The Sower

Spring---1949

Foreword

IN THIS anthology the students of our writing classes share with their readers their experiences, analyzed and then revitalized to them universal significance. By clear thinking they have tried to write clearly. By honesty of interpretation they have found a means of self-discovery, of growth. We believe that by understanding themselves subjectively and by understanding their environment, they have grown in personality and individuality.

But since reading also is a creative experience, we hope that through these sincere expressions of truth the readers, as well as the writers, will be led to a deeper, fuller measure of creative living.

VIOLA M. THIEL

"Go, little book," from out thy solitude!
We send thee forth — go thou thy ways!
And if, as we believe, thy worth be good,
The world will read thee many days.

NELLIE F. FALK

THE SOWER

Dana College Department of English Spring 1949

THE WINNERS OF THE LANGLAND AWARDS

For Prose: HERBERT A. HORTSVANG

For Poetry: CAROL MENGERS

* As a graduate student, Mr. Petersen was ineligible for the Langland Award.

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 C. Bansen

Jimmy And His End

PETER THORSLEV, Jr.

Jimmy was a little spider. His real name was Argiope Auranticus, but he didn't know it so it didn't bother him. All the spiders he knew called him Jimmy.

Jimmy was born into a rather large family. He didn't know exactly how many brothers and sisters he had, but there were quite a few. His mother was much larger than he was, and whenever she ate, she became very large; but considering that she ate only once a week or so, it was quite reasonable that she should get a little heavier, he supposed. He didn't know who his father was, but he had heard rumors that his mother had eaten his father before he and his brothers and sisters were born. He had never quite dared to ask her, though, so he wasn't sure.

His mother had a fairly efficient and neat web at the base of an old spruce tree in the corner of the garden. (The web was hardly the artistic type, as the Argiope aren't very good weavers.)

His little brothers and sisters were a lively bunch. They were always climbing up the spruce and letting go a long line from their spinnerets and then floating off on the breeze, out over the garden. If they got tired of this, some of them would try weaving a little—little bits of spider embroidery—out on the grass so their mother could see them.

Jimmy, on the other hand, was a rather drab little spider. He always went off by himself, and tried making webs in inconspicuous places, camouflaging them with bits of leaves and spruce needles. He was always experimenting, too, for a stronger and a more sticky thread, and although he didn't accomplish much, he tried hard enough.

Then one day Jimmy's mother told him and all his little brothers and sisters that they were going to the big web-weaving exhibition over at the other corner of the garden. Several of the world's greatest weavers would be there, and she was sure all of her children could learn something of the latest styles and fashions in weaving, if they would only act mannerly and pay close attention. Then she brushed them all over and polished all their eyes (considering each one had eight, that was quite a job) and started out.

They walked over hills and around lakes and over clods and around puddles for what seemed several hours. Finally they were at the exhibition grounds.

There were all kinds of webs there, large and small, some round with long spirals, and others square, with every line exactly parallel, and some, too, that were just holes in the ground, with cleverly constructed trap-doors of webbing. There was one web especially that was attracting a crowd of about a hundred spiders. It was a large octagonal web—a real study in artistic spider-geometry —strung from the fence to a neighboring tree, and all glistening for everyone to see in the morning sun and dew.

"Such artistic lines," said one of the spectators.

"Every figure is perfect," said another, eyeing the angles critically.

"Such fine, smooth thread," said a third, touching it reverently with a pedi-palp.

Jimmy moved closer as he saw the judges approach this web. The creator of this master-piece of engineering was standing near it, preening—polishing his eyes and combing the hair on his stout masculine legs.

The judges had evidently made the decision now, and the chief judge was walking over to the artist, holding the blue ribbon in his right front claw. The judge was a short spider, with a shiny fat black abdomen, that wiggled behind him as he walked. "For the most astounding engineering, the most artistic and the most perfect web that I have seen in all my three hundred days, it is with great pleasure that I award you the highest honor in all spiderdom," the judge orated. It was all very well, Jimmy thought, but there was just one thing that was bothering him. He didn't quite know whether he should say it or not.

The crowd was shouting "bravo" and "hurrah" and all the eight hundred odd eyes were fastened upon the artist. Jimmy could hold out no longer. In one of the momentary awe-struck silences he piped out in shrill falsetto, "But did he ever catch anything in it?"

Immediately everyone turned to stare at the originator of such a vast impertinence, such a terrible breach of etiquette. "An unforgivable insult, and from such a stripling, too," someone said.

"Yes, unforgivable," they all murmured, in horrified tones.

Jimmy's mother fetched Jimmy out from his hiding place be-

tween the legs of a large tarantula, and just to show how shocked she was at her son's behavior she picked him up and promptly ate him. "He always was a rather dull boy, anyway," she murmured apologetically to her neighbor as she brushed off her maxillary palps.

Metropolitan Beauty

CRAIG NIELSEN

San Francisco, a city of many scenic splendors, has one view that is possibly more beautiful than many of the others, and yet it is seldom seen. Anyone who knows anything at all about San Francisco knows about the Golden Gate Bridge, the longest single-span bridge in the world, but few people know anything of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, actually many times longer than its better known sister. Fewer people still have ever seen the western half of this bridge from the island of Yerba Buena in the middle of the bay between Oakland and San Francisco during sunset. The grandeur of this view will remain in one's memory for a long time afterward.

The bridge, resembling the graceful bow of an archer, reaches out across the bay toward the proud city. The four immense steel pillars stand as sentinels watching over the ships gliding silently by on the still water of the bay so far below them. The tremendous steel cables glide down from the tops of the towers, just touch the edge of the roadway, and then swoop back up to the pinnacle of the next structure. The reflection of the clouds in the west puts a golden tint on the dark waters of the bay beneath the gigantic span, and the clouds themselves form a brilliant background against which the dark silhouette stands with the majesty befitting its importance.

Then nestled between the bay and the clouds lies San Francisco, the city built on seven hills. Right in the center of the metropolis two identical points rise above the surrounding hills, Twin Peaks, towering nearly one thousand feet above the bay. Also reaching up into the golden clouds of the setting sun are San Francisco's many skyscrapers, bunched together in the downtown area and looking almost like man-made mountains in their darkened form But all the hills and skyscrapers so far in the background are almost compeltely dwarfed by the huge San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

The Little Red Fire Engine

CAROL MENGERS

Billy sat in the sandpile, sifting the warm sand through his fingers. The sun was hot on his back, and he wiggled so his overall suspenders moved across his shoulders. Suddenly a streak of red flashed past him, followed by a boy named Jimmy. It was a red fire engine with a wailing siren.

"Is it all yours, Jimmy? Is it your very own?"

Jimmy nodded, wiping the dust from the shiny smoothness with a grimy shirt tail. Billy knew he was telling the truth. A toy belonging to the Pre-School Department of the Sunnycrest Children's Home was never so new and shiny as this.

"My mother gave it to me," Jimmy declared.

"Was it a birthday present or something?"

"No, it isn't Christmas and it isn't my birthday or anything. She just gave it to me. Because she loves me, I guess."

Billy looked longingly at the white rubber wheels and the little black ladder at the side.

"Jimmy, let me run it. Just once up to the corner and back."

Slowly the red fire engine changed hands. There were two keys to wind; one to make it go and one for the siren. He wound them carefully, feeling the spring getting tighter and tighter until it was just right. Then he set it on the sidewalk and ran beside it, listening with delight to the crescendo of the siren.

"Billee-ee!" He heard a strident, demanding voice calling his name.

It was Becky and he went immediately, though regretfully, toward her. She grabbed him by the hand as he came near and hurried him along, forcing him to hasten his steps.

"Come on. You have to get your good clothes on."

"Why, Becky? Do I have company?"

"Your mother's come to take you shopping."

Billy considered this in silence. Usually shopping with mother was an ordeal he didn't enjoy, especially if she was in a hurry. He was dragged from counter to counter, only to wait long minutes until he was was hastily taken somewhere else. But maybe if she wasn't cross, they could have ice cream together. And maybe —

maybe she would buy him a red fire engine just like Jimmy's.

Ten minutes later, washed and combed and dressed, he went to the office where he always met mother. She was standing waiting, all ready to go.

"Hurry up, Billy. We have to catch that 1:10 bus."

Billy walked fast, trying to keep in step with the click-clack of her high heels. She did not speak again until they were in the bus.

"Miss Madsen said you needed more underwear and socks," she panted, as she sank into the bus seat. "Seems like I'm always buying you clothes. Either you wear them out awfully fast or she gives your clothes to the other kids to wear. I wouldn't put it past her. "

She reached into her purse for lipstick and a mirror. When the lipstick was on to her satisfaction, she continued, "I don't see why your dad can't give you something once in a while . . . By the way, did he take you to the circus like he said he would?"

"No, but maybe he will come next week."

"Next week! The circus will be gone by then. That guy never keeps his promises. I quit trusting him long ago."

Billy banged his feet moodily on the bus seat. He wished he could say like some of the kids that his daddy came to see him every week. He wished Mother wouldn't talk that way about Daddy. But the things she said were true.

"Billy, don't bang your feet on the seat. Come on, we're getting off at the next corner."

Shopping was worse than usual. The stores were crowded and they had to wait a long time for the saleslady, while mother got crosser and crosser. Finally, when she had got the last of what she needed, she started for the door, pulling Billy by the hand. His steps slowed as they passed the toy counter.

"Mother, buy me a fire engine!"

"No, I don't have time. We have to catch that bus so you'll get back in time for supper. I can't buy you supper and fire engines and everything else when I've already spent so much money on you."

He started to cry. "Daddy would buy it for me."

"Oh, all right. But don't you ever say your daddy does more

for you than I do. You wouldn't have a thing if you trusted him to get it."

The ride home was silent. Billy clutched his package in his lap, poking his finger through the paper to turn a wheel or to feel the smooth red paint.

Back at the Home, he went to show his toy to Miss Madsen.

"That really is nice, Billy. Now put it in your toy drawer and wash your hands for supper."

He went to the bedroom, but instead of going to his drawer, he concealed the fire engine under the radiator by his bed. Then he could play with it that night after Miss Madsen had gone to wash the bathroom floor.

Later in the evening he lay in bed with the fire engine under his covers. He ran it up and down the sheets, and wound up the siren, just a little, muffling the sound under his pillow.

After a while he parked it and lay still, thinking. "She gave it to me because she loves me," he whispered fiercely. "She did." And yet . . . His arm still ached from her constant pulling during the shopping trip. He turned restlessly in bed and the fire engine clattered noisily to the floor. He didn't pick it up. He heard Miss Madsen coming, but he didn't care.

New Year Welcomed In Various Ways By Green Bay Residents

DON POH

The sun dipped beneath the western horizon; lights flickered and cars began filling the streets. Slippery roads brought extra caution from driver and pedestrian alike. The man and his wife on the street corner hailed a taxi and were on their way.

A triumphant hymn rose from the congregation at Grace Lutheran church as its people chose to prepare themselves for the new year there.

The night became blacker, the light brighter. The hum of diesel engines raised its pitch, a moment of suspension, and those

who would spend the last hours of 1948 riding a train were whisked into the night.

A mile down the street at the same time the sound of tearing steel rent the night air as two cars collided. Wailing sirens cleared a slippery path and ambulances rushed five patients to a hospital.

House lights were darkened. The night grew colder. More vehicles flooded the already crowded street.

The formal dance was ready to begin. Couples swept onto the floor as the orchestra played a smooth fox trot. They smiled; they danced. They talked of big things, little things, the old year and the new.

What did the people of Green Bay do New Year's Eve? They laughed, they talked, they sang, they cried. But the ruling atmosphere was one of gaiety.

As the train pulled into the station at 8:45 on that traditional evening, a woman laden with baggage stepped down to the platform. The voice of a gentleman greeted her.

"Hello, Noly!"

"Happy New Year! This one's the heaviest!"

Someone hollered to the engineer as the train was about to leave the station.

"How do you like working on New Year's Eve?"

"I like it fine! Been doing it for 31 years."

The crowd of loyal companions seeing their people away and taking new ones into their midst disintegrated quickly as they turned their minds to the evening's celebration.

Then there was a lull. It was that midway point in the evening when those going to early shows were already inside. Early parties had begun and the later ones had not yet started. Those who just wanted to get drunk on New Year's Eve already had a start, while others who wished to see the clock at 12 o'clock took it easy.

But guests had gathered in private homes for parties, and at 10 o'clock Ray Hussong brewed a batch of Swedish "glug" for his wife and friends. The flaming cups of liquid, nuts, spices and raisins were served.

The minutes flew by and grew into hours. Gaiety became more intense and more cars crowded the streets and suburban highways. Lighted signs of all colors called to those passing by and the crowds answered.

Bowling balls smashed into pins at one establishment as college students were brought together with old acquaintances in a living version of "Auld Lang Syne."

