berta felt miserably foolish. If only she were tall and slinky like Lorraine Wright who sat to his left; she would have floated in, leaving the boys breathless and the girls envious; or at least if she were like Sari Sanderson, who sat behind him, she would have bubbled in, winked, made some sort of bright retort, stirring boys and girls alike to her side. But she was neither. She was Berta who lost her shoe, dropped her books, and was everlastingly late for class.

A boy like Hap could never have respect for her. Berta con-

tinued to stand miserably while the roll call continued, wishing she were anybody else in the room. Miss Morrison spoke.

"Take your seat, Berta," she commanded.

Berta sighed with relief. She stacked the books on her arm and walked down the far aisle. She lined the books on the empty seat next to hers.

She began work exactly as all others begin work: that is, by seriously regarding what the others were doing, the "others" being principally Hap. He had his History open to the map, but his eyes were focused on some distant point out the window. Lorraine was applying lipstick and Sari was chewing gum. Berta wished she were brave enough to break a rule deliberately. She would have liked the prestige that comes with an "I don't care" attitude. But Berta wasn't made of such stuff—she broke rules, but only unintentionally.

Her next step was choosing what to study first. The room buzzed with the scratch of pens and the rustle of papers. Miss Morrison was parading along the aisles with her regular step: one-two, one-two. She stopped behind Berta, who rapidly opened the English book and began reading.

She remembered how beautifully Hap read poetry. His voice was like velvet and it had a way of singing, even while he was saying something commonplace. It had been just last term when they'd been studying for finals; that magic night when he'd come to her house laden with books that seemed to her as precious as orchids. They'd recited theorems to each other and conditions of treaties, and it seemed something wonderfully personal and full of meaning. If only there had been another term, another class, maybe he would have understood how she felt, even if she couldn't slink, nor make witty remarks. Now a few more weeks and she'd never see him again. She felt a stab of sorrow and sighed aloud.

Sari leaned forward and said something to Hap. He smiled. Miss Morrison did not. In fact, she scowled. Berta was pleased.

The big clock on the wall clicked. The air was tense, as tense as Berta, hoping Hap would turn enough to see her.

She began to memorize the poem, saying the lines over to herself softly. Berta's eyes were magnetized on Hap. She forgot the words she had just read.

Sari was buzzing again, laughter in her eyes. Hap turned around and whispered something. He rolled his eyes expressively. Berta wished her name was Ryan. Then she'd be sitting next to Hap.

## *Half the Alphabet Away*

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Miss Morrison tiptoed beside her, "Haven't you any work to do?" she demanded.

Berta blushed and fastened her eyes back on her book. Sari was making a commotion under Hap's seat with her feet.

"Cut it out!" grumbled Hap.

Miss Morrison tapped on the desk with her glasses. "Maybe matters would be better if I removed the trouble. Mr. Ryerson, will you kindly go sit in that empty desk?" she said as she pointed toward the empty desk next to Berta. Hap picked up his books, walked reluctantly to the seat next to Berta and sat down. The impossible had happened. No longer was half the alphabet between them. Berta and Hap looked at each other and smiled. In no time at all the period was over and everyone hustled for the door. As usual, Berta was the last one. Well, at least, next to the last. Hap opened the door for her.

"Eating lunch at Harry's today?" he said.

"Yes."

"I'll save you a place."

"I'll be there," she said with a smile and headed down the corridor for her next class. Reaching the classroom, she turned and called softly, "See you at noon."

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