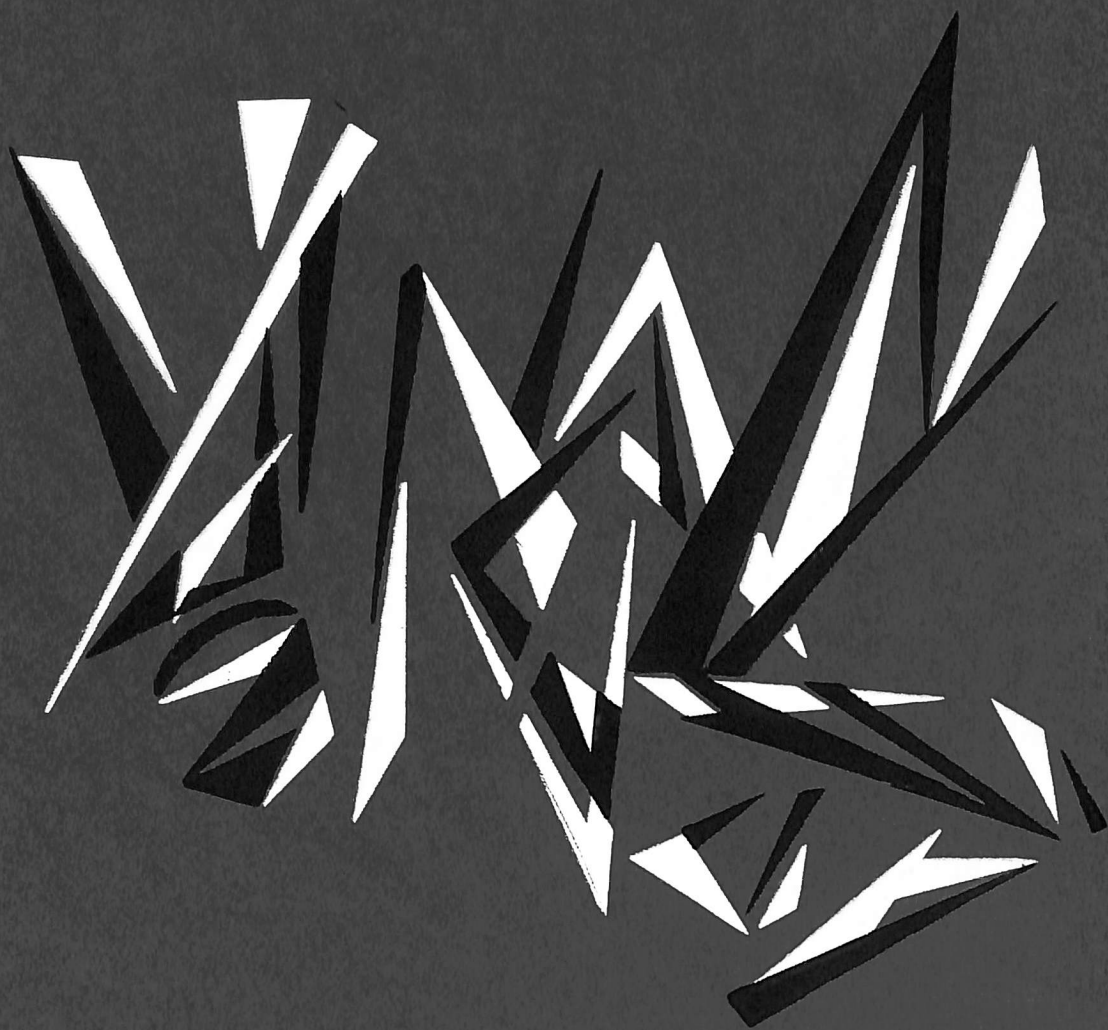


SOWER 1957



# THE SOWER 1957



Dana College  
Blair, Nebraska

Committee on Publications  
and Department of English

Spring, 1957  
Vol. XII

## A Sower Went Forth

It was in the spring of 1942 that the first printed anthology of student creative writing appeared at Dana College. Joseph Langland, instructor in English at the college, conducted a course in writing during that school year. There were stimulating and informal sessions of the class in a dormitory lounge. Langland, himself a Midwesterner, opened our eyes to the land about us, and, whether we came from the Pacific or the Atlantic coast or from the Central Plains, we saw here land and people to be known, to be loved, to be subjects of our writing.

There was a long discussion before the name *The Sower* was chosen, but it was finally agreed that the denotations and connotations of that name expressed all that the new publication was to mean. In making use of Nebraska's Sower symbol, there was a reference to Dana's home state. There was a Biblical overtone: "A sower went forth to sow." Here was an opportunity for young artists to sow the seed of their ideas.