A woman trying to keep warm in a thin cloth coat led her two children toward an unknown destiny. A figure ducked into the back door of a saloon and the strains of "Till We Meet Again" came from a nearby night club. A tall, gangling man stumbled past the YMCA while teenagers frolicked innocently inside.

An elderly woman sat in her West Side home crocheting quietly.

The hands on the clock drew closer together. A few celebrants blew their horns early, squeezing every bit of excitement they thought possible out of 1948's last minutes.

Then the big industrial whistles were heard, and, as though waiting for the unofficial signal, bedlam broke loose.

Happy New Year!

Some yelled; some screamed. Others took it with a smile and the man at the cafe counter, cold sober, seemed to be thinking of the occasion's more serious aspects.

While horns, whistles and sirens sounded at midnight at parties and on the streets, tones from St. John's belfry rang through the night heralding the arrival of another year.

Parties took on new life and lights in private homes began to flicker and go out. In some, small groups of friends lingered over their cards and cocktails.

At one o'clock the first crowds hit the streets for the brief run from buildings to cars. A middle aged woman waited in the sheltering door of a department store and the young couple made but a single shadow on the sidewalk at Main and Monroe streets.

Time wore on to an anticlimax. Lights burned just as brightly, the big thermometer on N. Washington street pointed to a mark below zero and the streets gradually became silent.

The colored lights in downtown Green Bay darkened and the blackness spread slowly from the center of the city to its limits like the growing shadow of a thunder cloud. Traffic thinned.

A lone man trod a snowy path through the park, winding his way homeward.

It was four o'clock.

It was 1949.

— Reprinted from the *Green Bay Press-Gazette*

My Height

DONALD OFTE

My height has been a matter of family concern since I was twelve years old. At that age I was of normal height, but then I just stopped growing. For the next four years my aunts fretted and fussed and recommended tonics, always smirking and saying, "Victor is a year and a half younger than you are and he is taller than you." Aunt Gerta was always giving out a little gem of wisdom, "You ought to eat more. Don't be so finicky." Whenever I refused to eat *Lutefisk* (an obnoxious Norwegian fish dish) my aunts would stare at me and wag their heads. As a result of this attitude, I found myself regarded, as well as regarding myself, as a freak. A short Norwegian was unheard of. I was a disgrace to the family. I can remember looking at my father's six feet, one inch frame and then looking at my mother's five feet, four inches and wondering which one I would take after. I figured my chances of being tall to be one to four, of being medium height, two to four, and of being short, one to four. It looked to me as though I had struck the last odds on the genetic roulette wheel.

When I was sixteen, however, a wonderful thing happened to me. I started to grow again. My aunts tried hard and finally found something to nag about. This time it was my abnormal rate of growth.

"He's all legs and no body. Won't he ever stop growing? He's taller than Victor and weighs less. Why doesn't he straighten up and stop slouching? Victor never slouches." And so it went on and on. There was absolutely nothing I could do that would make me normal. When I grew taller than my father, they became really concerned. They questioned my physical condition and advised me to go to a doctor and find out what was wrong. Even when the doctor stated that my growth was rapid but far from abnormal, they persisted in their belief that something was wrong. They commented on my ungainly walk and feet. I felt as though I were a subject for dissection in a class in comparative anatomy. My cousin Victor was the "All-American Boy" and I was an abnormity, given a dirty look by Mother Nature.

If that psychological theory is true that the experiences of one's formative years manifest themselves as idiosyncrasies later in life, I will probably find myself inadvertently crawling around on all fours, subconsciously trying to be inconspicuous.

Conquest

JOHN T. BECK

Corporal Jerry Bartels was not a man easily tired, but today he felt a numbness creeping up his powerful, well developed legs, and a peculiar weakness made his knees want to buckle with each step that he forced his tired legs to take. Far above him the summit of the mountain rose, as it had risen for ages, a challenge to those who would conquer it. This would not be the first such oriental monarch that Bartels had mastered, nor, he thought wearily, would it be the last. From that day twelve months ago when he had reached the 3362 Engineer Base Survey Company, he had been making almost daily trudges up the pine-clad slopes of the highest mountains of this sector of Korea in search of the large, granite elevation markers that the Japanese had erected on the highest points.

But this one was in some way different. For eight days he had been exploring the surrounding country which was the domain of Imbo-San, the father of mountains, the mountain which was his challenge today. On each of these days the mountain had seemed to smile down at him and say, "Little man, you will not find me so easy to humble." And Jerry Bartels was not finding Imbo-San easy to humble.

As he reached down to his hip and felt the cooling reassurance of his canteen filled with fresh, sparkling spring water which he had taken from an artesian well along the road, he paused and glanced down the slope to where the jeep was parked. It almost seemed to him that he could see Mahoney, the jeep driver, sitting in the shade of a near-by tree reading a detective story and hoping that he, Bartels, would take all day for this one.

Finally shaking himself out of his reverie, Bartels once more resumed his slow, steady climbing. He amused himself by watching his shadow dancing ahead of his moving figure, and he wondered if there would be shadows when he began his careful descent of the imposing monarch.

As the sun rose higher and the few clouds that had been drifting aimlessly about vanished into nothingness, Bartels began to feel the uncomfortable sting of little rivulets of sweat pouring down the hollow of his back. Then, when a random breeze swept across his path, he unconsciously unbuttoned the loosely fitting fatigue jacket, removed it, and let it hang limply over his shoulder, so that he might

take the best advantage of any other gusts of wind that might find their way to him.

As he thought of the climb up the steep, uncompromising slopes ahead of him, Bartels felt his heart sink. He was now passing through the dense undergrowth of pines and stunted trees that served as a formidable barrier to all but the most determined climbers. He had left behind him the uniformly terraced rice paddies that he usually looked upon from the summits with such interest and delight. He had once called them stepping stones, but today they had been retarding hindrances that had required him to zig-zag and criss-cross, taking him a great deal out of his way. It occurred to him that climbing should be much easier when he would finally reach the bare expanse of nothingness that invariably forecast the coming of the summit. At least, there would be no thick undergrowth to hinder his progress.

When at last the trees became fewer, and the prickly brambles ceased their incessant scratching on his bare arms, he allowed his knees to buckle and seated himself on a soft bed of pine needles under one of the larger conifers. He then removed his soiled fatigue cap, reached behind his ear, and produced a half-smoked cigarette butt. After giving it some studied consideration, he thrust his other hand into one of his pockets, removed a tarnished lighter, and lit the butt.

As he sat inhaling the irritating smoke from the dry tobacco, he planned his strategy. He had been climbing steadily for too long a time. Now he must rest, and eat the tasteless, rancid Australian 'C' rations that the supply sergeant had given him. Then he would drink one-third of the precious water, and once again resume his battle with the mountain. A mountain that gave no quarter, nor asked any.

Somewhere above him he could hear the merry gurgling of a stream. It was almost as if Imbo-San were laughing at this curious creature who had invaded his domain. "Or perhaps," thought Bartels, " perhaps I'm tickling his backbone; this ridge that I'm following could be the old boy's backbone."

The corporal carefully cleared the spot of everything that the field manual might term "fire hazards," and then set about building the fire which was to make the can of rations more palatable. Then he punctured the rusting lid of the can a few times with his engineer's knife, set the can in the midst of the blaze, and sat looking

through the trees at what should be the bald head of Imbo-San. It looked very near, but experience had taught Bartels that mountain peaks were very much like goals—there is usually a higher peak just beyond the one one you see.

After a few moments he picked up a stick lying nearby and carefully edged the can out of the fire. After the food had sufficiently cooled and he had eaten it, he called himself to the task and once more forced his rebellious legs to carry him ahead.

With new zeal he quickened his usual pace and the next time that he paused to gauge his progress he could see not only the terraced paddies, but also the distinct, green line that marked the end of the bald giant's hair. Ahead rose the sharp, imposing peak, his next goal.

"Laugh now, you old rascal. Laugh now!" muttered the inspired engineer as he gazed at the proud rock. But once again he thought that he heard the high, gurgling laughter of a stream, and as he gave his attention to the rock it seemed as if it were smiling, or perhaps a lonely cloud had only caused a shadow to pass across its face.

He continued his gruelling climb, and then, as the sun was dropping nearer to its berth in the west, Bartels once more began to sense the treacherous fatigue creeping nearer behind him. He almost ran up the last steep slope of the summit, but before he achieved the top he was forced to grasp the small spots of sparse, fine hair that still remained on the monarch's proud, though almost bare, head. Then, expending the last of his rapidly diminishing energy, he pulled himself over the summit's edge and stood looking down at the valley below.

"Now laugh," breathed the corporal. However, as he turned and looked about at the clean summit, his trained eyes could detect no sign of the granite monument which had been the object of his quest. And somewhere on the face of Imbo-San a stream laughed gently.

A Mercenary's Philosophy

A moonbeam is delightful,
No one will deny it.
Yes, a moonbeam is delightful,
But—Who will buy it?

The Way Of The Wind

LOIS M. GIRTZ

The wind is like a sad man;
Many moods he blows
As he travels eerily
To broadcast all his woes.

When he has a secret
A whispering wind is he
Telling all his troubles
Through the cracks to me.

When the night is blowing
Birds down from the tree,
'Tis the whistling wind that
Whistles a warning to me.

Cold fingers waken me
To hear a sad lament
Told by the moaning wind,
In grief and suffering bent.

The Wind

CAROL MENGERS

The wind has many moods;
The wind is many different people.
Sometimes he is a child, moaning at the keyhole,
crying to get in.
Sometimes he is a careless adolescent, picking up houses
and dropping them at the whim of the moment,
Destroying lands and crops in the unknown strength
of youthful fury.
Sometimes he is a poet, singing to the lyre of deep-voiced
pines and gently whispering aspens.
And sometimes he is the voice of all questioning hearts,
Forever seeking, forever unsatisfied, asking a dumb,
unhearing world
The eternal question.

The Girl From Drake

LOIS M. GIRTZ

In the small town of Drake
There lived a girl so simple-o,
Who knew how to sew and bake
With a tra la la and a hi de ho

She never had been away,
Had always lived with her family-o
And played in the hay on Saturday
Singing, "Tra la la and hi de ho."

Seventeen years she lived on a farm
With her brothers and sisters and parents-o;
But one day she caused them all alarm
Shouting, "Tra la la and a hi de ho."

"Brothers and sisters and parents dear,
I am going soon to the city-o,
To earn for myself a living there,
So a tra la la and a hi de ho!"

"Daughter, Oh daughter, do take care,"
Cried her mother dear and her father-o.
"All in the city is not so fair
As a tra la la and a hi de ho!"

Now the girl of seventeen years
Who worked so hard in the city-o,
Is the girl of seventeen fears
Without a tra la la and a hi de ho.

Revelation

HERBERT A. HJORTSVANG

As he waited for the ringing of rusted bells to announce the morning rest period for the employees of Blyth Chemical Company, Will Hayden was so on edge with nervous fear that his ears were tingling with anticipation. He felt like a hunted mouse with the cat ready to pounce on him at any moment. Looking up at the electric clock, he became more tense. In a moment it would be ten o'clock and the rest period would be at hand.

When the harsh clamor of the bells died away, he noted keenly the immediate dying of machinery noise, and the fading laughter of the girls who worked on the nearest filling line just outside the laboratory as they hurried to the cafeteria, a block away off the main aisle of the long rectangular building. Although most employees of Blyth Chemical Company looked forward with joy to the rest period, Will would much rather keep on with his work. For then and only then could he keep thoughts of Delphine at least decently back in the corner of his mind. Delphine, the heavy girl with an unpronounceable surname, was the cause of his worry. He had become so disturbed that now he used the back entrance to the plant so he would not have to walk past the girl at work. The events of recent mornings had weaved into a routine which was almost incomprehensible to him. Any moment now she would come. Will bent further over the desk and tried to lose himself in the test.

The chemists were leaving the lab when Delphine came in. They knew what was going on, but being married and older would not stay, only smiled at her. The two other lab assistants who worked together, leaving Will to a desired solitude, stayed to watch his perturbation. Delphine stood watching, appraising the neat, slight form, the usual trace of puzzlement in her young-old face. Vacantly she smoothed her net-covered hair, wondering over what he could be so intent.

All unaware of her presence, Will was mechanically going through the motions required by his work. His mind conjured up the daily scene of the other lab assistants as they joked with the girl. He had watched their eyes running over the heavy Slavic figure; he had listened sickeningly to their pointed comments which she countered with a lewd, rapier-sharp wit. Then she would come and

stand next to him as with averted eyes he bent far over the table. He could never remember the substance of her words, but he felt in her mockery something else—expectation—impatience. There was comfort in that she knew nothing of laboratory procedure. If the fellows told her—well he wouldn't know what to do. He looked down at his watch. Five minutes past ten. Maybe she isn't coming, he wondered, and strangely felt a faint disappointment. A shadow fell over his shoulder and rested on the table.

