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The Homecoming

Barbara Peterson

The young man walked rapidly toward the barn. His cheeks were flushed and a line parted his forehead as he frowned. His expression lightened as he entered the big door to the horse stalls. In a corner box stall stood a saddle horse, black as a shadow in the night. With her large dark eyes and flared nostrils, and her thick glossy mane, she looked like the devil incarnate; yet something in her appealed to the young man . . . perhaps it was her wild beauty. The horse whinnied a greeting and pawed the straw in her stall with one hoof.

"Hi there, old gal, how are you?" said the young man, as he ran his hand along the horse's sleek neck and through the shining mane. "You don't like to be shut up inside, do you? Well, we're going out for a ride."

He bridled the horse and then placed the saddle blanket over her back. He lifted the heavy saddle in place and cinched it tight. Then he led the animal out of the barn. Before he mounted he tied his jacket and a yellow slicker behind the cantle. It was warm now, but the weather was always unpredictable in the mountains. The horse quivered with suppressed energy but she was well trained; she stood still until her master had mounted and then she leaped forward. They galloped past the corrals and out into the meadow.

The water in the meadow pools glistened in the sunlight. The pools were clear and the pebbles in the bottom were clean and white. The waving meadow grass undulated like the gentle swells of a restless moving sea.

As the horse trotted down the path her glossy mane rippled along her neck. The young man rode easily in the saddle; he hadn't lost that skill in the few years he'd been away from the ranch. He wore levis and boots and a loud shirt he'd worn at college. The shirt was green and black and yellow with pineapples and palm trees on it.

His mind went back to the conversation he'd just had with his father. Again he frowned as he thought of it.

"So Dad wants me to stay on the ranch all my life. Well, it so happens that it's not the life for me. I went to college so I could do something else and maybe get to be somebody some day." He thought of the friends he'd made during his college days in the East. They'd had some rousing good times. "That's where I belong . . . back there with my friends . . . I'll go back East, get a good job, settle down . . ." He thought of a girl, too; he thought of her laughing eyes and blonde beauty. He preferred life in the city and his friends there to all the rugged grandeur of the ancient mountain peaks or the pleasant lazy meadowland.

They had come to the end of the meadow. The horse picked her way skillfully along the mountain path which led gradually upward. Here the grass that grew on either hand was sparse.

The path led into a grove of trees where the effects of the sun were dissipated. The ground was flecked with shadow and sunlight; the man and the horse passed through them both.

Suddenly the tops of the evergreen trees began a lively dance. The young man estimated the wind's force by the movement of the trees. When they rocked their entire length it meant there was really a gale coming; but now only the tops rocked. Through the trees he could see that the sky was no longer a light blue.

As they rode out of the trees he saw a gigantic thunderhead, its base in the inky horizon. The wind was chilly and whipped the horse's mane and forelock around her neck and ears. The young man untied his jacket and put it on; then he put on his yellow slicker. It covered his head and extended down on each side to protect the saddle completely. He looked like a yellow ghost astride an ebony charger.

'It's sure to rain before we get back," thought the young man. Presently the horse hesitated. He could tell she was nervous. "You don't like it, do you? O.K., we won't stay out much longer."

They turned back when it began to rain. It began suddenly. The cold drops pounded against his face and obscured the trees ahead so that they appeared to be slender black

images, rocking and moaning in the wind. The path was a jagged black line in the ground ahead. Lightning flashed like the fury of the gods through the black sky and they could hear the thunder rolling through the grim clouds and mountain peaks.

The lightning came closer. It was unlikely that it would harm a rider; yet it could, and had done so before. Anyway, he knew he would be safer among the trees ahead than in this open stretch. And beyond the grove it was only a short distance to shelter.

The jagged bolts of yellow fire chased across the sky. The grove ahead was lonely and forbidding. The rocks were rugged black blots on either hand.

They had almost reached the grove when a yellow fist of fire struck from out of the blackness above.

A black form bolted, and a smaller yellow form plunged to the cold black ground and slid in the wet earth.

The body lay there as it had fallen, with its face, colorless and still, toward the east. The horse, terrified, bucked several times, then stopped. She still trembled; her muscles quivered, her eyes dilated, and her ears lay flattened against her head. She looked like a demon. She stood awhile; then she went slowly back to the motionless form that lay in the rough wet grass. She waited. Finally she impatiently nuzzled her master's face. He didn't move. Still she stood there. Now her mane was a matted and tangled and twisted black mass. And the storm continued.

Valley of the Shadow

Gunnar Mengers

Mr. Prottle came home from the office a little after five and lay down on the sofa to await dinner. Before he could even call out, he felt a sharp, stabbing pain in his chest and died of a heart attack.

Of course, Mr. Pottle did not immediately realize he was dead. "Heart burn," he thought. "Every time I eat oysters I get heartburn. Dammit, that's the last time I eat oysters. Now if I just get a drink of water, the pain will go away."

Mr. Pottle started to get up, but nothing happened. "Well, confound it, what's the matter with me?" His arm lay sprawled on the floor where it had flopped when he lay down. He tried to move it, but it stayed right where it was and leered at him. Meanwhile the pain had suddenly stopped.

Mr. Pottle was terrified. "Ethel!" he screamed for his wife, "Come and help me!" Mrs. Pottle, who was out in the kitchen, answered, "Elmer, dinner's ready."

Mr. Pottle gasped. He had bellowed like a furnace, but she obviously hadn't heard him. I've got to get a hold of myself, he thought. Losing my head won't help one bit. I've got to analyze this thing carefully. My God, I didn't rise to the position of general manager of the company by losing my head. No sir, Elmer Pottle is a force to reckon with.

Let's go through this step by step. First I felt a pain in my chest. Sure, I've had a touch of heart trouble, but it was nothing serious. Then I found I couldn't move. And now my wife, my Ethel, can't hear me when I talk.

Mrs. Pottle came into the living room. "Didn't you hear me, Elmer? Dinner's ready." Through the half light she saw the form of her husband. His mouth was open and his eyes were expressionless, like two marbles. She sank to her knees and sobbed. "Oh Elmer, Elmer."

Mr. Pottle was overwhelmed with pity. He knew now that he was dead, but he was not thinking of himself. His only thought was to put his arm around his wife, to tell her that he still loved her, even in death. Oh God, he thought, please help me. Don't let her suffer so. At least, God, you don't

have to make me look so horrible. Can't you hear me, God, or don't you even care? For Christ's sake, do something.

Mrs. Pottle stroked the forehead of the corpse and ran her fingers through its hair. "Don't carry on so, Ethel. Call the undertaker and get me out of here. You're all alone, you know. Oh please, Ethel, call the undertaker."

Mrs. Pottle stood up and slowly left the room. Some of her tears were still warm on Mr. Pottle's face and neck. He heard her dial the phone, but her voice was unintelligible.