And while he was here, Joseph Langland sowed ideas. I was one who might not today be teaching had it not been for his inspiration. Langland, a professor of English at the University of Wyoming, was given the Amy Lowell Award in 1955 and spent last year in Italy. Upon his return his book of poetry, *The Green Town*, was published. As he has done since 1948, again this year he has presented awards to Dana's best writers.

I wish to express the gratitude of all who have had a part in creating the 1957 *Sower* to our poet friend for past encouragement and continued interest.

Norman C. Bansen.

## THE 1957 SOWER

<b>EDITOR</b>	<b>John Klug</b>
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## THE AWARDS

### **Langland Award**

#### **Prose**

Yes, Dear by *John Klug*

#### **Honorable Mention**

He Called His Name Noah by *Tom Langenfeld*

Macht Nichts by *John Klug*

#### **Poetry**

Void To?? by *Marilyn Ward*

#### **Honorable Mention**

Interrupted Performance by *Marilyn Ward*

God's Frustration by *John Klug*

### **Hal Evans Cole Award for Creative Composition**

The Eagle by *John Linahan*

The Denial By Peter by *Thelma Christensen*

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# He Called His Name Noah

Tom Langenfeld

"And Lamech lived a hundred and two years, and begat a son: And he called his name Noah . . ."

The neighbors said there was something unnatural about the whole thing, and perhaps Lamech believed a little too much of what they said. He waited several days before he went in to see his newly born son. When he entered the room, his brow was furrowed with worry and the sweat ran in rivulets beneath his robe.

When he saw the boy, he relaxed. He looks like me, he thought. Nice black hair . . . brown eyes. He studied the slightly wrinkled, slightly pink form for a few minutes.

His wife smiled up at him from the bed. "He's a pretty baby, isn't he?"

"Yes, my darling, he is," Lamech agreed. "He looks a little like me, I think."

"Noah, say hello to your father." She beamed down on the tiny swaddled form next to her. Lamech chuckled indulgently.

The infant stirred and smiled. "Hello," it said. Its voice was high and quavering.

"He speaks as well as I can," said the mother, glowing with pride.

Lamech turned pale and mumbled something about not feeling very well before he hurried out of the room.

He sat propped against a tree for a long time thinking about the events of the past several days. It had all begun the night Noah was born. There had been a storm and an earthquake, the worst Lamech could remember. It was almost as if Noah's birth came as a climax to some celestial upheaval, for the countryside had been besieged by severe storms for a period of 40 days before Noah's birth. Since that night, the weather had been marvellously clear and fair.

But the storm and the earthquake were minor compared to something else Lamech encountered that night. He was hurrying homeward after hearing that the time

for his son's birth was near. As he came over the gentle rise that separated the house from the pasture, running along the path he had made during many such journeys, he was greeted by a sight that made him stop short.

From the windows of the house came a pale green-tinted glow, shimmering and dancing indistinctly from somewhere within the ancient rough-hewn structure. For a moment, the phosphorescence left the windows and flickered along the edge of the roof, then faded away as the rain began to fall.

Lamech had been badly shaken by the phenomenon—shaken enough so that he had been afraid to look upon his mysterious son until today. And then, the child spoke! Less than a week old and already he could speak.

Lamech pressed his head between his hands. There could be no doubt. He was not the father. Noah's father was no human. What son of man could speak at birth? And would an ordinary child receive the terrible homage of the elements as Noah had? The neighbors had seen the strange display of lights within the house and had trembled in terror during the storm and quake. They whispered that he was not the father, and Lamech was inclined to agree. Perhaps, as one had said, the father was an angel.

Later he went to his wife. He wanted to be firm and harsh, but he was really a rather gentle person, so he began his rebuke gently.

"I don't exactly know how to say this," he ventured.

"What is it, Lamech?" she asked, "Did you burn your porridge again this morning?"

"Oh, no dear," he said, "I managed fine. Don't worry about me. I want you to take it real easy until you've got all your strength back." He had forgotten his suspicion for a moment in the warmth of his wife's concern.

"You're very sweet." She looked down at Noah. "I hope you'll grow up to be an angel like your father," she murmured.

At this, Lamech's face took on an ashen cast. He sat down on the edge of the bed. "Why? Why has this been visited upon me? How can I deal with a wife who has had an affair with an angel!"

"Lamech, what on earth are you saying? I only meant that . . ."