"Hi, Delphine!" Will spurted out the words and immediately felt his face growing warm as he sensed the surprised gaze of the fellows standing in the doorway watching. Waves of warmness piled up and his face stung under the rush of blood. For a silent moment the youth could have gratefully sunk through the floor into the cool, damp concrete. When he dared to look up, she had gone.

"Fellow, what did you do that poor girl? You sure scared her out of here!"

"Yeah, never saw any guy do that to her before. The way you blushed she must'a thought you wuz a Indian!"

Will straightened up and hurried to the small cubical balance room, slamming the door. The assistants came a moment too late. Finding their pounding and taunts had no effect, they went out to the yard back of the building.

Inside, leaning against the locked door, he waited for his pulse to calm, his senses to clear. In staccato and whirling the events of the past weeks passed before his mind's eye. Queerly he visualized himself as a spectator watching a projection of his life on a distant, wind-wrinkled screen.

The first days in the quiet laboratory. He had liked the unhurried routine, happy that he was not one of the laborers who made the same robot-like motions, hour on hour, day on day, year on year. The heat and noise of their machinery would grate on his spirit like the dentist's drill on his nerves.

Then had come Delphine. The fellows talked about her and then one day she came in the lab and he was introduced. He thought of Helen, Ann, the girls he knew from church, and Eleanor, his girl. Could there be so much difference between the girls he had known all his life and this dark stranger? Why me, he wondered now as he had often wondered before. I'm way younger and the other guys,

why they pinch her and she likes it. Perhaps it would be nice to pinch her?

Then Will imagined himself alone in the room and the girl coming towards him. His pleasantly horrible reverie was rudely interrupted, for the clonging bells signalled work time and he must go out into the lab.

When the lunch hour came Will was alone. By bringing lunch and drinking water instead of milk he could save exactly three dollars and sixty-seven cents a week. This sum went regularly into his college savings fund. Dad had plenty of money but his son would pay for at least a part of his education.

By now the young man was feeling somewhat more easy. On reflection he thought that Delphine might not bother him again after leaving without saying a word. But at least the chief chemist's chair was comfortable and he could relax, and while eating, read. Will liked to read novels and short stories during lunch. Besides satisfying his appetite he could satisfy an indirect longing for adventure. Evenings were filled with more staple diet as he reviewed the more difficult of his high school subjects. Not that he had found high school difficult, but his father and mother, both college graduates, insisted on this study. And Will found no objection.

"What are you reading?"

For a moment he confused her with Mrs. Williams, then as his mind came out of the book it was Delphine looking down at him.

"Must be kind'a int'restin'."

"Yes, it isn't bad," Will puzzled.

"You bring a book every day, don't you?"

She took the book from his stiff slim hands and holding it delicately she paged briefly, turning the pages with dark, stubby fingers.

"I read a lot too, but they aren't like this one. I've got a lot of quarter books at home. Have you got any more of those kind?"

"I've got a few," Will said, and not knowing what else to do, handed her a cheese sandwich. "There's mayonnaise on the lettuce," he offered.

"I like that." She sat on the desk, her green slacks soiled and stained, her legs swinging slightly.

The youth's boyish face began to mirror doubt and distrust.

Remembrance crept upon him while she silently munched at the sandwich.

Delphine in her acute man-wisdom saw the boy. The blush had told her something.

"Well, I guess you think I'm a pretty bad girl."

"No Delphine, I've never said anything!" His voice was primly denying. He thought of what the men had said and of his vision.

The dark girl gazed at this boy, at his clean, neatly combed dark hair faintly shining. Then she looked about the white laboratory, seeing the various bottles and instruments. She knew what test tubes were, but that was about all. She looked up and saw the electric clock on the wall above the desk. It moved inexorably onward. Twelve twenty-five and eighteen seconds,—nineteen, twenty, twenty-one. Twenty-one, she thought, that's my age.

"Will, are you going to keep working here?" Her voice was low.

"Course not," he replied confidently, "I'm going away to college in September. Both Mother and Dad want me to make something of myself."

"Oh, I wish I was smart enough to go to college."

"You don't need brains these days, anyone can get in," he said coolly. Why did I let her bother me, he wondered.

The Slavic girl looked again at the clock.

"My girl friend ought to be back now. We got to have a quick smoke."

Will Hayden gazed at her retreating form, the heavy hips swaying above heavy legs. She turned at the door and looked back.

"Kid, you can walk through the plant."

Will sat at the desk feeling ease grow. The nagging suggestion at the back of his mind was gone. In a moment the clonging came and soon the hum and whine of machinery filled the air.

The Forge

CHARLES J. CHRISTENSEN

Burn brightly, oh my life, and
Blaze away the glory of your being!
I cast coals upon the fire,
I work the bellows,
I fill the air with white-hot flames;
So burn and blaze
Alike through noon and night.
What though you cannot last forever,
What though the fuel give out?
Blaze, I say, and fill the earth
With glory, warmth, and light.
Burn well, that when all is but ashes,
They who come to gaze
At the burnt out grate may say,
"The fuel has given out too soon, but—
It was a magnificent fire."

October

CAROL MENGERS

I wander this October morning
Among the rustling, whispering corn.
Far off the mists cling to the hillsides,
But here the sun is bright and warm.
The fields are squares of brown and yellow
A wisp of smoke drifts to the sky;
Unexpressed is all my gladness
And yet within my heart I cry:
God, I pray for all the children
Pent in cities bleak and gray,
Those who have not climbed the hillsides,
Those who have not time to play.
O that they might see as I
Splendors of October's sky!

"In The Garden"

LeROY F. ANDERSEN

The days I spent as a youth at a boys' summer camp were filled with excitement and thrills, but one of the biggest thrills of the day came when all the campers would sing "In the Garden" at the close of the evening campfire program. There, around the huge heap of logs that had been built up log cabin fashion, we would settle down for a period of quiet entertainment. The fire was lighted by the camper who had done an outstanding deed that day. There, in the stillness of the night, in the protection of the tall pines surrounding us, we would sing our Indian songs; tell our tales of the day's more exciting experiences; put on our skits of comedy and drama; listen to stories of adventure and mystery told by our camp leaders.

Then, while the embers of the once huge fire began to burn low and refused to comfort us any longer, we would come to the close of our day. All the campers would form a circle around the fire with their arms over each other's shoulders. As we listened to the quiet night sounds of the forest and gazed into the glowing embers, one of the group would offer a short prayer, thanking God for the day we had spent. Following the prayer we would softly sing "In the Garden," and although the warmth of the fire was almost gone, the warmth that we felt from the song compensated for it in an almost indescribable way. If I had had a disagreement with a friend during the day, it was easily forgotten in this moment of entwined arms and hearts. I felt that all our thoughts were the same in this moment of pure happiness, fellowship, and worthwhile living. As we sang the words "and He walks with me and He talks with me," I always felt a closeness to God that I felt at no other time. This portion of the song imbued me with the feeling that I was indeed in God's care.

As I returned through the woods to my tent, the spirit of the hymn dispelled the childhood fear I had of the darkness, and lying in my cot with the song still echoing in my ears, I felt a real sense of safety for the night.

The wonderful thing about the hymn was that it always gave me the same comfort even though it was sung each night after campfire. Now each time I hear "In the Garden" it has a great deal of meaning for me, for it brings to my mind a happy memory.

'Bye Boy

PHYLLIS HANSON

Sue Ellen awakened with a delicious tingling sensation that told her something wonderful was going to happen this day. What was it, she mused. For a moment she lay there wriggling her toes against the smooth, tightly drawn sheet, wondering. What had she been thinking of when she fell asleep the night before? Suddenly she knew. This was the day when she was going to drive the team on the hay rack. She remembered how Dad had looked over and winked at Mom last night, then said, "Do you suppose Sue Ellen could be persuaded to get up early tomorrow and drive the team for her Uncle Jake and me while we pitch the hay on the rack?"

There was a moment's hesitation before Mom answered, "Sue Ellen?" She sounded doubtful. "Why, she is only eleven, Dad. Do you think she is old enough?"

"Well," Dad had said, "Sue Ellen is the only boy we've got. She handles the team pretty well around the farmyard. I think she'd make a good little hired man for tomorrow."

She sat up and tossed back her long, straight brown hair, then carefully slid down the bed and over the end to keep from waking her older sister. "I'll show them that I can drive a team as well as any boy," Sue Ellen resolved. "I'll even be up before Dad calls me." Silently, she gathered the worn blue overalls and yellow-striped T shirt from the corner of the room and slipped out of the door.

"Morning, Mom," she shouted a few moments later as she burst into the kitchen.

"For goodness sakes, Sue Ellen, are you up already? Your Dad isn't done milking yet. Did you wash your face and comb your hair?"

"Nope, there isn't any sense in it. I'm going out to the hayfield with Dad today, anyhow. I get to drive the team."

"I know, but you also get cleaned up for breakfast. Now march." Mom spoke firmly.

Sue Ellen crossed the room to the sink and dumped some water from the bucket into the basin. She soaped her hands and rubbed the soap over her face, using her fingers to wash her ears. Splashing a generous amount of water over herself and the floor, she rinsed off the soap. Just as she reached for the towel, Dad entered.

"Hi, Boy," he called cheerfully. "Aren't you the early bird?"

Mom was sliding the eggs onto the plates. Sue Ellen watched her, breathing deeply of the smell of frying bacon and hot toast. She noted how cracked and worn her mother's hands were, and glanced down at her own, then shoved them deep into the overall pockets. It would never do to let her mother see how dirty the nails were, she thought. Mom would make her clean them and that would be silly. "Mom doesn't realize I'm a boy today, and boys don't keep their hands clean," she thought.

"Sue Ellen," her mother interrupted her thoughts. "Didn't I say you were to comb your hair?"

"Let it go until after breakfast," Dad insisted. "Uncle Jake will be here before we finish eating if we wait for that."

Mom frowned slightly; her lips drew into a straighter line. "John," she began, "I think that there are times when you should realize that Sue Ellen is a girl."

Dad said nothing. He was busy buttering his toast. Sue Ellen scurried to her place at the table. Dad looked up. "Ask the blessing, Boy," he said quickly.

Sue Ellen bowed her head and mumbled a few words, then grabbed up her fork and began eating. Mom looked at her reproachfully, but Dad was eating as fast as possible. For a few moments there was no sound but that of the hurrying clock and the click of the silver on the china.

"Halloo," boomed a voice in the kitchen door. Uncle Jake stood there, and behind him was Danny, the neighbor boy. "Are you still eatin'?" Without waiting for the obvious answer to his question he continued, " 'Count of the shortage of manpower in your family, John, I stopped at Samson's and borrowed Danny. I figured we'd need someone to drive the team.'

Sue Ellen stirred the remaining bits of egg around and around on her plate, her blue eyes watching the fork tines. Dad shifted uneasily in his chair.

"Well," he began, "I had thought that Sue Ellen might do it. She handles the horses pretty good. But now that Danny's here—" his voice trailed off uncertainly.

"Ah," Danny interrupted, "Sue Ellen can't drive horses. She's a girl, ain't she?"

Sue Ellen looked up. "I can drive the team," she said tensely, her eyes a steel blue. "Being a girl has nothing to do with it."

"Oh, doesn't it?" Danny mocked, his wide-spaced front teeth showing. Remember what happpened the last time you drove the team? You let the big bay get too close to the gate and caught the wagon wheel. I'd hate to see what you would do if you tried to turn with a full load of hay. It would be right back all over the field."

The color mounted in Sue Ellen's cheeks. "Well, that only happened once," she said defensively. "And you were in the wagon telling me what to do. Being a girl has nothing to do with driving a team," she insisted.

Danny rumpled his red cowlick with greasy fingers. "Girls are pests if they are out of the house." He swaggered a little and stepped toward Sue Ellen. "Girls," he said positively, "belong in the house and not out with men. They don't know nothing and they haven't got strength enough to do a—"

His voice ended with a gasp. Astonishingly, he was on the floor with Sue Ellen on top of him pounding away with tightly clenched fists.

"Say that again, Danny Samson. Say that again. I'll show you that girls are strong. I'll show you," Sue Ellen screamed. Danny wiggled and plunged but he could not escape the flying fists.

"Sue Ellen," her mother spoke firmly. "Such behavior. Get up this instant."

Sheepishly, with her eyes fixed on her bare feet, Sue Ellen rose and stood before her mother. Danny scrambled to his feet, and dug his toe in the carpet, then traced the design around and around. "I'm going home," he announced. "We've got plenty of work to do there. Let Sue Ellen be a boy and drive her old team. I don't care." Danny started for the door.

Suddenly Sue Ellen was in front of him "Please stay, Danny." She smiled archly. "You can be Dad's boy today, and I'll help mother in the kitchen."