He lapsed into thought. Odd, this business of dying. I never thought it would be like this. I wonder if it happens this way with everybody, or if I'm a special case. What the heck, I must be. What about people who are blown all apart in explosions? They certainly can't—well, perhaps they can. I wouldn't know.

A Bible story that he had heard once came into his mind. Something about a rich man and a poor man who died and one of them went to hell. It was the poor man, no, it was the rich man who went to hell. Yes, that was it. And the poor man's name was Lazarus. There was a big gulf between them, and the rich man saw Lazarus on Abraham's bosom. Mr. Pottle tried to peer through the darkness. He couldn't see as much as a trace of Abraham or even a gulf between them.

Then it occurred to him that perhaps he was in heaven. He began looking in the other direction but was interrupted by the arrival of the undertakers. He was suddenly intrigued by the thought of being embalmed. Never have been in the business end of a mortuary. It faintly frightened him, like the time he had given a speech at a Lions club meeting.

Mrs. Pottle returned to the kitchen after showing the two men into the living room. They spoke in low voices. "Fat old slob. Take a gallon of fluid to fill him."

"Now wait one minute." Mr. Pottle was angry. "You're not such a healthy-looking specimen yourself." He stopped and smiled to himself. They didn't know he could hear them. What a shock they'll get when they die and hear what people say about them.

The older undertaker went into the kitchen. His assistant, the one who had insulted Mr. Pottle, absent-mindedly spoke to the corpse. "He went to find out when the doctor will be

here. We can't take you until he says you're dead. Wouldn't be legal."

"Oh, I see."

"Silly wast of time. You look deader 'n a mackerel."

The assistant sat down in an armchair and idly scanned a magazine.

That'd be old Dr. Lippincott, thought Dr. Pottle. God, how I hate the man. Wheezing, asthmatic old goat. Always leering at me with his glassy, crossed eyes and saying, "Now, Elmer, you're old heart is getting tired. You've got to take things easy." One hand on my pulse, one hand on my purse, That's old Dr. Lippincott. Speak of the devil, here he comes.

Old Dr. Lippincott tottered into the room and leered at Mr. Pottle. Mrs. Pottle accompanied him, explaining the circumstances of Elmer's death. The doctor turned to her. "It was probably coronary thrombosis. It can happen so fast sometimes that they hardly know what has happened. It's very nearly painless that way. I know it's a great shock to you, Ethel, but I was expecting it anytime. His great old heart just grew tired, that's all."

"Oh hell yes, you old hypocrite. I suppose you give every widow that line. Just wait until you die."

After examining him, Dr. Lippincott nodded to the undertakers and led Mrs. Pottle out of the room. The men worked quickly. They lifted Mr. Pottle onto the stretcher, straighteened and covered him with a blanket. It was the first time he had moved since his death and it was exhilarating. Mr. Pottle was feeling downright gay as they carried him outside and put him in the hearse. Never again will I put on a long face at funerals, he thought on the ride to the mortuary. All this weeping and mourning is absolutely senseless.

Mr. Pottle felt the hearse come to a stop and heard the men get out. A thought suddenly struck him as he was carried inside. Will I be able to talk with other dead people? He nearly trembled with excitement when he was finally carried into a room and placed on a slab. He glanced around quickly. There was a body on the next slab. Mr. Pottle cleared his throat. "Hello, there."

"Yes?"

"Are you, ah, how long have you been here?"

"I came in yesterday. Cancer. I suffered terribly."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said Mr. Pottle sympathetically. "I'm a heart case myself. Over in no time. I hardly knew what hit me." There was a pause. "Permit me to introduce myself. Name's Pottle. Elmer Pottle."

"I'm Father Charles Bennett, late rector of St. Martha's Episcopal Church. I'm very glad to meet you."

"I'm glad to meet you, Father Bennett. You say you're a minister. Can you tell me what's going on? I mean I never thought death would be like this. You being a minister I thought you'd have the inside track on this."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Pottle, but I'm as confused as anyone." He laughed, irony in his voice. "I helped the living, but I can't help the dead."

Mr. Pottle changed the subject. "Father Bennett, have you been embalmed yet?"

"Yes, I have. I was embalmed yesterday right after I came in. There's nothing to it; it's like being vaccinated. All they do is puncture the jugular vein at the base of the neck and drain out all the blood. Then they fill you with the embalming fluid. The fluid itself is just a mixture of formaldehyde and ether. There's nothing to worry about. You can't feel a thing. It's kind of funny. You're conscious of being embalmed, but you don't feel it."

The door opened and the undertakers, dressed in white, came in. "OK, Fatty," said the assistant, "here you go." The older one spoke as they wheeled Mr. Pottle out the door. "You know, Sam, when I started in the business, I acted just like you do. Sort of flippant and smart-alecky."

"Yeah?" Sam laughed nervously.

"Oh, I'm not bawling you out. I'm just telling you that you'll get over it if you stick around."

"Atta boy," said Mr. Pottle, "tell him off."

He was wheeled into a room and laid on an operating table. The older one tinkered with surgical instruments; Sam began undressing him. He was somewhat embarrassed and annoyed with the impersonal way he was being treated. "Like a horse," he mumbled. "Just like a horse. If I could only get my hands on him."

"Well, did you make it all right?" Father Bennett asked

as Mr. Pottle coasted into the room.

"Yes, I did. It wasn't bad at all, except that Sam here doesn't exactly treat you with a mother's care."

Father Bennett smiled. "Yes, it is a little disconcerting. Well, it looks like they're going to get me ready for my funeral." The two men placed the minister on the stretcher as he spoke. "Goodbye, Mr. Pottle. We've known each other for only a little while but—I'm not ashamed to say this, Mr. Pottle, I'm going to miss you."

Loneliness sudden and overwhelming filled Mr. Pottle. He wanted to reach out to the minister, to hold his hand and never let go. He wanted to cry, "Don't leave me; you're the only friend I've got." Instead he whispered, "Goodbye, Bennett. Perhaps I'll see you again. All the luck in the world to you."

Mr. Pottle watched the door swing shut. He quietly contemplated eternity that night and was buried the following day.

The Planner

Jacqueline Klopping

Adolph's house lies in a gentle hollow beside a busy country road. In summer, clouds of yellow dust stirred up by the passing cars slowly settle and coat everything, making even the trees look bleak and dry. The dust sifts insidiously through the cracks in doors and windows to cover the few articles of furniture that stand in the big echoing rooms. Adolph's wife, Hulda, would have a never-ending chore if she cared to keep the house spotless, for as soon as the cleaning is done, dust falls again.

Adolph and Hulda spend most of their time in the dark, cheerless kitchen, for it is the only room in the great eleven-room house that is completely, though poorly, furnished. When Adolph bought the house, he planned to make apartments in the upper story, but many years have passed since then, and now only spiders and mice inhabit the five upper rooms. However, according to Adolph, he is going to start on the project any day. "Pretty soon when I'm feeling better I'll get to work up there and we'll make a lot of money out of them apartments," Adolph boasts.