"Oh dishonorable woman! Do you deny that I'm not

the child's father . . . that its father . . . that its father is . . . is an angel?"

"I . . ."

"This is hardly a normal child," he continued. Lamech could become quite eloquent once he got going. "Normal children can't even say 'googoo' at his age. How old is he for goodness' sake?"

A high-pitched voice came from the mother's side. "What could I be? Four days . . . five?"

"Silence," quavered Lamech, unintentionally imitating the child's tone. "Silence, I mean," he quickly repeated an octave lower. There was an embarrassing pause. He looked hard at his wife. "Well?"

She covered her eyes with the blanket. "No, my love," she sobbed. "No, no . . . I don't even know any angels."

Lamech stomped out of the room, deciding to pay a visit to his father, Methuselah. At 369 years, Methuselah was 187 years older than Lamech and would be better able to deal with the situation objectively.

Methuselah listened carefully to his son's problem, as he had been listening to Lamech's problems for the better part of two centuries. "I've always thought of your wife as a fine person," he said when Lamech had finished, "and the things you're saying are pretty serious."

"But the earthquake and the storm . . . and the lights . . ."

"And the little urchin's vocabulary. There is something strange here, all right. I'll tell you what, I'll discuss this with your great-grandfather Jared and see what he thinks. He's been around for a long time, Lam."

As Lamech left Methuselah he noticed for the first time that his father was beginning to look old.

The next day, Methuselah sent for Lamech. He was waiting outside the house when his son arrived.

"You look tired, my boy."

"Didn't sleep much last night."

"Worrying about this whole business, eh?" Methuselah put an arm around him.

"Well, yes, partly . . . but it was mostly that kid's wailing. I think I'd rather have him talk."

"You kept me awake more than one night, young man."

"I suppose, but I couldn't have been as bad as Noah. It's funny, he just can't stand to be wet, not even for a moment."

"Well, come into the house, Lam. Jared was pretty perturbed about the whole thing and had decided to call all the fathers together."

Gathered around the dining room table were Jared, his father Mahalalel, and Mahalalel's father, Kenan. Jared was 598, Mahalalel 741, and Kenan 811. Because of his seniority, Kenan served as chairman at this type of meeting. Generally the meetings got a little out of hand because the group would always get started on a discussion of the "old days," and since everyone had so many old days to talk about, the discussions often continued for hours. Some of the old days were so old that the details were hard to remember, making for frequent pauses to insure the accuracy of some recollection of several centuries past.

Finally, however, the gentlemen got to work on Lamech's problem. Jared thought the child should be examined for the presence of wings. "If he has wings there can't be much doubt about it," said Jared. This met with the approval of all but Kenan who reminded the group that there was no definite proof that angels had wings in the first place.

Mahalalel thought the child should be dropped off a nearby cliff. "If the child's part angel that would prove it, for certainly an angel is immortal and wouldn't be hurt by such a drop," he said.

This sounded good to everyone but Kenan who pointed out that this would be fine if the baby were really an angel, but it might be a little hard on it if it were indeed Lamech's flesh and blood. Mahalalel blushed when he saw his error and hastily withdrew his suggestion. There were some sly remarks made about fallen angels and then all turned to Kenan because no one could think of a sound solution to the problem.

Kenan appeared to be deep in thought. After several minutes, however, it became apparent that he had fallen asleep. Mahalalel tactfully woke him up with a gentle tug on the beard.

Kenan paused to collect his thoughts and then, with all the dignity his 811 years had given him, he rose to give his opinion on the matter.

"You say the child is capable of talking, Lamech?"

"Yes, Kenan, it's frightening the way he talks. Last night, for instance, he kept asking his mother if she thought his basket would float. Very strange."

"Uncanny," said Jared.

"Incredible," said Mahalalel.

"If the child can speak," said Kenan, "then why not ask him about it?"

The wisdom of the plan was obvious and the whole group hurried to Lamech's house to see what the child would say. Lamech entered the bedroom with his four relatives close behind. His wife greeted the guests warmly, but she cast a series of apprehensive glances at her husband.

Lamech walked over to the bed.

The infant stirred and smiled. "Hello, Father," it said.

"And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters."

## Interrupted Performance

Marilyn Ward

Myriads of snowflakes dancing,  
pirouetting in the air;  
Crystalline and opaque mixture  
is apparent everywhere.

Driving wind destroys the ballet;  
dancers steal each others parts,  
Twirling, swirling, whirl together—  
an impromptu measure starts.

Unrehearsed, the dance continues.  
Stagehands enter this new phase.  
Audience stares behind closed windows—  
is prepared to watch for days.