"Well," Danny said magnanimously, "I guess I can help your Dad today."

Dad looked from one to the other, amazement darkening his gray eyes. Suddenly his tanned face wrinkled into a grin. He crossed the room and threw his arm around his daughter, his rough hands playing with the rumpled hair. "Yes," he said gently, "you stay inside and help Mom and your big sister today." One hand dug in his pocket and finally emerged with a crumpled bill which he pressed into his daughter's hand. "Say," he whispered, "don't

you think you should get a print dress to wear around the house sometimes?" He turned and started toward the door, Uncle Jake and Danny trailing along behind him. In the doorway, he paused again. "Bye, Boy," Dad said gently, pride and regret oddly intermingled in his tone. Danny looked back and smiled.

It Could Have Been You

VIOLET DEGRAVE

I have been away a long time; it may have been a year; it may have been ten; but it was a long, lonely time. I can still recall the day I went away. I should not have gone if there had been someone there to help, to understand. My heart cried out but my cries fell on ears that led to hearts of stone. Could no one see the hurt in my eyes, the need in them, the need of someone to understand? People laughed at me; could they not have shared some of the joy that seemed to be flowng around them? My heart cried out for mercy.

My memory fails me, but this I know, that I did go away. Away? Yes! Away to where people stare into blank space for eternities, where people talk loudly about nothing, where people walk around in silence with their eyes to the floor, where people walk around in white coats with a look of omnipotence about them, but who understand so little of my heart, where people are put in tubs of water for hours, where people are wrapped in cold sheets, where people are drugged to talk, where people are drugged to sleep, where people are given needles every day. Needles! Needles! Big needles, little needles, medium needles, long needles, short needles, to bring them back.

I am back now; I still need love and understanding. Must I go away again?

Washday

CAROL MENGERS

I like to hang the clothes out
Even on cold days when wet fingers soon are numb.
I like to see the sodden heaps of clothes
Change suddenly to smooth and flinging sails
To be the airy playthings of the wind.

Noseology

CAL JORGENSEN

Every normal individual on the face of the earth has a nose. It is just another blessing bestowed upon us by our Maker, not a blessing in disguise, although we must admit that some noses could easily be mistaken for disguises. When we consider a nose a blessing, the following blessings come to mind. What would we do without a nose? How would we smell a delicious steak simmering in the frying pan or the sweet fragrance of a red rose? What would we use to cover up the space between the eyes and the mouth? How would our profile look without a nose?

Now, why is it that we hear so many unfavorable comments about noses? Here are some reasons that answer that question. First of all, the shape of the nose seems to vary in different individuals. Some have a nose which resembles that of a vicious animal, the bulldog; some people and all bulldogs have a short nose that turns upward at the tip, making one think the person or animal has run directly into a brick wall. Others have the nose of a prize-fighter. This nose looks as if it has been beaten considerably with a wooden mallet and has consequently been flattened and splattered about, sort of uncertain as to its position on the face. Another type of nose is the hook type: from the bridge downward the nose rises abruptly until the point or knob of the nose is reached, and there it bends over like the handle of a cane. Evidently the nasal bone was not able to grow as fast as the flesh; it finally gave up the race, and the tip was left to hold up as best it could. If the nose has grown long, it creates a hazard to navigation. There is a type of nose that more than likely gave someone the inspiration to start the manufacture of coat hangers. This type of nose tilts upward with the tip enlarged making a knobby effect. This nose looks as though the knob were the foundation for the building, the rest of the nose being built later. Another unique type of nose is the one that covers the greater part of *my* face. It is long and pyramid-shaped, and besides that it has a startling bend or hump that resembles the large blade of a jackknife. I speak to my nose as though it were a friend and say like Cyrano de Bergerac, "No wind can hope, O lordly nose, to give the whole of thee a cold, but the Nor'-Wester." Evidently the Nor'-Wester caught up with my big nose, as it answers with a resounding sneeze.

In spite of all the unfavorable comments about noses, let us be thankful we have a nose, no matter what the size or shape may be, or its position on the face. Think what would happen if the nose were upside down! Every time one sneezed, he would blow his hat off, and if he went outdoors when it was raining, he would probably drown himself.

The Car

ANN THOMSEN

The sun sparkled and danced over the thick snow coating of the earth as Dad and I walked out of the back door. The sweet aroma of alfalfa and ground corn, mingled with the odor of wet cattle in the feeding lot, permeated our nostrils as we neared the barn. Dad pulled his collar a little tighter around his neck and put down the ear flaps on his cap as I ran ahead to the garage.

"Think the car will start, Dad?" I asked as I opened the garage door, stooping down to bolt it to the cement post. Every winter we had trouble starting our car when the temperature in the garage dropped below freezing. There was just something about this garage, regardless of the model of the car, which caused trouble every year when winter came.

"Well, Ann, I'll see what I can do, but I'm not promising you anything," he answered with a bit of a smile playing on his lips.

He walked by the open doors of the garage, made a quick appraisal of the back tires, and swung open the left door of the green, much-used car. A brownish-red spot, the result of a wild-grape hunt the summer before, covered the spot where he was to sit, and he pulled the leather pillow over the stain. Dad was particular about how he placed the pillow, and, after numerous shakings, and re-arrangings, he lifted himself into the front seat.

"While I'm starting it, how about wiping off the back window, Ann? Won't be able to back the thing out if you don't," he said, turning his head towards the window.

Hurriedly, I took a large gray cloth from a shelf in the garage and polished the window until it was as shiny as a mirror. As I was putting it back on the shelf, a speck of dust flew into my eye, which began to burn and fill with tears. Pulling off my right glove, I rubbed my eye until the smarting ceased.

"Through yet?" Dad called expectantly.

Sniffing back the tears I answered, "All through. Go ahead and start it." Just my luck for the thing not to start, I thought to myself as I waited for the grinding of the starter in the six-pistoned motor. I thought about the evening last December when the thing wouldn't start, how I'd pushed until the palms of my hands were red and sore, and I'd been thirty minutes late for the music recital. And so much depended on this play rehearsal. Just my luck . . .

Dad's graying head bobbed back and forth in the front seat as he turned the switch, put the gear in neutral, and pulled the choke out one-half of an inch. I had watched him perform the various forms of preparation so many times I was positive I could do them in my sleep.

Now the test was about to come. The grinding of the starter cleared my mind, and I waited, tense and eager, for some response from the machine. The motor coughed a small breath of life, then died again.

Listen, you thing, I thought to myself, you've just got to start. You've just got to start . . .

Again the grinding of the starter wakened me to reality, and my arms swung back and forth around my tingling body as I waited anxiously for some spark of life in the old motor.

There! What was that? Sounded almost like Dad had it going. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Third time has to be a charm, I thought.

I could hear Dad pumping the accelerator as he checked the dash-board once more, and now his foot was pressing on the starter. Suddenly the engine growled, coughed once more, and then pungent fumes of smoke blasted out of the exhaust pipes like straw from a threshing machine blower. The motor roared like a vicious animal. But the thundering noise and penetrating odors of the burning gas and oil were to me like the sweetness of a morning in May.

Slowly the car moved backward.

Emancipation

PETER THORSLEV, Jr.

Dark Ages

A prison cell—
Gray stone, rough-hewn and damp,
And on the wall, on two coarse slabs of wood,
A Man,
Bound by thick bonds, but aged iron chains,
Time-worn and rust-encrusted.
A dark cell,
Only one small stream of light—
An iron-barred window high in the wall,
Deepset—
A thin pale promise of future release.

Renaissance

A sudden surge of new-found strength,
A sound of bursting chains, time-worn and
weakened,
And Man throws to the floor the simple wooden
rack of torture,
Strides forward to the Door, upward into outer
light,
Hails the New Dawn.

Atomic Age

The light, new to his senses, staggers him.
The winds of Circumstance buffet and bruise him,
Cast him to the ground.
The ground yields, rears and sinks like stormy seas.
Man rises, staggers, drunken, for the Door:
Within the prison cell,
Groping, half-blind, amid the broken bonds,
Rusted and useless,
One thing solid, certain, finds—
A torture-rack upon the cold stone floor,
Two coarse slabs of wood—
A Cross . . .
High up in the gray stone wall
A window, a small stream of light,
A thin, pale promise of future release.

Victory?

BRUCE JENSEN

The blistering sun had pushed the mercury to a new peak for the summer. The bright, shining rails were too hot to touch for but a few seconds. The bodies of the men on the jacks quivered and shimmered in the heat. Every day since the Ruthven gang had come over to help it had been hot, and now it seemed that the sun wanted to make the last day one that all the men would remember. Jake would not have had the men work on a day such as this, but tomorrow the road master was coming and the rains had made this curve too rough to pass inspection.

Only about two more hours of work and they would spend the rest of the afternoon in the shade — cool, refreshing shade. Before Jim had started this job he had longed for hot sunny days, but now the sun seemed more like an enemy, making it difficult even to breathe. The creosote oozed and gurgled on the ties. The backs of the men were wet with sweat and streaked with dirt and grime. Their throats were parched and dry. What little water they dared drink was warm from sitting in the sun all morning, and a thin layer of dust had settled on the surface, making it dirty and giving it a peculiar, unhealthful flavor.

Old Hank and Jim were helping Jake line the track into a well-rounded curve. Hank would call out a short "Yo-heave!" and they would edge the track closer to a perfect curve.

"The next center ahead, a little to the north," Jake called out from a short distance back. Hank carried his hot lining jack to the place directed and skillfully threw the jack under the rail. Jim's hands were more sensitive to the heat as he carried his jack. It soon became so hot that he had to run to the place and quickly drop it, and he began rubbing his hands. Hank, seeing his agony, laughed softly.

"Yes, sir, this day is hot enough to make the watermelons sweat dry!" he joked and then began to chuckle again.

Jake was looking back over the track just lined when he noticed it. "Holy smokes!" he shouted, "The track is pushing out!" The track had expanded and was ridding the excess by pushing out the curve, loosened from the ground by raising it. "Everybody stop

what you're doing and fill it in on the outside!" Jake yelled. "Hurry! We've got to stop her before she pops!"

"What's this 'pop' Jake's talking about?" Jim asked.

"Jist what he says," Hank replied. "She starts pushin' out like she is now and then—bang!—all of a sudden she pops out a couple of feet." With that he began to scoop the gravel as hard as he could go.

Jim too began to scoop hard and fast. The perspiration began to flow down his dark naked back in streams. His pants became wringing wet with sweat. Bend over and scoop a shovel of sand from the edge of the grade with the short handled railroad shovel, he thought, throw sand up against the end of a tie; scoop up another shovel full, still in this half-stooped position. In a short while Jim stopped, straightened up and arched his back a little and then stooped over and began shoveling again. "Why do they have to make these handles so awful short?" Jim questioned as he continued working in a stooped position.

Jake had run up the track and was flagging down number "64" as she came. "Of all the luck, a train would come now!" Jim dejectedly muttered.

Old Hank, standing near, chuckled and remarked, "She couldn't have come a better time. This's just when we want 'er."

Upon seeing Jake's yellow flag the engineer had "cut throttle." The huge mass of iron and steel came slowly chugging around the curve. Seeing the perplexity still on Jim's face as to why they could possibly want a train now, Hank pointed to the track just ahead of the big, massive drive wheels. The questioning look left Jim's face and he began to smile as he wiped the sweat from his brow. Only about every tenth tie had gravel tamped under it since they raised the track. Now the tremendous weight was easing the track back into the position that it occupied before, a stable position.

Jim looked up at the sun and yelled. "I guess we licked you this time!" As the glare made him turn his eyes down, the sun seemed to smirk at him.

"Doc"

JOHN T. BECK

"There's nothing wrong with you that these sugar pills won't fix," barked the doctor. "Now get out of here, and don't come back until there's something wrong with you. Think I've got time to fuss around with people whose only ailment is not having enough sense to know whether they're sick or healthy? I'm getting old." The warm, good natured, friendly tone in the physician's voice had nearly broken into his characteristic stomach chuckle as he spoke his last few words.

"OK, you old goat, but I hope you don't expect me to believe that these things are sugar pills. About the time you start giving me those things I'll start giving the new doc my business. Besides they're the same kind that you gave the little woman when she felt like I do. Except you put her to bed, too. Well, Doc, see you around. Much obliged." The man had entered the dilapidated office with bent shoulders and a creased brow, but now he slammed the door with a resounding crash, and the rapid click of his cleated heels reported his almost carefree descent of the worn stairway.

The old doctor stood a moment listening, ran his nicotine-stained hands across his tired brow, and then walked slowly across the small office to his desk. With exaggerated care he seated himself in the old swivel chair, and with a weary look in his bespectacled eyes, which were nestled beneath his thick, white brows, he stared meditatively at the untidy desk in front of him. The bulk of the mess seemed to be caused by numerous advertisements from various vendors of medical supplies.