Adolph is happiest when he has a cup of coffee in his hand and an interested audience to listen to him. He sits at the dusty kitchen table heaped with yesterday's dirty dishes, telling of his great plans for the future, and as he talks he comes to life. His pale, red-rimmed eyes glisten, and he gestures expansively with his thin weak arms. Sometimes, deep in thought, he rubs his stubbly jaw or tugs at the few strands of sparse,dingy hair usually arranged carefully over his bare skull. He leans forward eagerly and his scrawny body is taut with excitement and joy.

Hulda sits across the table from him, her solemn eyes fastened on his face. Every night for twenty years she has plodded to the barn and milked the cows with only a smoky lantern for light; but now when Adolph outlines his plans for a complete electric lighting system for the barns, she smiles in approval. She believes him.

When he has finished the pot of coffee and his discussion of lighting plans, Adolph rises stiffly, puts on his tattered denim jacket and shuffles out to start the evening chores. He doesn't notice that the fences are sagging or that the battered barn door is hanging by only one hinge. His mind is occupied with visions of the dam that he intends to throw up across the creek come next spring.

Presently Hulda joins him with the dim lantern and they go on together silently. When the milking is done, they turn to feed the lean cows their daily ration of hay. There are only a few bales left in the rickety shed and Adolph looks toward the field where his hay stands, uncut and waving in the warm, late evening breeze. "The neighbors know that I haven't been well this summer. Times are getting pretty bad when a sick man's neighbors won't trouble themselves to help him get his field work done," he complains, and shaking his head he starts toward the dark house.

As they enter the gloomy kitchen, Hulda puts down her lantern and moves toward the rusty range while Adolph sinks into his favorite rocker. "As soon as you get that coffee made, sit down here and I'll tell you what I intend to do up at the creek next spring," he says, and Hulda nods her approval.

Dr. Hastings Meets Eternity

Gunnar Mengers

I got off the subway train on Commonwealth avenue and took out the card once more to check the address in the light of the station. James Hastings, physician and surgeon, 845 Beacon street. I hadn't been in Boston for over a year, and this city can be quite confusing.

But if I remember correctly, Beacon street should be two blocks south of Commonwealth. I looked at my watch and saw that it was ten minutes of nine. Enough time to arrive for my nine o'clock appointment with the doctor.

There was an ominous stillness in the autumn air, a sort of brooding blackness punctuated by faint little whirlwinds of leaves and old newspapers that raced around buildings and suddenly dropped their worthless loads. I pulled my hat on tight and walked faster. I had looked forward to meeting Dr. Hastings, but still I wanted to get this business completed.

I found the address, walked up to the door and rang the bell. The house was one of those imposing graystone structures built by fine old Boston families in the 1870's when the Italian immigration had displaced them from their homes around Breeds' hill and the Old North church. Dr. Hastings was a descendent of one of those families.

The doctor himself came to the door. He was a tall man, faintly stooped from years of intense, protracted work in the laboratory. But he carried himself with an aristocratic poise, and I liked him immediately.

"Do come in," he said, "and let me take your things. You're the man I'm expecting?"

"Yes," I replied, "I am. I see you got my message."

'Of course." He hung my hat and coat near the door and ushered me into the sitting room.

"Would you like a drink?" he asked. "A whiskey and soda to warm you up?"

"No thank you," I replied, "I'm a teetotaler, you know."

"Excuse me. I didn't know. I must say, I don't care for the stuff myself, I only have it to serve my guests. Sit there by the fireplace. Very comfortable. I'll sit over here on the

other side of the coffee table. Did you have a good trip?"

"Very fine, thank you. — Dr. Hastings," I felt a little uncomfortable, "could we please get down to business? This is a strain for both of us, I know, and the sooner we conclude it, the better it shall be."

"Yes, you're quite correct. Where shall I begin?" A look of hopelessness came into the doctor's eyes, and I immediately wished I had been more tactful.

"Well," I said, "I should think at the very beginning of your experiments—before you even knew that the soul has its seat in the brain."

"Very well." He cleared his throat. "In my experience as a physician, I had been intrigued by the ageless and unanswerable question, 'what exactly is death?' How can we define that exact point, the *denouement,* so to speak in which the soul unties itself from the body?

"So I tried to analyze what we already knew concerning death and found to my surprise that our knowledge was limited to the recognition of the appearance of death. And even savage medicine men know that much.

"I had to take a bold step. Somehow, I intuited that the soul or mind (call it what you will) is an entity, and if so must have a location, a point around which it revolves.

"I had to take that step, you know, for I reasoned that if I were wrong, if the soul were not an entity, then nothing would come of my experimenting. But on the other hand, if I were right, in assuming that the soul is an entity then I had a very good chance of finding it. Do you follow?"

"Yes," I replied, "I follow. Do go on."

"Good. The brain, you know, has been charted and divided with respect to the various functions it performs. The center of involuntary responses is in one area, the center of reasoning in another, and so forth.

"However, there was one area of the brain which utterly refused classification. It was an area no larger than a dime, located deep between the hemispheres of the brain. It is cartiliginous in nature, and my colleagues merely assumed that it was a left-over, as it were, from a previous evolutionary stage.

"But I have discounted the evolutionary theory, so this explanation did not satisfy me. So I called this area my

medius animi and proceeded to investigate."

I was amazed that a mere mortal could even conceive of such possibilities, much less investigate them. I begged the doctor to continue.

"To corroborate my idea, I opened the brain of a live monkey for examination. There was no *medius animi* in his brain! I was overjoyed, but still I had no conclusive proof of my theory. I had to build a graphing machine similar to the type now in existence which is used to graph the areas of the brain. I believe you are familiar with it. Electrodes placed at intervals on the brain to stimulate the various functions."

I nodded in the affirmative.

"It took me eight years to perfect that machine. And even after it was built, I still needed the circumstances by which I could use it—I had to open the brain of a dying man and place the electrodes on the *medius animi.*"

"And so you killed your wife," I said.

"Yes," the doctor spoke softly, "I killed my wife. But I proved what I was seeking. I actually graphed the flight of a soul from the body. I saw on that machine the soul of my wife descend into the bottomless pits of hell where she is suffering even now. I can show it to you on the machine."

"That's not necessary," I replied, "I already know." I paused, cleared my throat and continued, "I believe you can see, Dr. Hastings, the position in which you have placed me. We can't have mortal men upsetting the delicate movement of the universe. It is like a child who has discovered how to drive a car, but lacks the judgment and maturity to handle his new found skill. We must either take the car or the child away. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Yes, I understand," said the doctor. He arose. "It's getting late. Don't you think we should be leaving?"

The Shepherd

Marilyn Ward

David's thoughts wander lazily through his mind as he relaxes upon the hill. The sky above, interspersed here and there with scudding clouds, awakens peaceful memories and dreams. Each twinkling star, the full moon, shine brighter than they have shone before.

Seemingly in the far distance, David can hear the bleating of the sheep and the murmur of the other shepherds' conversation. Yet, David knows that the only distance between them is the gap created by his own thoughts.