Violence is gaining power;  
wayward wind has ruined the play.  
Director's orders to disperse  
are obeyed without delay.

# Occupation

Harry Landbo

Ray stepped lightly over the apron of barbed wire and sauntered down the little hill about forty feet. He stopped, sighed, then sat down and leaned back against the nearest tree. He dropped his head and shut his eyes. Soon he raised his head and looked around. Funny, he thought, how he always read books and magazines and wrote letters in his off-duty hours to keep so busy he never had time to relax and get bored. But today that didn't work. So finally he just started walking and came to this hill. Sunday afternoon was the worst time of the week in Korea, a slow time, the worst day in each tedious week of occupation.

He saw where trees had grown in a row, but only every fourth one had been allowed to stand. The others had been cut from four to twelve inches above the ground, probably to fit into someone's battle plan. He couldn't help but wonder who had cut these trees because each stump was different; some were flat on top, some were jagged, and some had been split after the tree was cut. He felt sorry for the stumps, sorry that they had not been allowed to grow as their fellows had.

A fly came to rest on a twig a couple of feet away, seeming to smell the twig as if certain there was food for him somewhere on it or in it. He had stripes on his back, gold and black stripes which made him look like a tiger fly. But he was no bigger than an ordinary housefly. Ray tried to look closer, but the fly left when he saw that big head staring at him.

"Where can all these dead twigs have come from?" Ray wondered. "Are there branches dying all the time or can these be left from several years ago when the great tree-cutting took place?"

He got a surprise as he pulled a leaf off a plant he was sitting by and smelled it. Mint! He tasted it. It tasted dry and sandy, but it was mint. He hadn't seen mint leaves since he had played in the vacant lot next to his home in Chicago where the strong-smelling plants grew in thick clusters. Here the four plants he saw were spread over a circle about one yard in diameter. They were small and

sickly looking, a seasick green in color. They looked too weak to even try to last through the coming winter, much less try to reproduce for new plants the next spring.

A red ant crawled onto a nearby board as Ray thought about the mint leaves. Ray picked up the board and held it out flat and watched as the ant tried to figure a way to get down. He kept turning the board over so the ant had to walk upside down making sure he kept at least three of his feet holding tight. Ray wished he could walk upside down on some ceiling. What could a lone ant be doing out when he should be working, or do ants have days off just like we do? Or could he be a scout from a nearby camp? Soon Ray tired of his game and threw the board away.

He looked back at the ground and stared as he saw a leaf from a previous year with a blade of grass growing right through it. The grass must have had a sharp point to poke through its blanket and continue to grow.

Ray glanced toward a cluster of bushes about twenty feet away and noticed that they were interspersed with brown and white cans, the remains of a party some former occupants of these hills had enjoyed with contraband from the beer hall. He thought about the incongruity of beer cans in bushes in Korea. It seemed too much like home in a place that wasn't home.

His eyes wandered to the tree stumps again where only every fourth one had a tree attached to it, trunks that now spread branches to a height of 25-30 feet. There were only two colors to the leaves, yellow and green. Ray thought they didn't blend well at all with the blue sky background. He got to wondering if more than one out of four guys had left Korea in one piece during the war. No matter how much he hated being here now, he knew he was lucky because no one was shooting at him. That had ended two years before.

His eye caught a butterfly, a yellow one, bouncing on the breeze. Ray wished it would come and rest by him for a minute, but it flitted on. "I'd better flit, too," he decided, "back to reality and monotony."

He got up, stretched, and returned up the hill and over the barrier of barbed wire, back to the books and the letters.

# October Woods

John Klug

Wrinkled trees  
crowding smooth skinned heirs,  
filtering the sun,  
whispering,  
sighing,  
some fallen,  
arms entwined around a brother,  
silent witnesses of God's wrath,  
quietness disturbed,  
growth disrupted.

Spangled leaves  
escaped from Van Gogh's palette,  
crisp,  
fragile,  
colored flakes preceding their white brothers,  
fluttering,  
twisting,  
falling downward to the dry earth,  
messengers  
announcing fall,  
preparing a cushion,  
earth's first carpet.

The dark ground  
freckled by the sun,  
a miniature jungle  
moulded blindly,  
twisted twigs,  
crumbled leaves,  
hindering struggling ants,  
nature's mountain climbers,  
hiding shrill shouting crickets,  
October politicians.

A dry creek bed  
expectantly waiting for the water  
that never comes;  
waiting to be washed.

Spiderwebs  
stretched between trees,  
rainbows of the forest  
sparkling in the bright morning,  
enfolding insects in their color  
trapping fallen leaves.