"When will those outfits learn?" grunted the doctor, shaking his shaggy mop of silvery hair. "I've been practicing medicine for forty-seven years, and all this time I've given the same company my business. Still all these others keep sending me this tripe. Wonder what they'd say if they knew that I'd stopped reading their miserable circulars in '24. Don't even open them anymore." Then the corners of his lips wrinkled into a smile, and he chuckled, remembering his last patient's parting remarks. "So he didn't believe me when I tried to tell him that those were sugar pills. Tell a man the truth, and he'll never believe you."

One of his darkly veined hands reached out and swept a few of the unopened advertisements to one side, and then he carefully picked up an aged, leather-bound, black ledger. He turned to the space given the letter 'J' and found the name he sought, John Jorgensen. A few lines above it he noticed another name, Johannes Jorgensen. "Now there was a man," he thought. "I can remember one day he came riding in to get me. The way he was acting you'd think that his wife was the first person that ever had a baby. Hard to believe that man with the middle-age spread who was just in here was his son. Well, I'm getting old, and I may just as well realize it."

His eyes wandered back to the name of John Jorgensen. The figures next to the carefully printed name indicated an impressive series of unpaid bills. The doctor closed the ledger without making an entry.

The old clock in the corner, which he had received in payment for an appendectomy in 1933, groaned ominously, and then managed six feeble croaks. "Six already," he thought. "I'd better get home before Amy gets herself worried. This has been a long day."

He rose slowly, and then as he pulled on his heavy overcoat, he grunted resoundingly. Picking up "The Doctor Is Out . . . " sign, he moved the hands of the paper clock to 9:30. Then he searched through his abundant pockets for the key to the office. Just as he had located it, he heard the regulated jingling of the office phone. He picked up the receiver and growled, "Hello."

"Doctor Simpson?" said an urgent voice.

"Of course," he replied.

"My wife's got a stomach ache," declared the voice.

"Is that right!" muttered the doctor impatiently.

"It may be an appendicitis," said the voice, a little less urgently.

"Might be," answered the doctor.

"Will you come out?" implored the voice.

"Have you got any money?" asked the physician.

"Of course," was the reply.

"Then why don't you call the new doctor?" he asked, with a peculiar unevenness in his voice. "I'm too old a man to be running around helping people who can afford to pay for it."

He placed the receiver back on its hook, walked out of the office, closed the door, and slowly descended the worn stairs. Someone on the sidewalk below looked up and called, "Hi, Doc." The old man straightened his weary shoulders and replied, "Hello, Jim, how are the kids? Tell them I said to keep their noses clean."

Nitey-Nite

OWEN K. GRAMPS

"Okay, Artie, let's pick up the toys." All over the room lie toys that were brought out of the toy-box early in the morning. Everyone has now been forgotten, but as it is picked up it holds new fascination for the weary little lad. The little red racer has to be wound once more, the blocks have to be twisted on or off their posts, or the hopping bunny needs just one final examination before being put to rest.

"Come on, Artie, get Snoopy over there." The blocks are dropped into the box and Arthur runs across the floor to pick up Snoopy, who suddenly becomes a long-lost friend with eyes, nose, and shoes to be pointed out to Papa as if newly discovered.

"That's a good boy; now let's go . . . " But no. Far back underneath the sofa is a little brown car which, of course, just must be retrieved and put into the toy-box.

Another ten minutes are spent in the process of tooth-brushing. This consists of attempts to spit as well as daddy does. Then comes the comment, "Ummmmm," at the first taste of Pepsodent, and there is frequent rinsing of the brush.

Somehow a game of tag gets started. The pajamas are located and bare-footed—in fact bare—Artie is pattering across the rug toward the kitchen. Having arrived there, he suddenly acquires a tremendous hunger for a "cackoo."

Finally amid giggles and stern words the boy is tucked under the covers with an arm around his teddy bear and a piece of cracker in an extended left hand. But wait! Suddenly we have to go to the bathroom once again—a cleverly planned scheme pulled nightly for those extra five minutes.

This ordinarily concludes the process, but tonight in walk callers. They are immediately greeted by many "hi's" and are vastly entertained by the red-slippered rogue. As many toys as possible are strewn about while the guests' coats are taken. However, the gush of preliminary conversation, pipe lighting, and getting situated draw attention away from its rightful center. Suddenly the guests find their rubbers being placed before them by Artie. This subtlety is augmented by his waving good-byes.

"Oh, yes, nitey-nite, folks; we are going to bed," A skillful swoop and a swoosh, and Artie is shoved under the covers. Then the bedroom door is firmly closed.

Forlornly, pleadingly, comes the muffled one word request, "Cackoo?"

Lines Composed In A Boring Class

CHARLES J. CHRISTENSEN

Yet does the weary day, ill born, progress
Its dismal course through this small space of time.
The many common things that make no sign
In the great scheme of things no more distress
Than bring forth joy; its droning hum not less
Enclosed in mediocrity, that time
Is dragging on in its succeeding line
Of days through sharp bright stabs of hopelessness
And weary labored pangs of hard-wrought sameness
That heighten more the pain and suffering that is mine.

Gray Skies

PHYLLIS HANSON

Gray skies
Holding a hint of rain,
Not yet falling
But waiting
Behind the lowering curtain
Of clouds.

Gray days,
Spent in existing
Not in living
But waiting
Behind the loneliness
Of his absence.

Feminine Logic

OWEN K. GRAMPS

"Why?"

"Because."

"Because what?"

"Just because!"

This typical conclusion of a conversation between a man and a woman is the classical example of feminine logic, and the man who knows woman to even a slight extent accepts the first "because" as final. "Because" is proof of anything, justification of any action, and sufficient reason for the most drastic feminine folly.

"Well, mother says—," is the best known reference to a wholly unqualified person as an authority. In short, the opinion of an aunt, a girl friend, or a beauty parlor operator, on any subject, is regarded as having all the authenticity of an encyclopedia.

Women are experts on evading questions and confusing issues. Politicians study their methods and use them widely, but not with the ease and skill of the average woman. One poor fellow made an attempt to convince his girl that she was wearing too much paint, but she cleverly turned the argument into a question of whether they should see Charles Boyer or go bowling. He had been contemplating driving out to Westville so she could meet his grandmother.

The closely associated confusion of issues is exemplified by the discussion of being able, or not, to afford a refrigerator. She argued that he was spending too much on cigarettes, and that they could afford the fur cape in Bresee's window, the cape being $13.02 less than the refrigerator.

Another exceedingly deplorable form of logic characteristic of women is proceeding on false premises. A Mrs. Shultz, now deceased, proceeded on three: one, that every man who entered Maxie's on a Saturday night was a drunken bum; two, that ptomaine poisoning was fatal; three, that she had ptomaine poisoning. Actually, on one of the two occasions she had seen Doc Block enter Maxie's he had been in quest of his driver. Also, ptomaine is seldom fatal even though the afflicted wishes for a time that it would promptly be so. Furthermore, Mrs. Shultz died from indigestion, a result of too many toasted cheese sandwiches followed too soon by too many

chocolate-coated cherries, after having refused treatment by "that no-good drunken bum of a doctor."

Arguing in a circle differs slightly from proceeding on a false premise in that she arrives where she started. A woman can prove the most impossible things by this system!

Let us study the case of Beatrice B. who proved to her fiance that his unusually sound Ford was too dilapidated for their honeymoon trip. Her Uncle Looie had a Ford that broke an axle in the middle of the bridge across the Niagara. Aunt Emma contracted chicken pox (presumably on the bridge), and their marriage resulted in divorce eleven years later . Therefore: Miss B's fiance bought a Packard. He subsequently married the daughter of the banker who financed the purchase.

The extensive use of these types of logic by the women of today is, in my opinion, an underlying reason for the defeated appearance of so many husbands, and for the increasing divorce rates. Therefore: if there were no women there would be no divorces.

Spring

MELIUS BOLLESEN

Ah Spring, whose ruby lips
  Have kissed the earth
And wakened it from
  Winter's long, cold sleep,
Whose growing warmth
  And gentle, whispering rains
Restore the landscape to its velvet green.

Ah Spring, whose magic fills
  The air with sweet perfume,
Whose golden sun brings forth
  The flower in bright array,
The sweeping winds have called
  The birds to well-loved northern homes
To build their nest and sing thy praise,
  Ah Spring, I welcome thee!

Midnight Watch

CAROL MENGERS

Well, kids, I suppose I should check again to see if you are covered up well. You toss and turn in your sleep and throw the blankets from you. Because you turn over when I disturb you, I must wait until you are still to tuck the quilts snugly around you. I wish you could always be as peaceful as you are now, buried in warm sleep. You can't read the newspapers and magazines and books that call you social problems, but you can sense the unhappiness of your unadjusted lives.

But I have read about you in sociology books and the magazines. I have read the facts and figures and causes—yes, even the solutions glibly given in three-page articles.

I stand by your bed, Bobbie. Your mother is a statistic in discussions of insanity. I remember how you wrinkled your face and cried out when you were made to wear the apron with the little tear in it. "He has to learn that he can't be so fussy," they said. I see your happy face when you are wearing your Sunday clothes: a clean shirt and pressed pants that satisfy your craving for neatness. I remember the story your social worker told me. "If he got his clothes the least bit dirty or torn, his mother would tear them up and then beat him." And so, Bobbie, I know why you are so particular about your aprons and laces and suspenders. I wish I knew if you will always be that way. Even the Soc books can't figure that out.

Billy, if I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times, to pick up your clothes. But you're stupid. I guess you'll never learn anything. According to one mechanistic psychologist a shot of thyroid extract or some other extract and you'll be normally intelligent. According to someone else, lack of love and understanding has caused your dullness, and you'll be cured when that lack is supplied. But what good would it do you if we knew what you needed? This benevolent institution can't afford expensive shots, and your imbecilic grin and actions get you more slaps than caresses from the busy, rushed workers.

Lucy, you are another statistic. Thousands of illegitimate children born every year, shriek the headlines. Who would think that a number in the newspaper would have such dancing curls, such an

engaging smile, such twinkling eyes? If your mother could see you now, would she be sorry she dumped you in the ashcan to get rid of an embarrassing problem?

What makes you so restless tonight, Freddy? In your sleep you don't look like the sinner who committed the awful crime of telling a lie. The supervisor punished you good for saying your daddy had given you your new suit, when you knew very well it was donated by the Sunshine Club. I guess you haven't seen your folks since they decided it would be best for everyone if they got a divorce. What will you do when you stop telling lies to yourself and to others; when you admit the crushing truth that your own parents didn't want you? I've read about you in the psychology books. "Children suffering from a feeling of rejection often develop traits of lying, aggression, or shyness," says the learned professor. But somehow, the psych books never moved me to the tears that I wipe away now as I turn from your bed.

Are you warm enough, Gretchen? You like to pile up the covers around you, perhaps to erase the memories of cold nights when you huddled under one blanket with three or four of your sisters. Why did your dad lose his job? Why did you have to run the streets dirty and ragged, uncared for? When we dressed you in first old thing we could find in the closet, you smoothed it with reverent hands and whispered, "Oh, my pretty dress." I suppose you are better off here where you have enough of food and clothes, but you still cry at night for your parents who couldn't take care of you.

Jimmie, don't be afraid. I'm just tucking the covers around you. But you always tighten up with fear and hide your face with your hands. You've been here almost a year now, Jimmie. Can't you forget the beatings you used to get? From the window I see the red light of the saloon, beckoning customers to come and enjoy the friendliness and hospitality of a glass of beer. Will you ever believe what the advertisements say, that drinking is only a pleasant social custom?

Well, goodnight, kids. Pleasant dreams. While you're sleeping I'll find the answers in my books.

Dawn

CHARLES L. KALDAHL

The sun breaks from the grip of night,
Stretching its long fingers of light
Upward to clutch the passing clouds.

Shades of gold, purple, red,
Leap from the earth to wake each creature from its bed,
And tell the world that morn has come.

Gray World

CHARLES J. CHRISTENSEN

Heartbroken skies, hardened
And grown grim and forbidding with sorrow,
Grimly stare down upon the cold and wretched world,
Mercilessly remote.

Sign boards, pitiful in pretended courage,
Blatantly announcing a blind philosophy to a race,
Sodden and hopeless, lost in a mire of self-doubt and despair.
Dirty signs, reminiscent of summer,
Covered with naked girls, smiling faces, lies,
Speaking a mad language to a world gone mad.

Buildings, sleazy in slattern shades of gray,
Unpainted, plaster, brick veneer,
False pretentions of long-vanished dreams,
Graves of dead hopes,
Repositories of worthless rubbish,
Offered for sale in the market place of fools.