Leaning back, he gazes up at the heavens. As he admires the stars and dwells on the wonder of each one, David notices a strange occurrence—one star appears far bigger and more brilliant than any of its neighbors. He watches as it increases in size and splendor.

Then, roused out of his lethargy, he calls to the others. They, in turn, look heavenward and are filled with awe and delight.

Suddenly, one voices his thoughts; at first softly, then more loudly—"Can it be that the star will fall to earth? What if it bursts into flames?"

The silence broken, the others speak simultaneously, creating a jumble of words—"How..." "...fall here..." "Where?" " . . . go . . ."

David remains silent and motionless, deceivingly calm. His thoughts swirl together; yet the fearful doubts shared by the others do not mingle in David's mind. "What can this mean?" rises again and again and again.

Then, a glowing light illuminates the hill. An angel suddenly appears. The shepherds, cringing from fear, draw closer together; excluding David. The angel speaks:

"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord, and this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

Then suddenly, a multitude of heavenly host joins the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will toward men."

As suddenly as they came the angels disappear into heaven—their message delivered.

On the hill, David looks about him, expecting some miraculous change to have taken place. He finds none. Instead, his comrades are still uncertainly trying to decide what to do, the sheep are still grazing peacefully, and the star is yet bathing all with its glorious light.

At last some of the shepherds decide that they will seek this holy child of whom the angels spoke. So David joins them, and the little group begins its journey. The glowing star seems to guide their way.

After a hurried journey, David finds himself in the town of Bethlehem, standing before a stable. He notices that the star shines even brighter now, and a strange calm engulfs the scene and him.

David draws apart from the others as though seeking relief from this unprecedented and unexplainable situation in which he finds himself.

At last, he wanders into the stable, the scene before him awakening a strange feeling and a new peace—

A lowly manger embracing a lovely child; sweet scented hay perfuming a musky stable; a gentle mother bending over her new-born babe, humming a soft lullaby; animals silent, curiously watching; an attitude of serenity pervading each crack and corner;—David feels and notices each detail while standing aside as the others group around the manger in adoration.

When the little party of shepherds leaves, glorifying and praising God, telling of what they had seen and heard, David accompanies them in body only, his mind and heart remaining near the little manger and the Child of God...

By Any Name

Gunnar Mengers

The hamburger was as greasy as the lunch wagon, but Paul didn't care. He was too hungry to care. He finished the hamburger and looked impatiently at the waitress. She was leaning across the far end of the counter, laughing and talking with a male customer. He beckoned to her and she looked up annoyed. "Whatsa matter? Want another hamburger?"

"No, I want to know where the bus depot is." He had hitchhiked all day and was damned if he'd do it all night.

"Greyhound or American?"

"I don't care. Which one has the first bus to Denver?"

The waitress turned to her companion. "Hey Hap, can you help the young man?" She giggled an explanation to Paul. "He works there—at the Greyhound, I mean. Takes baggage and stuff off."

Hap obliged. "There ain't one 'til 12:03 and it's always later 'n hell."

Paul looked up at the clock. 9:30.

"What about the American?"

The waitress broke in. "Now, Hap, don't be sayin' nothin' that'll help yer competitor."

"Jeez Crise, Luella, do you always run at the mouth?"

Hap spoke to Paul again. "I don't rightly know about the American. All I know is it's sometime in the morning, about 8:00."

"Well, I guess I'll take the Greyhound then," said Paul. "Where's the depot?"

"It's four blocks down the highway here." Hap indicated the direction with his hand. "It's in with a place called Shep's Steak House. You can't miss it."

"Thanks a lot. I think I'll do that." Paul paid his check, picked up his suitcase and left the lunch wagon. The heavy odor from lilac bushes at either end of the building nauseated him and he hurried down the sidewalk. He thought of home and the lilacs in his backyard. Janet had always liked them. Janet had been his girl and they had even talked of marriage

when both of them would finish college. But that was before she became pregnant. It wasn't entirely his fault. And to think of it, he, Paul Bauer, had to quit school and run away from home all on account of a girl.

God, what a joke. Janet's father and his father teaching history at the same college. They even shared the same office. He wondered if everyone knew by now. Hell, they must. Paul and Janet had kept it a secret from their parents for four months, not knowing what to do. Paul had no money; they couldn't get married right away. Besides, even if they had gotten married everyone would know it was a shotgun wedding, and Paul couldn't face his friends with that knowledge.

An insect-covered neon sign announced Shep's Steak House and interrupted Paul's reverie. The suitcase had become heavy and he was glad to enter the cafe and set it down. There were no other customers.

"I'd like a ticket to Denver, please." The man stamped the ticket and figured with a pencil. "That'll be fifteen dollars and, lemme see, ninety-two cents." Paul took out his billfold and paid the man. He bought a cup of coffee and a paper cover book, then sat down in a booth.

He had nearly finished the book when the bus arrived. It wasn't later than hell, only five minutes. He left the book on the table, picked up his suitcase and stepped outside. The night had grown cool and Paul shivered as the driver punched his ticket. There were only ten or fifteen passengers on the bus and Paul was the only new one. He sank into the seat behind the driver and fell asleep. Janet and the scent of lilacs invaded his dreams.

Paul didn't wake up until the bus stopped at the depot in Denver. He rubbed his eyes and glanced at his watch. Ten o'clock. He got out of the bus and waited for his suitcase. The happy reunions around him left him lonely and afraid. He wanted someone's arms around him, someone to hold him and tell him that he has been missed. Immediately he thought of Janet, then tried to forget.

Picking up his suitcase, he walked into the waiting room and found a telephone book. He looked up the address of the YMCA. It was only seven blocks from the depot and he de-

cided to walk. He felt better now and the thought of settling down gave him confidence. He looked around at the city as he walked. It was clean, new and he could make a fresh start here.

He got a room at the YMCA. Cheap too. Only ten dollars a week. It was a corner room on the seventh floor and Paul could see the mountains to the west and south of the city. He unpacked his clothes and took out two pictures, one of himself, the other of his parents. He placed them on the dresser and studied them. Then he put the one in the bottom drawer.

It was nearly noon. Paul showered, dressed and went downstairs to the cafeteria. He bought a paper with his lunch and looked at the classified ads. Fry cook, salesman, service station attendant. To hell with those jobs. Paul was artistic. Seeing nothing he really liked, he settled for a factory job. The Denver Steel and Engineering Company. "I'll work there until I can find something good," he thought to himself. "Maybe I can eventually get a job on this newspaper if I'm lucky." He noted the address of the factory and finished his lunch.

The factory wasn't a bad looking place. About six hundred worked there, the employment manager told him. "You'll work in the receiving and shipping department," he said. "Report to this office at seven o'clock tomorrow morning. We'll have a man to show you what to do." Paul thanked him and went back to the Y. It was a thirty-minute streetcar ride, he noticed and the cafeteria opens at six. It'll work out nice, real nice.