A sun soaked glade  
releasing springing locusts,  
always seeking,  
never finding,  
darting moths;  
yellow,  
brown,  
white,  
all intermingling,  
gay,  
inquisitive,  
darting,  
playing tag,  
hiding in the shadows,  
the shadows of the woods,  
hushed woods,  
eternal woods  
waiting for the seasons,  
always waiting,  
dark bodies  
stretching toward the sky.

# Your Move

Charles Jorgenson

Sam moved out his pawn and looked up at his partner as the two began their daily game of chess. "Your move Jake," he said, and he was hoping, wishing inside himself that this would be the time, this would be the game that he would finally defeat this monster that sat across from him.

Sam and Jake had been together for fifteen years now. Sam could still remember the night Jake had come. It was a cold November evening when there was a scratching at the door. Sam went to investigate, let the mangy looking fellow in, and Jake had been with him ever since. The two went on long walks together, ate their meals together, and Sam had even fixed a bed by the stove for Jake. All that Sam asked in return was a little companionship during his remaining years on earth.

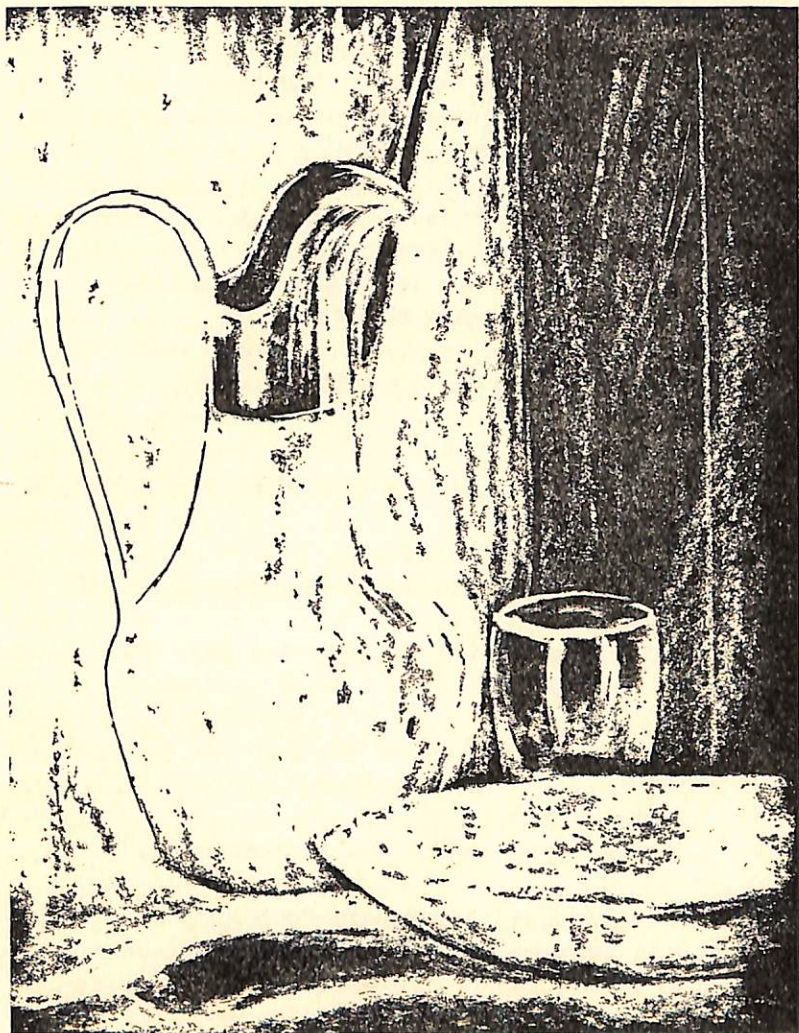
But since the two had decided eight years ago to take up the game of chess as a pastime, Sam had not won a game, and winning now had become an obsession with him. Each new game that they began was to be the game, but it had never been so. Each new game begun was a new challenge, and each defeat angered Sam a little more until he looked forward to the daily game with a mixture of hate, enthusiasm, cynicism, and determination.

Jake now in turn moved out his pawn, and the game was under way. Both players sat and studied the board, deliberating each move before it was made. The silence that the two kept had become part of their strategy and the psychological effect that it had on each was wearing on their nerves.

As the game progressed, Sam's eyes began to twinkle as he thought he saw the possibility of putting Jake's king in checkmate, and thereby winning the game. Each move of the chessmen caused Sam's eyes to brighten a little more and Jake began to burst forth with such expressions as "Wowf," and "Arrrgh."