Through the village a river,
Shining gray in reflected shadows,
Roadway to a world of sun and song—
Filled with the sewage of ten thousand houses,
Turgid with the waste of a thousand mills,
Brown with the wealth of a thousand neglected farms,
Symbol of civilization.

Happy New Year

HERBERT A. HJORTSVANG

The figures of swaying couples outlined grotesquely on the wall—huge distorted shadows bulging, narrowing to a sliver, vanishing to reappear again. Harsh, jarring syncopation. Bongo, bongo, I don't want to leave the Congo. Smoke from a thousand fires rising and mingling in the humid heat of the crowded room — a pall of choking ash. The strident roar of aimless conversation, shrieks of inane laughter, screams. Alcohol laden air, foul and sour. Symbols of civilization.

We sat at our table quietly watching the clamoring, jabbering merrymakers who were united only in one desire, the search for happiness. Isabelle sat close to me, her chin pressed moodily on her palm. We looked at each other.

"Would you like to leave now, Isabelle?"

"Yes, it's so warm and noisy."

I threw several bills on the table, and we rose and edged our way through the close network of tables to the anteroom. A swirl of smoke entered the elevator with us and we began the swift descent from the penthouse club. On the main floor several couples waited despondently behind a rope. The attendant let one couple take our place in the empty elevator. They waved to us happily.

"Thanks for leaving early. We never thought we would get in at this hour."

We walked through the lobby, whirled through the revolving door, and stepped out under the canvas of the entrance.

The sky was gray and overcast. The reflections of the city lights and distant steel mills to the south disclosed sullen rusty clouds rolling swiftly overhead. The street glistened under the rain that had fallen sporadically since four in the afternoon. A cutting wind from the northeast, bearing a strong fresh hint of the lake spanked along the street, now all but emptied of passers-by. We shivered as the cold pierced our coats and chilled our overheated bodies.

"I'm glad we left early, Bob. Aren't you?"

"I am. You know, in some strange way I felt uncomfortable in that place."

"So did I. And it's strange. Here we are, both cosmopolitans of Chicago."

"Hon, are you cold?" Her coat didn't look too warm.

"No, I'm fine. Warm as toast when I'm next to you." She smiled up at me.

"That's the best compliment you've given me since last week, when you told me I was better looking than Peter Lorre."

"You are entirely welcome, sir." She looked happily ahead. "Look, Bob, it's almost time." There was a huge projecting clock fastened to the corner of one of the buildings.

"What would you like to do, Isabelle?"

"Oh, let's just walk along and look at the windows and dream dreams. Wishful thinking, as you would put it, Bob."

We walked slowly down the street, pausing now and then to gaze into the shop windows. Many were yet brilliantly lighted. Their displays were still of Christmas finery. Out over the street, gaily colored wreaths fastened to the tops of lamp posts swayed loosely in the wind. At intervals noisy streetcars rattled past on shiny tracks, their usual racket subdued by the damp atmosphere, yet accentuated by the comparative quiet of this late hour.

By one of those whims that are unexplainable, we left the wide, well-lighted street and turned off onto a narrow side street. Isabelle and I walked along, our hands interlocked, and swinging back and forth like children's.

"You know," I said, "I can't help thinking about those people we saw up in the club. They're a prime example of many Americans today."

She was interested.

"Yes, Bob, I noticed the women especially. Pretending with all their might they were having a good time. But deep down they weren't."

I looked at her seriously.

"We're having a better time just walking along, watching the city, and talking, than we did back there."

We walked slowly for several blocks, continuing in the same vein, and wondering what the future held for us.

Then a new intensity of the wind brought a resumption of rain, at first only a few scattered drops, but soon increasing in such volume and force as to obscure vision to a few feet. The driving pellets rebounded into the air as they struck the pavement, and then, their energy spent, fell exhausted. We ran to the shelter of a small, dimly lighted store entrance. Outside, the raindrops collected to form a

swift stream which flowed into the gutters and sewers along the street.

There was a sign painted on the window of the store front:

THE GOSPEL MISSION

"Look Isabelle." I pointed to the sign. "This is one of the rescue missions for the down-and-outers of West Madison Street."

We could hear a ragged chorus of men's voices from within. Curious, we stood there trying to decide whether or not we should go in. Isabelle's formal and my tuxedo would look out of place, we knew. Then the rain ceased and as we turned to leave, the door opened and a small, kind-faced man stepped out. He smiled at us. "I saw your shadows against the door. Perhaps you would like to step in and join our services." He noticed our hesitation. "Please come in. We would be glad to have you. Don't worry about your clothing."

The kindly invitation of this man, the pastor, appealed to us. Ashamed, we turned to enter.

Off in the darkness, beyond the towers and rising above the subdued murmur of the city, there began to peal swiftly the bells of a cathedral. Clear and sweet they rang. Then, almost in unison, more bells began to chime and ring from towers all around, far and near. Soon sirens, whistles and the raucous blare of car and truck horns blocked out the melody of the bells.

"Come, it's midnight."

We entered the humble mission, and left behind us the blaring horns and sirens. As we knelt to pray by the worn and aged bench, strangely, miraculously, the bells of the churches came to us, signifying peace and happiness.

Ring out the old, ring in the new. Happy New Year, Isabelle; Happy New Year, Pastor; Happy New Year, my fellow man.

I prayed. Heavenly Father, I thank Thee . . .

Simile

PHYLLIS HANSON

Like the gentle opening of a door
Upon a darkened room, so opens love
And all unsuspected enters in,
Never to leave a life the same again.

Episode At a Perfume Counter

CHRIS PETERSEN, Jr.

The saleslady said—
"A necessity of groomery
Is milady's perfumery."

The Junior Miss said—
"The need I can plainly see—
But what is the brand for me?
What type am I—a dizzy neurotic,
Or are people wrong—am I exotic?
If I'm a cute girl, demure and pure,
Which bottle contains my allure?"

The saleslady said—
"I claim, whatever you are,
You can be safe with Shalimar."

The Junior Miss said—
"For some that may well be
But I'm sure it doesn't fit me.
I need a scent to set off my charm,
To cast a spell, to enchant, to disarm."

The saleslady said—
"We have Violet, Sweet Pea, Teak and Musk,
Evening in Paris and Turkish Dusk.
You're not the type to use Tweed—
Maybe Scandal will meet your need.
If it's a heart you want to win
I'd suggest you try My Sin."

The Junior Miss concluded—
"My patience is completely spent
And I can't find a proper scent.
Ah, rue the day—for the truth I see—
Undecided, I'll keep on smelling like me."

My Birthday Party

GERHARDT MENGERS

"Hey, Jack, do you want to come to my birthday party? It's on Tuesday, February 22. Okay, be there at 3:30. So long."

I was the happiest boy in the world. In two days I was going to be seven years old and have my first birthday party. Now the last invitation had been given.

I hurried home from Sunday School all thrilled at the thought of so great an occasion. Why it was even a national holiday celebrating George Washington's birthday and mine. For weeks I had been talking of nothing except my party. "Mom, what are we going to play at the party? What are we going to eat? Huh, Mom?" Sunday night I fell asleep dreaming about the wonderful presents I was going to get.

Early Monday morning I was ready for school. At a quarter to nine my little brother and I got into our imaginary cars and with much shifting and tooting, started on our way. We met Jack Younger and James Bailey on the way and asked them what they were going to bring to my party.

That morning we had a spelling bee. Of course Jack won. He always did, even on some of the bigger words. I had a headache, so I went down earlier than usual even though I never was much good. When the lunch bell rang, I was feeling terrible. Gunnar comforted me all the way home.

That afternoon I didn't go to school. Instead Mom put me in bed and took my temperature. I was very feverish and was restless all afternoon. The next morning I felt even worse and when my brother and sister came in and sang "Happy Birthday" to me, I started to cry. Now I could not have my birthday party. Mom tried to cheer me up by telling me that I could have my party when I got well, but nothing that she did could console me.

At school Gunnar told all my friends that I had the measles and that we couldn't possibly have the party. I tried to forget that it was my birthday, but the harder I tried to forget it, the more miserable I felt. When it became time for the cancelled party, I could restrain my tears of disappointment no longer. I burst into long, mournful sobs. Why did I have to be sick today? Why couldn't

I wish it on someone else — at least for a little while? But it was all in vain.

Then my brother came in to try to cheer me up. I moaned about being sick on my birthday. But Gunnar in his childlike, brotherly love said, "But think of George Washington. He's dead on his birthday!" After that everything seemed to get a little brighter and in a week I had my delayed party.

The Idiot

CHARLES J. CHRISTENSEN

A little child, Hannah, yet woman grown,
Idiot unloved, ugly, with one protruding tooth,
Given to the stiff-starched, long-haired sisters to keep,
Given to the prim, staid Lutheran Sisters to keep.
And here, one morning, sticky in the heat of summer,
I mopped my sloppy, splashy way down the corridor,
Tired, oppressed, with thoughts grown overlarge,
Mopped past the door where Hannah lay sick abed,
Stepped inside, called, "Hi! Hannah."
The idiot looked up, and smiling
And pointing said, "See—Sis'er Lily—flo'ers.
Jesus loves me."
From a distance
I heard my voice thinly answering,
"Oh yes, little Hannah,
Jesus loves you."
And down within the chapel of my soul
Another fainter voice folded its hands, and prayed:
"Oh Lord, if Thou canst use this idiot child
To show the way to me,
Perhaps, Oh Lord, Thou also couldst—
Oh Lord, use me."

A Contemporary Galsworthy

OWEN K. GRAMPS

Were Mr. John Galsworthy an American writing today, I am sure he would write a play on the housing situation. Interest in this subject is above the matter of politics, inflation, and the next war in the minds of the majority of Americans. Most of these Americans are landlords or tenants, or relatives or friends of one of these groups, and have one-sided viewpoints on the matter.

First, Mr. Galsworthy would picture the poor landlord with his life's savings in real estate, with upkeep expenses, complaints from tenants, high taxes and a return of about one per cent on his investment. He will advise his gin-rummy partner to sell, not rent, the new houses he has built.

Then there will be the unfortunate family with four children being evicted from their two room apartment. They will ultimately pay a week's wages to the manager of an apartment building in order to secure a place to live, and, at an exhorbitant price, will be forced to purchase some dilapidated furniture from the man as well.

Mr. Galsworthy would probably take this opportunity to portray the tenants as the complaining group they are, complaining about excessive rent, disagreeable neighbors and needed repairs.

So then the landlord will make a few repairs, call it remodeling, and raise the rent. This will bring in the rent control office which will, of course, do nothing but provide material for two acts and make all characters concerned more unhappy than they were before.

At a gin-rummy game the landlord's friend will lament that he has been unable to sell his property and will state that he is considering renting it to quiet couples with no children. He has just received a bill from the electrical contractor, who wired the new houses, for a sum three times the original estimated price, an alleged result of rise of labor and material costs. One of the town's assessors had been a prospective purchaser until the price was mentioned. Lastly, the parents of the boy who had been hired to keep the lawns mowed were filing a suit because a loose brick had fallen from the top of the chimney and hit the lad on the head.

A story such as this would be an opportunity for at least seven characterizations, and an opportunity for the study of clashes be-

tween these characters and between their ideas. It would take all the skill and experience of Mr. Galsworthy to conclude a story of this worsening state of affairs. My only suggestion for this portion of my drama is to write, in the center of the page, one of Galsworthy's most frequently used phrases:

The curtain falls.

A First Impression

LOIS M. GIRTZ

"Meet me in the chapel," his letter had said, and as Liza walked down the steps to the gymnasium that served as a combination chapel and auditorium as well, she felt the fallen leaves, both soggy and crisp underfoot, and she kicked them aside. How could he have raved about this place so, she thought, it certainly isn't neat. The sidewalks were stained and half covered with leaves; the dying lawn wasn't trimmed, and its ugly desolate blades stuck accusing fingers at her for being so neat.

She crossed the road at the bottom of the steps on the mud-covered sidewalk that led to the gymnasium. The ditch on the side of the road held many dead leaves, an old cement bag, and a number of bricks whose broken surfaces looked like stark, bloody wounds. Past the wooden guard-rail, unpainted and slivered; past the broken-down little posts that marked the parking area—looking like a defeated army, all broken in rank.

She pulled open the door, stepped in, and clapped her gloved hands together, brushing off dust from the door handle. She climbed the six steps gritty from feet of three hundred students who had gone to chapel an hour before, and she shuddered. Another door, and she was inside.

The gray motionless light that diffused through windows accentuated the drab and scarred plaster and the disharmony of the room. Folding chairs set up in rows facing the stage were painted two colors of green and bore the name *Dana* in bold white letters. The deep red of velveteen curtains pushed aside and of the valance cuddling a layer of dust in its folds opposed the red of the altar and pulpit hangings. The blond wood of the organ, the light reddish wood of the stage frame, the soft brown of the rostrum and altar,

and the shiny black finish of the grand piano made her shudder again, and she looked over her own smart British tan shoes and accessories complementing her rich brown suit.