Paul went upstairs to his room and lay down on the bed. He thought about his job and how lucky he was. He'll work at the factory for about a year and then go to Denver University to finish his major in journalism. Paul wondered if his parents would trace him when he transferred his credits. Oh well, he'll worry about that when the time comes.

Paul woke up with a start and looked at his watch. It was after seven; he had slept for almost two hours. The cafeteria was closed when he went downstairs so he ate in a restaurant and went to a movie. He thought little of the performance and left early.

Paul was at the office next morning and the shipping supervisor took him to his job. Workers on the assembly lines looked up from their work and stared at him curiously when

they saw where he was going. "What are they making here?" asked Paul indicating men who were cutting long I beams with acetylene torches.

"Indoor cranes. You know, the kind on rails near the ceiling that they use in some warehouses. They got a cab up there with 'em that the operators work in. You can lift damn near twenty ton with them bastards. We got one out where you're gonna work."

Paul and the supervisor stepped through a door into the warehouse. It was quiet and cool, but there was still the smell of oil. The far end of the warehouse was open and bushes grew at the end of the cement floor. Crated bundles of steel were stacked to the ceiling at the near end and steel beams at the other.

"Hey, Joe," the supervisor spoke to a small wiry man. "Here's your new helper. His name's Paul Bauer." The supervisor turned to Paul. "This is Joe Remlein. He's the crane operator. He'll show you what to do."

The supervisor left and Joe began. "See this here chain with the pinchers?" Paul nodded. "You hook the pinchers on the flanges of the beams, right in the goddam middle of an I beam and I lift them with the crane and then we put them on a truck when they need them inside. We use that other carrier for the sheet steel. You got it?" Paul nodded again. "One thing you gotta remember. When we get those bastards hooked, you get 'way the hell outa there 'cause they'll go damn near through you if they hit you. You got it? OK, they're backin' the truck in now, let's go to work."

Joe climbed the ladder into the cab. Paul hung the chain on the hook of the crane and walked to the pile of beams. The huge crane rumbled on its rails after him. He climbed the pile and hooked the pinchers in the middle of an I beam. Joe yelled instructions from the cab and Paul climbed down again. The pile groaned as the beam rose. Paul guided the beam into the truck and they went back for two more.

"See, it's easy as taking candy away from a baby," said Joe as the rest period bell rang. "As soon as we're done restin' we gotta restack that pile. It was wobblin' too much and besides, some of them fifty footers stick out in them bushes and are harder 'n hell to move." Paul agreed and

went outside for a cigarette. He had never done work like this before and was very proud of himself.

The bell rang and he took a last drag on the cigarette. He walked back inside and Joe was already in the cab. Paul glanced at the doorway and saw the foreman and the supervisor. Now was his chance to demonstrate his ability.

He climbed the pile and lazily hooked the pinchers on a fifty footer. "Like a pro," he thought to himself. He walked to the end out in the sun and jumped down to the ground. He scratched his arms on the bushes and cursed. "OK Joe, take it away." The crane rumbled and the beam began to rise.

"Look out, Paul!" Paul looked up and saw the beam cascading toward him. He screamed and turned to run.

The foreman and the supervisor refastened the pinchers and lifted the fifty footer off Paul's body. A portion of his face came away with the beam.

"Goddam it, Joe." The supervisor was breathing hard. "I told you this would happen. Why in hell didn't you get rid of them lilac bushes?"

The Team

Barbara Peterson

"Mom, you sure know how to feed an athlete," said Billy Mattson, his plate heaped with hot waffles, butter and syrup. Mrs. Mattson smiled at her son, who sat perched on the edge of a chair eating his breakfast. His auburn hair was combed neatly and his grey eyes were clear and bright. He was a tall boy, and his legs were always in his way in a sort of teen age coltishness.

"Will you be coming home after school, Billy?"

"Nope. We've got basketball practice again. I'm really a stranger during the basketball season, huh, Mom? You know what? We've got a good chance to beat Lincoln this year. Maybe if we beat them we'll get to go to the Interstate Invitational Tournament. They went last year, you know."

"Don't count on it too much, Billy. Then you won't be hurt if your hopes don't come true."

"Yes, Mom. Well, I gotta be going. Bye."

Billy gave his studies as little attention as necessary. A 'C' disturbed him, a 'B' satisfied him, and an 'A' made him ecstatic. He was ecstatic only on rare occasions. He somehow knew that if he would study as much as the most likely candidate for valedictorian, he would be seriously challenging him. But that would be too much work.

The last ten minutes of every day dragged by. "Why does English have to be the last class of the day?" thought Billy. He yawned. Soon the bell ended the monotony.

Billy noticed that Steve Spengler wasn't at practice. "That's funny," thought Billy. "He's always here." Coach Parker frowned and growled, "Where's Spengler?'

The moment passed. Billy was glad to get out onto the court. He loved the tattoo of bouncing basketballs. A team mate passed a ball to him and he arched it up toward the basket. Swish! It fell through without hitting rim or backboard.

After practice he went to the showers tired, but not exhausted. He was in good condition and he knew it. The

water sluiced around his ears and face and neck. "This is the year," he thought. "I'm glad I'm a senior this year instead of last year. The team probably won't be this good again for a long time. If we get to go to Interstate . . . there'll be college scouts there . . . plenty of them. Maybe . . . just maybe . . . we're in pretty good shape for the Lincoln game tomorrow night."

The following evening Coach Parker's Tigers surprised the city basketball circles by trouncing Lincoln for the first time in years; the previous year they had dropped the contest to the Lions by one point. Spengler was the high point man, hitting for twenty-eight points. Steve, the tall blonde giant with the crew cut; Steve, the darling of the fans, was the hero. But Billy noticed that on several occasions he hogged the ball—kept it when he'd had a perfect chance to pass off to a team mate in a better position. "Am I jealous or dreaming?" thought Billy.

The season progressed and proved to be the most phenomenal as well as the most successful the Hamilton Tigers had ever enjoyed. Parker told the team more than once "There's no rule that says they must invite us. They'll pick the team they think is the best in the city." The team members would always nod in silent agreement, but each felt in his heart, "We are the best team in the city."

Steve Spengler missed another practice session. When Billy met him in the halls the next day he asked, "Coming to practice tonight?" Steve seemed annoyed. "I suppose. I really don't need it, but I suppose the rest of you guys do." "There's no conceit in your family," thought Billy! "You've got it all."

Billy noticed that it was usually when he came close to a team scoring record that Steve would become more possessive and grandstand. Coach Parker seldom reprimanded him; the crowd considered Steve a regular ball hawk. Several of the players clustered around Spengler like imitative, admiring satellites, but the rest shared the opinion that Steve was a conceited, though excellent, ball player.

Coach Parker came to confide more and more in Billy. "You know, Billy, even if we are invited to the tournament, the administration has to decide to send us. But that will be a mere formality, I think."