Now the game was coming down to the wire and Sam was moving. The twinkle in his eye had changed to an evil gleam, and he was becoming impatient as Jake seemed to take much too long between plays in the determination

of his next move. But what was this? Something Sam had not noticed before. With a couple of jumps of his queen, Jake had Sam's king cornered and had again beaten him. Sam slammed his fist down on the board, scattering the chessmen all over the floor. As Jake growled a little, Sam seemed to ask the whole world, "Will I ever beat this damn dog?"



Still Life

Jo. Baasch

# I Know a City

Harry Landbo

I know a city—  
One whose buildings rise high,  
Monuments to a great town  
And its people.

This city has millionaires' mansions,  
And shacks and fire-traps that house  
Drunkards and the destitute—  
The forgotten people.

To some, this city is an Ogre;  
To others, it is Opportunity.  
For some, the sun is always shining here;  
For others, it never shines.

Alongside this city is a lake  
Which—  
Knowingly or unknowingly—  
Is a mirror of the city's inhabitants.

At times the lake fumes,  
Showing anger, disgust, disappointment by its  
Rising and falling  
And throwing itself at piers and rocks and  
buildings

And, in contrast,  
At times it reflects happiness,  
Lying peacefully,  
Welcoming swimmers and fishermen.

At times the lake must be controlled,  
Like society's lawbreakers.  
In ways the lake controls,  
As politicians and labor bosses do.

This city is my home,  
And I know its monuments and mirror.

# Clickety-Click

Marilyn Ward

Clickety-click. Clickety-click. The keys made a monotonous sound as they recorded letters to form words from the brain of the monstrous machine. Day after day after day, the machine droned on.

Tom looked apprehensively at the giant form before him. "Monster . . . almost human . . . someday . . ." Then he walked on. Clickety-click. It unceasingly recorded its ideas for mankind to use—or misuse.

The sun set shortly after Tom left, leaving the room dark except for an occasional spark from the intricate mechanism of Gertrude, as the brain was nick-named by the few men who were destined to spend their lives watching her every movement and caring for her.

The night watchman passed, pausing a moment to glance in Gertrude's direction. Clickety-click. A message . . . a message . . . but he continued on, never looking back . . .

When morning came, Tom returned to Gertrude. He fed her the morning diet of formulae and news. Gertrude picked up speed. Clickety-clickety-click. Tom grimaced and walked away.

The daily ritual of checking each of the many buttons on Gertrude's enormous sides kept Tom busy during the rest of the day. Occasionally as he went about his task he muttered a little verse which he had learned from some of his predecessors: "Little bits of formula, tiny drops of oil, make the mighty Gertrude work—work that we may toil." Occasionally he made up his own version of the phrase—depending upon how he felt. Today he didn't seem to care about Gertrude; his mind was occupied with other things.

"Adjust a button here . . . easy Gertrude . . . it won't be long now . . ." Clickety-click. Gertrude hummed happily along—if a machine can hum happily. Tom's agile fingers mechanically checked every nut and bolt, expertly determining whether a new one was needed. Years of experience had made him an expert at his job—Gertrude's chief care-taker (or slave, as the men dubbed him). Tom took their teasing and remarks with a sly grin and a shrug of his shoulders. They just didn't know Gertrude as he did—

the monster machine. Yet he couldn't let them know how he felt. Not yet. Clickety-click.

"Quiet Gertrude . . . Easy Gertrude . . . confounded machine . . ." Tom jumped as the door to the huge room opened unexpectedly. "Come on, Tom. It's time for that coffee break!" Tom hurried down from his perch near the top of Gertrude's massive iron sides, glancing at his watch as he hit the bottom. "Morning . . . going fast." He nearly ran to catch up with his co-worker. He hastened more than was necessary to get where he was going. Little would have changed if he had taken ten minutes to climb down from his precarious perch.

"Boy! She sure is running smooth today! What have you been doing, feeding her vitamin pills?" The two walked out together kidding about Gertrude. Clickety-click. Gertrude's mechanism kept on running—recording, filing, sorting, and expelling information that man thought he needed.

When Tom returned she was releasing information at random, having dealt with the formulae which had been given to her earlier that day. "You need a break, too. Don't you?" Tom spoke aloud to the machine, a habit he had picked up through years of association with her. "Well, try this for taste!" He jammed a few reams of paper into the proper opening. Clickety-clickety-click. Gertrude gobbled the printed sheets. Tom laughed aloud. "You must really enjoy those, don't you?" He paused as though expecting Gertrude to answer him. "Just wait. We'll see how you enjoy what I'm preparing!" He turned to his desk in the one empty corner of the room and bent his head over a few papers and books. Clickety-click. Gertrude's keys typed on.