She walked over to a chair and sat down, sighing impatiently. She glanced around, then reached and picked up a little booklet. "Sing!" the finger-marked cover said, its limpness daring her to relax. She leafed through it. "This must be what they use for a hymnal . . . I might have known George would be late, he never managed to be on time for meals at home . . . I do wish he would hurry!" She started to the door to see if he was coming.

Just then a door slammed and clomp! clomp! clomp!—someone was taking those six steps two at a time. Into the room burst George, all smiles, his curly hair in disorder.

"Liza honey, it's good to see you." He was at her side instantly, giving her a bear hug.

"Oh Buzz, I wish you'd have come sooner," she said, setting her mouth in a pout.

"Why, little sis, what in the world is the matter? I certainly am only a few minutes late, and I wouldn't have been if I could have helped it," he said in a surprised tone.

"Oh, you're always late for meals at home . . . and besides, this place gives me the jitters. Why did you have me meet you here anyway?"

His eyes lost their sparkle for an instant, and he said in a lower tone, "I'm very sorry, Liza, that I was late, and that I asked you to meet me here." Then he brightened. "Let's go up to the canteen, and I'll introduce you to some of the kids and tell you just why I love it so here."

"Okay," she said, shrugging her shoulders a little in relief.

"Say, before we go, I'd like to ask you if you noticed our chancel and altar?"

"You mean the stage?"

"Yes."

"Well, yes, everything up there clashes, if that's what you mean. I don't see how it can put you in a very devotional mood."

"Oh," he said disappointedly, "I guess we never particularly noticed the colors. I was just going to say that some of us guys had decided that the altar reminded us of our life here at Dana—very

simple, yet very stable—and with the cross standing there straight and bare in the center." He smiled at her gently, remembering the modern high school auditorium at home—that was what she was used to.

She looked at him in both admiration and annoyance at his enthusiasm over so little. Then she stuck out her hand and said, "Come on, let's go."

"Yeah, nuff said," he declared, feeling a bit sheepish. He grabbed her hand and swung open the door. "By the way, Liza, who's your latest beau?"

"Oh, Buzz," she said protestingly, then laughed. "You'd never guess."

"Aw, it won't hurt to tell me, I can't mess it up for you anymore," he said coaxingly. They passed through the door. Liza didn't see the posts of the parking area or the unpainted guardrail; she was too much engrossed in playing her little oral fencing game with her brother.

But as they passed up the steps, she noticed that one of them held the rust imprint of a leaf—a damp leaf had lain there so long its color and outline had become a part of the cement. She looked up at her brother, big and friendly, and she could feel her whole body smiling with happiness there beside him. Then she poked George coyly and said, "Oh, Buzz, will you introduce me to your star football player? I just love them!"

And All Things Must

LOIS M. GIRTZ

When I put nasturtiums in a bowl
It makes me vaguely sad,
To think their sunny, sprightly faces
Soon will be limp and dead.

The cool green of summer leaves
Changes to an amber glow,
But my heart feels in their warmth
The hint of cold and snow.

The Burn

PETER THORSLEV, Jr.

They were sitting around the camp-fire, sipping coffee in tin cups. They had to snatch a meal and an hour's rest before they went back to the fire. The hot liquid felt good, burning some of the sleep and tiredness out of them.

Dick looked over the rim of his cup at the men squatting on the ground. The stubble on their faces was begrimed with a mixture of ashes and sweat. Their battered red caps were faded by sun and rain, and the brims dropped sloppily. Their "Levis," stagged at the cuffs, were stiff with sweat and dirt, and their flannel shirts were torn. Their boots, although of staunch durable leather, were torn and dusty.

Dick smiled thinly as he thought that if they had been caught beside a railway track back home in Iowa, they would have been in the county jail before morning. Here, they were men of position—men who knew the art of fighting fires, and men for whom the woods was home.

"Well, Johnny Jin, do you think the camp can take care of itself while you go up on the fire this morning?" Jack asked. Jack was a tall gangling Ranger with a thin face, the foreman of the fire and the camp.

"I s'pose so, if you really need me," Johnny Jin answered. "Where did it break the line?"

"On the west side. When that wind came up last night some sparks must have blown over the trench. We didn't notice it until it had a pretty good start, and it's darn hard to dig a trench in the dark," Stratton informed him. Dick remembered that Stratton and his men, who had been brought in from the Diamond Match mill down the valley a few miles, had been watching that part of the line.

"Well, I suppose we'd better get off our butts and on the trail again," Jack said, standing as he spoke.

They prepared to leave, and Dick rose to his feet. He felt stiff and sore, but they seemed none the worse for their long night's work. They picked up lunches in ten-pound sacks and twisted them about their belts.

The relief crew of laborers had finished eating, and had their

lunches and canteens at their belts, ready to go. They stood lounging about beneath the trees, talking about the fire, and smoking cigarettes. Jack shouted at them, and they fell into line for the march to the fire, carrying a few tools to replenish the supply on the fire-line.

Dick walked to the bole of a large pine where he had left the portable wireless. "Coming, Richard?" Johnny Jin called. "Fire foreman's gotta be on the ball, you know."

He had asked them to call him Dick, but they persisted in calling him Richard. They walked on ahead of him, talking about the fire and planning the day's strategy.

He supposed they had that attitude toward him because he was just out of college. His father, in the office in Missoula, had sent him out there, and had told him that he would have to prove his worth. "They won't accept you right off. Most of them have had little formal education, have worked themselves up. They'll resent your coming in with so little practical experience," his father had warned him.

Suddenly he wished fervently that he were back in school—in Ames—with Art and John and all his school-mates, friends who respected him as he respected them. He hadn't dreamed it would be like this. His legs were tired, and the heavy boots seemed weighted. The muscles in his thighs ached—and in his arms. The wireless was heavy.

They were almost there now. The crew on the fire yelled down the trail at them in greeting. Most of them had taken off their shirts, and the sweat was running down their grimy backs. Their faces were weird, grotesque masks of sweat and soot and ashes. They gave up their tools gladly and the relief crew went to work quickly, bending their backs to the work, cuttting trees and digging the trench through the heavy undergrowth and the soggy layers of needles and humus on the ground.

"They've done a darn good job, but I'm afraid it's a losing battle—unless we get some more men in a hurry," Jack said to the foreman.

Stratton glanced up at a large dark cloud-bank before the rising sun in the eastern sky. "Looks as if it might rain, though, and a good rain could check it for a while, at least."

"You can't depend on this mountain rain, though—and hell

knows where this fire will be before we get it," Johnny Jin added laconically.

"When we were coming out I saw a burn—from some spot-fire a while back, I suppose—just ahead of this blaze," Dick said.

"Yeah, but it'll go around it," Stratton said in dismissal. "Are any more men coming through, Jack?"

"They're sending in a couple of hundred more from Spokane, but by the time they get here they might just as well come in from the other side." Jack laughed drily.

Dick persisted. It might turn out to be just the chance he needed. "How about me taking about twenty men and heading for the burn," he said. "If we could use that as a fire-line, and lengthen it a bit, we might hold it back—at least until we can get a good line through," he added hastily.

Jack studied him for a moment, and Stratton eyed him coldly. "You'd never get to the burn before the fire, and if you did, you'd probably get caught in it. This ain't no picnic camp-fire, you know, Richard," Stratton remarked acidly.

"Let him try," Jack said suddenly. "Maybe our little college boy has something there, at that. And anyway, it can't do a hell of a lot of harm to let him try."

"Carter, Bassendowski, Hanson, Melton," they fell back to the group as he called. "Ross, Petersen," he called off twenty men, sawyers, some with axes, and a few with Pulaskis. "Just follow Richard, here; he'll show you what he wants done," he said, and then he turned and left, the other foreman following him.

Dick set out along the trail without a word and the twenty men after him. They went to the end of the line, and as they passed the other workers Dick could hear them ask his men what they were up to, and his men answer in low voices, out of his hearing. When he reached the end of the fireline, he pitched out through the brush, sighting a tall cedar up ahead, as close to the fire as he dared go. As he half-walked, half-ran, the sharp needles of the pines lashed at his face, and salt sweat stung in the scratches. He hurried on, forcing himself to hurry, hurry—half run through the woods— his caulks now biting into the soft wood or humus, and now his feet tripping clumsily on some hidden out-cropping root.

He reached the tall cedar. He was almost abreast of the fire now, and that open space in the sky-line up ahead was the burn he was looking for. A few tall blackened snags, pencil-thin, point-

ed at the sky. "It's almost too close," he thought. "I hope to God it rains."

When he reached the burn, he gathered his men around him and barked his orders. The men went to work, quickly and efficiently, but sullenly, without a word.

He looked again at the burn. It seemed even smaller now, less than a dozen chains in length, he thought. It would take a lot of work to lengthen it into an efficient line. He glanced upward again, but the smoke from the fire was rolling up in huge clouds, the wind behind it, and he couldn't see the sky. "I hope—dear God —let it rain."

Then he set the wireless down in the burn, and taking an axe, he pitched into the work, swinging with every ounce of strength left in him. The men worked silently and earnestly at his side, and the line inched forward. "Not so thoroughly," he shouted. "Just get the biggest stuff down."

Between the ring of the axes and the steady zing zing of the saws he could hear the fire crackling in the bush like a brigade of rifles in irregular fire. Now and then a tall spruce would burst into flame, billowing bright orange sparks into the clouds of grey smoke.

He worked feverishly, shouting and slugging. He felt numb—numb to the aches of his muscles—numb to the thorny bushes that tore at his legs or to the sharp branches which tore his shirt and the skin beneath. He felt a new strength rise within him, but in a foreign body, as if he were directing an automaton, a robot, from somewhere far away.

Time went quickly. He glanced at his watch. They must have been working for almost four hours, he thought. He glanced at the length of the line, stretching into tthe wood from the burn, and he knew that they had succeeded. They had blocked the fire!

He straightened up. A sharp pain stabbed between his shoulders, and he dropped his axe. Suddenly he noticed that the steady roar of the wind in the pines and its thin whistle in the naked arms of the snags had diminished, and that the smoke lay heavy and dense near the ground.

"Oh Lord," he thought, "don't let it rain. It can't rain now!" He ordered the men to take "five," and they straightened up and leaned on their tools. Some of them pulled out their makings and placidly rolled cigarettes. He lit one of his own and held it tensely,

looking half-fearfully at the sky. "I've done it now—it can't, it mustn't rain!"

Then it began, not slowly, but with big, splattering drops, as mountain cloud-bursts do. The men moved to shelter, under short spreading cedars or dense spruce. Dick stood where he was, and the torrential down-pour beat on him, and trickled in little rivulets from the brim of his hat. He cursed it as it fell—and it rained harder, and little puddles of dirty black water formed in the trench, and the strong wet acrid smell of smoke hung heavily in the humid air.

Suddenly he felt very tired, and picking up his wireless he went and sat under the shelter of the outstretched branches of a cedar. The rain fell steadily now, monotonously, and the thin white stream of smoke from his cigarette curled slowly up into the dark green branches.

Then he heard voices laughing and talking through the rain in the trees and heard sticks snap as heavy caulked boots crushed them on the ground. The foremen broke into the clearing and halted a moment, studying the fire-line. Then seeing Dick, they hurried toward him.

"Well, our bright little college boy didn't figure on the rain, did he, Richard?" Stratton remarked caustically.

"Shut up, Stratton. He would have been a damn fool if he had," Jack answered curtly. "Say, Dick, we've got a pot of coffee brewing back down the line a ways, so come along. You're soaked, and it'll do you good."

They walked back silently, and the rain fell softly now, but steadily. The fire seemed a far-off murmur in the trees.

They sat around the camp-fire. The wet clothes clung tightly to their bodies, and little white wisps of steam rose from them as the fire blazed brightly. The workers sat around, smoking in silence, but not in the sullen silence that Dick had noticed before.

Dick took the tin can of coffee which one of the workers offered, and sipped it slowly. It made a pleasant warm sensation in the pit of his stomach. "It shouldn't take so much to mop up the fire if this rain keeps up, eh, Dick?" Johnny Jin asked.

"No, it shouldn't," Dick answered. "And I'll radio back to Bonner's Ferry to tell them to stop those buses of men there, if they haven't already. We won't need them here now."

"Yeah, sure," Jack said.

The fire spat and sizzled in the rain, and the water dripped steadily from the low-hanging branches of the pines and cedars. Mixed with the acrid smell of smoke was the fresh clean smell of crushed foliage and sap from fresh-hewn trees.