"I have something to say to you that is of extreme importance and, I imagine, of utmost interest to you," began the superintendent. "Some members of the team have not been as diligent about their studies as they have been about basketball. As you know, our athletes must meet certain scholastic standards to participate in athletics. Certain members of the team have fallen below these standards and have been suspended from all athletic activities. Unfortunately, this includes the tournament."

"Oh, no!" thought Billy. "Not now! Not when we've got it made!"

"Ordinarily, the administration would be eager to send you. But there has been considerable discussion and debate over this. We must adhere to the rules of the school. That means the team will lose several players and one is quite a valuable player."

"Spengler!" thought Billy. "That's why he's not here anymore . . . and those other guys!"

"We realize, of course, how much this means to you. It's a great honor and privilege. Mr. Parker has done an excel-

"I didn't know that. Why?"

"Because that sort of thing isn't provided for in either the athletic set-up or the funds supplied us. But the trip would be terrific publicity for us, especially for our athletic department. We'd probably get better facilities and equipment. What we have now can't quite be called medieval."

"It won't hurt your coaching reputation, either, will it, Mr. Parker? Especially if we could finish on top in the tournament," said Billy. "I mean, we think you're a swell coach."

"Well, that's true," smiled Parker. "Maybe I'll be at a college in a few years."

"You and me both!" exclaimed Billy.

The Hamilton Tigers did receive the bid to the Interstate Invitational Tournament; all that was needed was the approval of the administration. Basketball practice was marked by increased enthusiasm and spirit. But one day Billy noticed that Spengler and several others were missing. "Hey, Billy, where's Coach Parker?" Billy replied, "I don't know."

Presently Mr. Parker came in, accompanied by the superintendent. Parker's face was inscrutable.

lent job in the three years he has been here. The team has accomplished great things this year and we can take pride in that. If we do not accept the invitation they will offer it to another school. This is what we've decided; because our team is under-manned, and especially because we've lost one of our key players, we feel that we cannot creditably represent our city. Many of you have worked diligently and faithfully both in your studies and in basketball. To you this must come as a great disappointment, especially for you who are seniors this year . . ."

Billy stared at the speaker without actually seeing him. His form was blurred and so was his voice. "No more games for the Tigers," thought Billy, dazedly. "Not any more."

"Do any of you have any questions?" asked the superintendent. The blank faces before him were silent, their voices mute. He turned and left the room.

"Practice dismissed," said Coach Parker. "That's all . . . for this year."

The team filed out, not looking at one another. Billy stumbled over a basketball on the floor. It rolled away with an empty, hollow sound.

The Way

Marilyn Ward

Days. Nights. Seasons. Centuries. Darkness. Hope. Trembling. Fear. People searching; people seeking, slipping, falling. Deep despair. . .Shepherds watching; flocks are feeding. Suddenly an angel. Light. Songs of praises, words of comfort. Bethlehem, a child there.

Battered stable, manger lowly. Certain calm and peace within. Wisemen. Shepherds. Joseph. Mary. Gfits and honor; praises. Him.

Baby cooing. Childish laughter. Youthful seriousness and might. Ever older. Ever wiser. Glowing with an inner light. Growing outside. Growing inside. Babe. Child. Youth. A man. Preaching. Teaching. Helping others. "Come." "Believe." A life. A plan.

Healing lepers. Saving sinners. Leading all to grace and peace. Suffering hardship. Loving others. Not content with simply ease. Miracles and mission work. Mending minds and molding men. Ever onward. Fighting harder. Facing, fearless, grief and sin.

On the water walking surely. Feeding thousands. Curing ill. Always working, weaving wonders. Doing God, the Father's, will. Love and worship; praise and honor; given to Him, Christ the Lord. Those about Him, following, doing, always listening to His word.

Judas. Peter. Curse, deny Him. Swear against Him. Foolish men. Doubt and darkness, swirling nearer. Man still falling into sin.

Man is evil. God is goodness, grace, and never changing love. Man denies Him. Christ continues, guided by His Hand above.

Eat and drink and blood and body. Life and death and life again. Bravely going. Firmly trusting. Giving all for human sin.

Pontius Pilate. Trial. Judgment. Cross on Calvary's sloping side. "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" throngs and multitudes decried.

Darkened heavens. Crashing thunder. Lightning and a quaking earth. Jesus suffering, agonizing, crying out "I thirst. I thirst." Vinegar, not cooling water. Jeers instead of soothing sighs. Crowds of people. Slaves and soldiers. Mocking, chiding, as He dies.

"It is finished." "Father into..." Jesus dying. Darkest day. Stunned and staring, guilty people, slipping silently away.

All hopes vanish. Weeping, wailing, doubts and fears are victors now. Day and night and night and day. Gloom and darkness cruelly reign. Then a morning bright and shining. Sun and Son have risen again.

Faith in Jesus. Trust and comfort. Saved, redeemed. Man's eyes look up. Higher, higher, even higher—Heaven's portals opened up.

Days. Nights. Seasons. Centuries. Darkness lifted, light within. Man's forgiven. God has blessed him. Through His Son man conquers sin.

Leaves That Never Wither

Phillip Pagel

When the tulips blossomed by hedges
in spring we'd walk to the garden and
you'd say, "I wish I could see them just
once more." But even though your eyes were
darkened, you knew they were there.
Your hands were worn from years
of work, but to me they were tender
and reassuring.

Just next door wasn't far for me to go.

The woodbox by the cookstove was always
filled with hickory and maple.
And, on winter nights we'd pop corn
over the crackling fire with the old wire popper.
On Saturdays, the kitchen would be filled with many
different smells, and always
a plate of molasses cookies would be waiting.
The stories told and retold were a
part of every visit. Even now I can feel the
dust from the Indians riding over the
plains and the smoke of prairie fires
burning in my nostrils.
The attic was our hideaway on
stormy days. We'd climb the narrow winding
stairs to the third floor—I knew it was
hard for you to make your tired legs move.
But you'd never say a word, and there
we'd find new and exciting treasures of the past.

And then, our treasure days were over.

I watched the tulips blossom many times after,—
and you'd help me gather different

shapes and colors for Botany study.
Our visits became less frequent,
but always during vacations I'd find you waiting.
Grey and tired you'd say, "Be careful,
and I'll see you next time."

I read the cards your friends and
neighbors send; I see the empty vases
and feel the carving on the stone.
I wasn't there that autumn day;
A letter brought the news,
"Grandma Blaisdelle died today."

Washington County Has Its First Traffic Fatality

Darol Valder

A man came to our town last night.
At the corner of Third and Washington he stopped.
It was cold last night;
the stranger had a long wait.
I think he dozed as he stood there by the corner
and that shattering impact,
    the sudden light
        and the screaming
startled him, too.
With quiet swiftness he crossed the street,
paused a tender moment
and was gone.