Hours later the hum of the machine quieted somewhat and Tom rose from his desk to feed the gaping mouth more paper. "What is the condition of the world today you know-it-all? . . . Even I know that everything's going along remarkably well . . . Your job is to find out if anything will go wrong . . . But why don't you? . . . You're getting old Gertrude, getting old . . . 300 years is a long time even for a machine like you." Clickety-clickety-click. "Don't get angry with me, Gertrude—with your brain you should know I speak the truth." His voice echoed a bit from the walls of the dreary room to Gertrude's gray iron sides. He watched the machine as it automatically began to deal with the

material he had just stuffed into it. "Hmph . . ." Tom returned to his desk muttering to himself. "Some day . . . Some day . . ." And so the time passed.

That night when all was quiet except for Gertrude's steady clickety-click, clickety-click, a figure stole quietly into the room. A bundle of papers bulged the sides of a brief-case which hung at the figure's side. Quickly the shape approached the giant machine. With unhesitating movements the brief-case was emptied and the papers placed within the opening of Gertrude's form. Clickety-clickety-click. The night watchman appeared in the doorway; the figure sank into the shadows. "Good-night, Gertrude." The watchman, too, had the habit of regarding Gertrude as almost human. Clickety-click. The keys clicked out the answers to what the papers had contained. "Thank you, Gertrude! You despicable creation!" The voice had a familiarity that even Gertrude would have recognized—had she been able to hear.

"Just what I wanted to know. Tomorrow we can seize power! Tomorrow is the day! Do you hear Gertrude? Soon these nights will not have been in vain! Soon, Gertrude! Soon!" Clickety-click. The figure disappeared through the way it came. All night Gertrude clicked on. Her gears never missed. Her keys never paused. Clickety-click.

Morning brought Tom and the same ritual—feed her formulae, check the mechanism. But today his attitude seemed changed. He actually smiled as he glanced her way. Clickety-click.

"Did you have a restful night Gertrude? . . . I'm glad . . . I had a good night Gertrude . . . a good night." . . . The morning passed with little incident, although Tom occasionally glanced at Gertrude and mumbled "Soon now, Gertrude! . . . Soon! . . ."

That afternoon Tom suddenly rose from his deck and ran to the door . . . The time had come. He could feel it . . . He shut the door, leaving himself completely alone with Gertrude . . . Already he could hear the drone of the approaching space ships . . . "Do you hear them, Gertrude? Do you know they're coming? . . . You helped bring them Gertrude. You and your intelligent brain . . . Did you know that too?" . . . Tom laughed an insane laugh . . . while all

the time his mind was clicking as though it too were mechanical.

“One more question, Gertrude. One more question before I leave you and join my fellows”—He stuffed a sheet of paper into Gertrude’s mouth. “This is a simple question old girl—answer me quickly.” . . . clickety-click . . . The answer to Tom’s question rolled smoothly onto the roller tape at the end of the line.

Tom eagerly picked up the tape to read the answer . . . Even as his eyes widened in horror at the reply he heard the click of military heels in the hall . . . saw the door open . . . turning to Gertrude he screamed, “You betrayed me!” . . .

The shot was direct to his heart . . . Clickety-click. Clickety-click . . . .

## God’s Frustration

John Klug

Heavens are darkening,  
Clouds are mingling,  
Wet flakes dancing  
Toward the earth below.  
Winds are rising,  
Clouds are bursting,  
Blanketing the arid earth  
with snow.

Farmers’ windburned faces smiling,  
The Creator had been listening.  
Wheels churning,  
City men cursing,  
Tempers flaring,  
Eyes glaring,  
Children laughing, eyes aglow.

Looking on his fresh white earth,  
God throws his arms up in frustration.  
“Nothing I do makes all men happy,”  
He mutters, as he looks below.

## Yes, Dear

John Klug

The boat rocked gently as Mr. Geeny once again dropped his line into the water. A contented smile lighted his careworn face as he watched the red cork bobbing against the small waves caused by the slight motion of the boat. His small, middleaged body seemed to quiver with delight within his red checked jacket. This was the life, he thought. He looked forward to these Saturday afternoons. No more work in the freight office until Monday morning and his wife, who hated anything to do with fish, wasn't around nagging at him. There was nothing to disturb him out here except the cool spring breeze, which was gently ruffling his thinning hair, and the timid creaking of the oarlocks keeping time to the slow motion of the boat.