Climax

ART SIMON

It was a hot summer evening. The kind of pasty, sticky warmth that makes one's clothes cling uncomfortably to the body, penetrated the room. The air was almost too heavy to breathe; so, exhausted, I relaxed into an easy-chair and stared out of the window. A faint replica of a wind rattled the window only slightly. A breeze! The thought of it made me start. But after a more thoughtful glance through the window, I hesitated, then flopped back into the chair.

The sun was slowly making an exit behind a far-distant hill, making the trees send long, black shadows behind them. Ominous, dark clouds were racing from the east in an attempt to catch the sun before it could make that final dip and hide itself from the billowy forms. For a moment there was a clashing array of light streaming against the darkness; then the light was gone. A not too distant crashing noise, followed by a vibrating rumble and a flash of light, echoed threats of revenge at the sun for hiding.

A lonely stillness, magnified in the darkness and disturbed only by a growing breeze, now dominated the scene. But I could only hear the breeze, for the sultry atmosphere continued to torment me. The deep green leaves on the trees dipped and darted one way, then another; they fluttered teasingly—now more violently.

Once again a sharp crash like the boom of a mighty gun—this time closer, much closer—intruded upon the ever darkening spectacle. A jagged neon-light dropped through the clouds almost together with the crash and then vanished from sight as instantaneously as it had appeared.

Now the tormenting, damp air had a more warming effect; for outside nature was at war with herself and had been bled of her color. She seemed to be resting now, waiting for that final great blow. The only sign of still existing life was a whistling howl in the darkness that sent dust swirling through the air. Without warning a big wet streak splashed against the window—and another . . . now another. Then it poured.

Sweet Sixteen!

CAROL MENGERS

She twisted the last curl flat on her head and jabbed a bobby pin through it. "There, that's done," she murmured to herself. "I suppose Eddie will tell me my hair looks nice when I put it up, as if it looked awful when I didn't. The dear boy. He has such an awkward way of paying compliments. Oh well, at least he knows I exist. I don't suppose Harold would notice the difference if I just disappeared off the face of the earth."

She rummaged under the bed for her diary, concealed from prying eyes between the mattress and the springs. Her pen flew over the page as she recorded the day's events.

"Dropped by the *Sugar Bowl* tonite for a sundae. Harold was there, but he pretended he didn't see me. Eddie is under my feet all the time, but Harold doesn't care if I live or die. Why is life that way?"

She contemplated the page. There was nothing more to add to that unanswered cry, she decided. Idly she leafed back the pages to the happenings of the month before.

Sept. 22. "I got real mad at Pop. He didn't think I should go with Eddie and lead him on when I don't really like him. Why does he have to run my life for me? I'm old enough to know what I'm doing. He thinks I'm just a little kid. After all, I'm sixteen. I suppose he thinks I'm breaking Eddie's heart. Nuts. He doesn't see my point of view. He doesn't want to understand me."

She shoved the diary aside and leaned on her elbows, frowning at the wall. Since her violent declaration of independence that night, Pop had treated her like a grownup in a stilted, artificial sort of way. He still thought she was a little girl, who knew nothing of the sweetness of love or the bitterness of despair. Wouldn't he be shocked if she were to come home some night and say, "Pop, Harold and I are engaged."

The words were sweet on her lips. Dreaming of her happiness with Harold, she forgot her quarrel with her father.

The smell of coffee aroused her from her reverie. Suddenly she was hungry, and she slipped downstairs to join her father at the kitchen table.

The silence of the house bound them in a comradely intimacy.

"What if this were Harold and I, drinking coffee together in our own home," she thought moodily.

"What's wrong, Sister Sue? You don't look very happy."

"Oh, nothing."

She was silent for a few moments before she spoke again

"Harold is going to sing the solo in the operetta at school."

"He has a beautiful voice."

"He does. I wish I could play well enough to accompany his singing, but I'm not good enough for him, in more ways than one."

She looked at her father from the corner of her eye, half expecting to see him smile, but his face was grave as he shoved his cup aside.

"I know, Sister Sue. That's the way things go sometimes."

The kitchen was quiet as she finished her coffee. From the darkness of the dining room the clock ticked with monotonous regularity.

She pushed back her chair and took her cup to the sink.

"Well, goodnight, Daddy. I have to get my beauty sleep."

She dropped a light kiss on his hair and ran up the stairs two at a time, humming under her breath. As she entered her room, she started singing, " 'And I'm all yours in buttons and bows.' Tum-tum-te-tum. I think I'll wear my new skirt tomorrow, and maybe Harold will think it's cute."

Of Ink and Blood

CHRIS PETERSEN, Jr.

It was in Toledo and I was gettin' tattooed.

I'd never been tattooed before since it was my first year at sailin'. That needle, jabbin' at your arm all the time, is enough to drive ya nuts. But a guy's got to get it done, and act like it was nothin' at all, so everybody he ships with knows that he's got guts and can take it. My first tattoo was my last. It's not that I don't have the guts for it, understand. It's just that I made such a fool out of myself after I got the Toledo job done. Here's what happened:

I sat there, that day, tryin' to keep my mind on a picture of a

girl on a calendar and tryin' not to move my arm. I was sweatin' all down my back and I had my stomach sucked in every time the old guy quit jabbin' me for a minute to get some more color ink on the needle. I didn't want to look at my arm. The old man had a big, brown wart, with one hair on it, right on the end of his nose. So whenever I stopped lookin' at the calendar and wanted to look at my arm, I looked at the wart instead.

It itched somethin' awful. I wanted to reach down and scratch, scratch all over where he was puttin' the anchor on my arm. I wanted to rip at the skin there, or bite it, or anything at all to make the itchin' from those needle jabs stop.

All the time he was workin' on me, the old guy kept talkin' to himself under his breath. Every time he stuck me with that needle, he kinda grunted and a couple of times when I moved my arm, he grunted louder and looked up at me for a second.

We were in the back part of a barbershop on Front Street, that part of Toledo right by the coal docks. Used to be a pretty lively part of town once, but it's nothin' but old shacks and cheap stores now. It smells like rats, sewers, and dust inside those old places. Makes ya feel shut in, like ya couldn't breathe. Anyhow, him mumblin' away and stickin' me and bein' in that place started to make me sore.

"Look," I told him, "I paid ya three bucks to put that thing on my arm. You just keep on puttin' it there and never mind the tellin' me I got not to move or anything."

"You'll spoil the job," he said.

"Who's wearing it, me or you?" I came back at him, and he shook his head sayin' something about sailors. After that he was kinda careful. In a little while he'd finished it up. Took about an hour altogether.

"Be kinda sore for two-three weeks," he said while I was rollin' down my sleeve. "Nice job, though. I do a nice job, sailor. You ask anybody and they'll tell ya old Charlie Hoyt does a nice job. Ya like it?"

"You buy yourself a drink, Charlie," I told him and slipped him an extra buck. It was a nice job.

I was walkin' out. "Thanks, sailor. Hope she don't hurt too much, kid," he yelled after me.

It didn't hurt much the rest of the day. I went right back to the freighter and showed it around. The guys said, "Look, the kid

got tattooed. He's a sailor now." And I said, "Nothin' to it. Just like eatin' candy." And they grinned and said, "The sailor can take it." I felt like I was really somebody.

The afternoon of the next day, she hurt plenty. I must have got coal dust in it when we were cleanin' up on deck after we got out on the lake. I could hardly eat my supper. I turned in as soon as I got away from the table. It was one of those real hot nights on Erie. I laid there in my bunk, listening to the fan speed up and die down on account of the dynamo bein' no good. And all the time my arm was throbbin' and hurtin'.

I laid there about three hours, then got up and put on a pair of dungarees and my slippers. I went down to the galley for a drink of water, but couldn't drink near as much as I thought I wanted lyin' in my bunk. There wasn't anybody in the galley. It was hot there with the coal stove burnin' so I went out on deck and up to about midships and sat down on a hatch. Most of all, I didn't want anybody to see me and find out I was sick from the tattoo. They'd say I couldn't take it.

The way I felt, I wished I'd never shipped on the lakes, and had never seen Toledo. I didn't have a shirt on, but my arm burned like it was wrapped in hot flannel. When I touched it, there was a hard scab there. I thought a cigarette might help. But the first drag almost made me throw up.

I sat there for awhile and then somebody said, "What ya sittin' out here all alone for?" I looked up to see one of the watchmen, a guy named John Mullaney.

I started to say somethin' and then kept my mouth shut. I was so sick I didn't even want to talk. He could see I was sick by the light from the deck lamp. He grinned, then said, "Tattoo has got ya, huh? Just like eatin' candy, eh?" He laughed as he started to walk away. "The guys were wonderin' when you'd get sick." Laughing, he went on down the deck.

Then I was sick in my heart as well as in my stomach and arm. I knew Mullaney would tell the crew at breakfast and then the guys would laugh and say, "The sailor's just a kid after all. Kids can't take it."

For a minute I wanted to run after Mullaney and ask him not to say anything about my bein' sick. But I knew that would be beggin' off. Only guys with less than no guts at all beg to save themselves. So I sat there sick—sick because of the tattoo and sick be-

cause everybody was gonna know I couldn't take it. Mullaney would tell 'em.

Mullaney had always been just another guy on the crew as far as I was concerned—a guy I said hello to and sat next to at the table once in awhile. That was about all. But, as I sat there, I started hatin' Mullaney because he was gonna tell the crew, gonna trade my chance to be a man, like the others, for a good belly laugh. By the time I went back down to my bunk, a couple of hours later, I hated him enough that I was hopin' he'd fall overboard, down a hatch, or anything to shut his mouth.

I didn't go down to breakfast in the mornin'. I was still a little sick, but the reason I didn't go was that I didn't want to be there and have them all laughin' and makin' cracks at me. I figured it would be bad enough, havin' to meet the crew one or two at a time.

When the crew came up from breakfast, I was busy on deck. As busy as a half-sick kid can pretend to be. Some of the guys said, "Mornin', sailor," and they all went about the ship just like nothin' was different. No one made any cracks all mornin' and I got to wonderin' what was up. At noon, the mate asked me how my arm was and I said it was OK. He asked me just like everything was natural.

I began to wonder if Mullaney had said anything that mornin'. Finally, I asked one of the guys if anything special had happened at breakfast. The guy told me nothin' had happened and then asked why. I told him there was no special reason, just askin', that's all.

I tried all afternoon to figure the deal out. Finally, it came to me. Mullaney was just savin' it back until a better time—a time when I would be there and he could really make a show of it. He'd get me cornered when all of the crew was around and then tell his story. I knew I mustn't give him the chance.

I dodged Mullaney for better'n' a week. It wasn't easy. I missed chow, stayed away from the card games and bull sessions, tried to stay to myself as much as a guy can on a Lakes freighter. All the time I was hatin' Mullaney more and more because of the way I decided he was goin' to crucify me. I got past the point of hopin' he'd fall overboard or down a hatch. I got to hate the guy enough to think about pushin' him. It's funny how hate can keep gettin' stronger and stronger.

Things had to come to a head. Finally, I decided to have it out with Mullaney. The whole thing was gettin' me down.

He was aft, workin' over some hauser rope when I walked up. "Mullaney, why don't ya go ahead and tell 'em? Don't look so surprised. I mean just that. Tell the crew I got sick from the stinkin' tattoo, that I'm just a kid, that I can't take it, that I don't have any guts. Tell 'em and have your laugh." I got madder as I talked "It wasn't enough for ya to just tell 'em that mornin' after ya saw me on deck. Since I wasn't around, ya wanted to wait until ya could catch me when everybody was around, then crucify me good. They'd all say Mullaney sure knocked the wind out of the kid's sails, that the show was too good to miss."

"Shut up and set down," Mullaney shouted as my spiel sunk into his head. I shut up, but I didn't set down.

Then Mullaney told me. "So that's what's been runnin' through your crazy head for better'n' a week now. That's why I ain't seen you at chow or around the ship no place. I'll be go to blazes. If that don't beat all. Well, listen to me, kid. I plumb forgot about ya bein' sick that night. It wasn't worth talkin' about—a little gut-ache like that one ya had. After ya been around sailin' men for awhile, you'll learn something about gettin' tattooed.

"Gettin' tattooed don't take any guts It's bein' able to take what might happen afterwards that takes the guts. Ya did all right for your first time. Ya got a little anchor on your arm and ya didn't cry about the gut-ache and arm-burnin' ya had. But, when it comes to bein' tattooed and takin' what happens afterward, what happened to you wasn't worth talkin' about. If a man's goin' to talk to other sailin' men about somebody needin' guts for a tattoo job, he's goin' to tell 'em a real story—a story maybe like my own when I got two big tattoos, one on each arm, and darn near died afterwards.

"Your little belly ache just didn't rate a tellin', kid. I've seen worse from green apples."

Since then, I've always figured that tattoo did nothin' but make me a first-class fool. On top of that, my best friend, Old John Mullaney, says a man can get awful tired of lookin' at his skin drawin's year in and year out.

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