The Awakening

Jon Nuland

Why was I taken from the void nil,
give reasoning and put on earth to wonder of my worth?
The world rumbles on.
How can I improve it during my short span?
Man is evil, is born that way,
lives and then decays.
I am an evil and lonely man without much time.
Was I sent to heal man's plight?
I would have to change every soul, an endless goal.
I am a lonely man, chained to earth by greed and lust;
nothing satisfies.
And then my reason, guided by some mysterious hand,
explores the promises of God.

The Deferring

Darol Valder

Have you hungrily approached a table only
to find the bowls before you empty?
Or left the theatre without seeing the
third act of the play?
Or seen a movie twice?
Or watched the mailman pass by you?

Then you have put to sea with no one to await your returning.

Song of a Sailor

Darol Valder

Hey! Come with me to a tropic isle
Where at night the moaning bird wails,
    Where the man-o'-war flies
    And the bo'sun bird cries,
And the long-wing'd albatross sails.

Now the isle ain't long and it ain't very wide,
In a gale you could spit across it
    And there ain't any dates
    For my sailor mates
'Cept the daughter of Pappy Gossett.

Now Liffby is cute as a baby tern
All wrapped in its snowy down.
    But her Ma is—well . . .
    So wot the 'ell,
This ain't no marryin' town.

At evening you sit on the cement roof,
And gaze to the east out to sea,
    Where the moon'll come up
    Like a big yellow cup—
It's worth waitin' a lifetime to see.

But when it gets dark and all should be still,
The moaners come out of their holes,
    Then they shriek and they wail
    Like some cats in travail,
An' my mates get no rest for their souls.

But the airlines don't pause at the island no more,
And the cable station has fallen.
    The runways stare
    Unused and bare—
For the past they seem to be callin'.

So don't try to find my tropical isle
Where at night the moanin' bird wails,
    Where the man-o'-war flies
    As the white bo'sun cries,
And the long-wing'd albatross sails.

Transition

Phillip Pagel

Even now a blanket of red and orange
covers the dry and naked earth,
and the grapes behind the summer-house
glisten with silver frost.
While in the garden, gilded pumpkins
wait for the harvest,
wolf-rivers coated with fire
hang casually from the branch.

Scarlet plumes of sumac
give regal glory to the somber hills,
and fringed gentians toss
purple petals to the cold, unyielding earth.
The flaming berries of bittersweet
bring beauty to the fences,
changing scars to crowns.

Shocks of corn holding securely
the gold of the fields
cast shadows along the winding road.
While high above, flocks of geese
harnessed to the moon wing their way southward.

Whidbey Island

Gunnar Mengers

I went hiking on a summer day on Whidbey Island,
Dark grey and green in Puget Sound.
Adopted mother by the spruce and pine,
She keeps her children from the waters.

At last towards evening, coming to the western shore,
I saw the sun a scabbard on the Sound.
The blue that lay around that golden shaft
Stretched out to mingle with the sea.

And far across the Sound I saw Olympic Mountains,
Sharp, jagged peaks the distance smoothed.
They lay unmoved upon the waters
And ruled the scene with granite might.

The Veil

Jon Nuland

Music expresses many feelings.
Its vibrations, delicate and thin
move through the air
to infold you and hold you in a spell,
a purple veil playing magic with the mind.
The same air that's always there
when stirred by strings,
becomes a sea of emotion.
Drink deep its potion,
but remember when the music's gone
the purple veil lingers.
Does it help mankind, or blur the mind?
Be wise when you choose a song.

The Wanderer

Darol Valder

I am home from the mountains—
the lonely echoing mountains
with their unlighted depths and their dark pathways.
Let me view them here from the plans,
where thoughts may sweep across them from great distances.
Now they loom like the softened contours
of last year's voluptuous love.

Beckon sea!
Shout from your rocky caverns!
Pant on your sandy threshold! I shall not hear you.
Far from you and safe from your sensuous convolutions—
deaf to your whispers.

In the ageless valley of the beaver,
the muskrat, the prairie dog, let me live.
Let me hear recounted my father's schooner journey,
while I etch in mind the path of that trek
following the trails made by buffalo
filing to water holes. Let me feel the poignancy
of hearing of the passing of the wild pigeon
whose flight once darkened the sky,
a poignancy deepened by the tear-darkened eye
of the teller; tell me again of the graceful dance
of the whooping crane.

Then let me ponder
and rejoice in my heritage.

Scars

Phillip Pagel

Gloom.
A December of a hundred thousand years
dragging cloudy days.

Why do they do it?
They could easily sit and watch
my legions marching through cities and towns,
ever finding more southerly regions.

But no, they guard their acres well,
and fight and scream when they catch sight
of those who fly instead of walk.

Can any man so love his own
that life becomes to him a shell,
empty of all feeling for others?

Give them a thousand pities,
and rivers of tears to wash their bloody wounds.
But wait, they are not dying; the blood is dry,
They are already dead.

Leading a Dog's Life

Doris Jacob

Susie and Chi were two of the prettiest dogs you could hope to find. Susie was a full-blooded Pekinese covered with shining brown fur that had little streaks of black in it. She had black eyes that sparkled above her little pushed-in nose. She was a lady through and through. When she walked she held her head high, never watching her feet, though she had a cute little pigeon-toed walk. She minded her manners when in public and never spoke to strangers unless properly introduced. When she was at home among her family she let down her restraint and enjoyed her life with them.

Chi, Susie's daughter, inherited much from her mother. She also inherited some of the characteristics of her father, a happy-go-lucky Spitz. Chi was just a little taller than her mother but she had the same beautiful brown coat with an additional touch of white on her chest and on the tip of each foot. She had the same dislike for strangers that her mother had. Here the likeness ended, for while Chi was more playful than her mother she was also more jealous of any attention Susie received.

Life with two dogs was certainly interesting. They were as temperamental or loving as any human being. They always knew when they had done something wrong and should avoid us or be especially nice. Chi's big pleading brown eyes gave her an advantage over Susie.

Sunday was a big day for then they went riding in the family car. Just mention a ride in a car and they got so excited they started racing from the front room to the back door over and over again. This continued until they were either taken with or greatly disappointed at being left behind. Once in the car they sat in their favorite seats. Susie perched on the ledge of the front seat just behind the driver's head while Chi would sit on the lap of whoever sat by the front window. They must have thoroughly enjoyed the view from their seats.

Also on Sundays after the family was through reading the Sunday papers they had a habit of leaving them lying a-

round all over the floor. What could be more fun than to get one dog on each end of a piece of the paper and then pull. It wouldn't take long before the two of them had the paper torn to shreds. If only they would also clean up after themselves.

They could be two of the most affectionate dogs, but they always wanted attention at the same time. If anyone sat down he could expect one dog to bounce up on his lap while the other would snuggle just as close as she could get. They were worse than a couple of little children when it came to wanting and getting attention.

Winter seems to be enjoyed as much by the young as it is by the old, be they people or dogs. Chi enjoyed nothing better than if someone would go outside with her and throw snowballs so she could chase them. Susie, being three years the elder, soon came to the stage where she didn't care to get any further from the sidewalk than necessary. She preferred to get her exercise running through the house with no concern at all for the furniture.

We all have certain foods that we like and others that we don't even care to see. Well, dogs are that way too. Susie and Chi were cultured dogs. They sat up for their food. Susie, being a lady, preferred to sniff at her food awhile before eating it. Her daughter was just the opposite and would dig right in. Susie preferred oatmeal for breakfast and meat for dinner. She wasn't fussy but she didn't care for any of those vitamized substitutes that we tried to pass off on her. Chi found out through experience that the one thing she really disliked was pickles. She would sometimes sit up and beg for food. It was hard to resist throwing her a pickle for she would swallow her food so fast that I'm sure she could hardly taste it. With a bite of pickle she could make the funniest faces. She couldn't seem to learn to take her time in getting to her dinner. She would rush in and be done eating before Susie had even started to eat. Then Susie would have to protect her dinner by eating it or growling so that Chi wouldn't try to get it.

Susie and Chi did enjoy life. They were happy scampering about. They couldn't help but entertain those around them with their tricks and foolish little ways.

On Writing a Poem

Helen Videbeck

Writing poetry isn't the easiest thing in the world to accomplish, but I imagine it affords the poet many hours of personal satisfaction. For the beginner it can be heart-breakwas troubling me. I wanted to find out if I could write poetry, really set me back on my heels.

When my English teacher announced in class that we might use any medium of creative writing for our next theme, which was to be a long one, I thought of poetry. Whatever made me think of poetry, I'll never know. I had read very little poetry, and the poetry I had to read in high school did nothing to encourage my interest. But, there I sat entertaining the idea of trying to write poetry. I knew I could write an essay or short story and enjoy writing it, but now some strange compulsion from within me kept insisting that I try poetry.

In answer to my query, the teacher announced that if anyone wrote a poem it must have at least thirty average-length lines. My heart sank! What did I know about writing poetry? I had never written a poem! I knew poetry must have rhythm, that some poetry rhymed and some didn't, but the actual mechanics of poetry were foreign to me. Perhaps I should just forget about poetry and write my theme! But I couldn't give up that easily! Whenever I get an idea it keeps coming to the top like the cream in milk. I knew what was troubling me. I wanted to find out ifI could write poetry, and the only way to find out was to try. Did I dare? Yes! No! Maybe? Why couldn't I write poetry? On the other hand, what made me think I could? Well, nothing ventured-- nothing gained!

I went to the library and read several books on the rhythm and rhyme of poetry. So far, so good! But I must hurry! The deadline was getting too close for comfort. The nucleus of an idea was flitting about in my mind. I reviewed the material I had gleaned on my subject, but try as I might I couldn't get my "lines" to come forth. I was becoming frantic! Here it was Monday night, and my poem must be turned

in Wednesday morning, first period. What was I to do? I returned to my notes and studied until I could no longer hold my eyes open. With a feeling of desperation I finally gave up and went to bed.

On Tuesday morning I hopped out of bed before dawn—and dizzily crawled right back in. An hour later I tried again —with the same results. I was sick! Now what? There was nothing I could do but stay in bed. A sedative put me back to sleep. By early evening I was able to sit up in bed, so I gathered my notes about me and went to work. I thought about my heroine and her past. As each new thought came to me I wrote it down. New thoughts were slow in coming at first, and then the pace of thought began to increase gradually. Several hours later (in what seemed to me no time at all) I had written eight four-line stanzas. I re-read and revised my poem once, then again and again. I wasn't absolutely sure of the rhythm, but I felt it was there. I had written in free verse rather than rhyme. And I almost had it memorized by the time I had finished writing it. My! how happy and proud I was! I had succeeded in writing a poem! I had created something!

The days following seemed an eternity to me. How would the teacher like my poem? How would he grade it? What comments would he make? I could hardly wait. And then—I had the paper in my hand! I quickly unfolded it, took one look at the grade—and folded it again! Surely my eyes had deceived me. I looked again. My eyes had seen correctly. There were comments written all over the margins. I tilted the page and read, "I'm sorry that I find it necessary to be brutally frank—but this isn't poetry!"

This—isn't—poetry? This—isn't—poetry? I was stunned! Such an idea had never occurred to me! At the bottom of the page I read, "Don't give up!" Who? Me? Ha, ha! Don't you worry about me, Mr. Teacher! *I* won't give up. *I'll write that poem yet!*

About the Langland Award

The Langland Awards for outstanding selections in prose and poetry have been a feature of the *Sower* since 1948. The awards are given by Joseph Langland, associate professor of English at the University of Wyoming and former professor at Dana.

Poetry by Langlad has appeared in *New Yorker, The Paris Review, London Argosy* and *Poetry* magazines. He collaborated with James B. Hall of Oregon University to prepare a college anthology-textbook to be published in the fall.

Prof. Langland studied at Harvard and Columbia in 1953-54 as a Ford Fellow and was recently awarded the Amy Lowell travelling poetry scholarship, one of the nation's highest poetry awards. He will study and write in Italy under the provisions of the grant.

About the Authors

Junior Barbara Peterson is from Farmington, Minnesota. An English major, she was a member of the creative writing class. Active in WAA, a capella choir for two years and *Hermes* reporter, she plans to take graduate work in library science at the University of Minnesota.

Also a junior, Phillip Pagel's poem, "Leaves That Never Wither," also appears in the *Connecticut Literary Review* and the companion *Poetry Digest.* Phil sings tenor in the a capella choir and the male glee club. He edited the *Danian* this year and was president of his class.

A veteran of two years of Navy service, Jon Nuland from Bellevue, Nebraska, returned to Dana to continue his major in business administration. He is a member of Alpha Zeta. His poetry was written for the creative writing class.

Darol Valder, a six-year Navy veteran and transfer student from Bucknell College and Stanford University, is an associate editor of the *Sower.* He is a history major. The Andersen Festival featured him in the ballet, "The Rose and the Nightingale."

The only freshman contributor this year is Jacqueline Klopping from Underwood, Iowa. Her fascinating character study was a composition class assignment. Jackie will take nurses' training at Immanuel Hospital in Omaha after finishing a two-year preparatory course.

Racine-ite Marilyn Ward has contributed to the *Sower* for two years. A junior, she is an associate editor of the *Hermes* and has assisted in preparing the *Viking Log*. She is an English major and plans to teach in high school following graduation.

The fourth member of the creative writing class is senior Doris Jacob also from Racine, Wisconsin. She is a member of the History Club and the Home Economics Club. A history and English major, she plans to teach in the fall.

Essayist Helen Videbeck regaled audiences with her interpretation of Penny in Hart and Kaufmann's *You Can't Take It With You*. She is an English major. Her activities include the a capella choir, Fine Arts Club, Alpha Zeta and the American-Scandinavian Foundation. She plans to be a parish worker.

Sower editor Gunnar Mengers hasn't done anything worthwhile since he translated *Paradise Lost* into Japanese at the age of six months.