His thoughts were interrupted as the red cork suddenly went under the water and his bamboo pole doubled almost to the verge of breaking. Mr. Geeny pulled with all his strength but the pole didn't budge an inch. In fact, the tip of it was now in the water. He couldn't let this one get away. This would stop those hecklers at the office, he thought as he let go of the pole and almost capsized the boat in his excitement. He grabbed the fishline itself, gave it a tremendous tug and managed to wrap the end around the oarlock. He pulled the line in hand over hand and saw with dismay that the hook had only become entangled in what appeared to be some yellow colored seaweed. He almost broke out into tears of vexation as he plunged his hand into the water and tugged furiously at the yellow mass in an attempt to free his hook.

A second later his face paled with fear and he started as if to go over the other side of the boat as a white hand followed by a slender arm clasped the wrist of the hand pulling on the seaweed. He fell backward in a faint and the hand and arm together with a white body came following after him.

When Mr. Geeny recovered he saw what appeared to be a slender, young, beautiful woman sitting in the bow of the boat. He pinched himself and looked again. Why it isn't a woman, he thought as he looked down at where her legs should be, it's one of those . . . those . . . why it's a

mermaid. I ju-just bumped m-my head when I fell. I-I-I'm just seeing things. I'll ju-just turn my back on it and continue fishing. Why, before I know it, it'll be gone and I'll have a good laugh on myself.

However, before Mr. Geeny even got his worm on the hook, soft, white arms entwined him from behind and gentle fingers ran through his hair. Beads of sweat broke out on his forehead. This just isn't happening. It doesn't happen to Saturday afternoon fishermen. What will my wife think? I would be the laughing stock of the office if I told them a story like this. I'm dreaming. I'll wake up soon. My imagination, my imagination, that's all, just my imagination. No one is kissing me on the back of the neck. I'm dreaming, that's all, just dreaming.

Mr. Geeny put the oars in their oarlocks and hurriedly began rowing for shore and the safety of his automobile. By the time I get to shore it will be gone. Mermaids just didn't happen. But when Mr. Geeny got to shore, she wasn't gone. Her big blue eyes looked at him with loving tenderness while his frightened brown eyes looked back at her with utter dismay. He rubbed his eyes and looked again. She was still there. He sighed in resignation, picked her up in his arms and set her in the back seat of the car. He broke out in a mischievous boyish laughter and said to himself, "Well, I guess she would be sort of nice to have around." Mr. Geeny's heart was melting.

Monday afternoon found Mrs. Geeny's imposing figure sitting in the kitchen nervously biting her finger nails. It was the first time in her thirty years of marriage that she felt she was losing control of herself, her household and, most of all, her husband Timothy. Everything seemed to be going wrong. Her washtub was missing, she couldn't find the key to the cellar door, and she was hearing the strangest noises down there at night . . . Like someone taking a bath. To top it all off there was that husband of hers. He used to be such a quiet, timid thing until he came back from fishing Saturday. Now he was forever smiling mysteriously to himself and continually humming under his breath.

He has been carrying on in the strangest way. He is forever piddling around in the basement. Whatever was he going to do with that ten pounds of fish he ordered? Why we don't even have any fish. She wouldn't even have known about it if she hadn't peeked into the package after it had been

delivered. That wasn't bad enough but he called from the office today to tell her he would be late for supper because he was taking swimming lessons at the Y.M.C.A. . . . At his age, too. Who did he think he was kidding? Timothy was going to have some tall explaining to do when he came home. He was over an hour late already.

Suddenly the front door opened and Mr. Geeny came bustling into the kitchen. "Hello, dear," he said, "You're looking fine."

"Timothy, where have you been?"

"Swimming."

"Don't lie to me, you beast. You've been out with the boys again. Come here and let me smell your breath."

"Now dear, you know you've never let me go out with the boys. Did a package come for me?"

"It's in the back hall and will you explain why . . ."

"Excuse me, dear, I have to go into the basement for a minute."

"Come back here and answer my question." Mrs. Geeny shook her head in exasperation. Why Timothy had never been this bold before. The nerve of him, leaving her like this. What? . . . she'd swear she heard the cellar door open. She'd just tiptoe down the stairs and get to the bottom of this affair once and for all.

As Mrs. Geeny entered the basement, she nodded her head in satisfaction. She was right. It was the cellar door she had heard open. It was Timothy who had the key. Well, she would just rush in and end this monkey business all together.

Mrs. Geeny tiptoed across the basement floor toward the cellar door. She pushed her bulky figure into the darkened cellar and let out a shriek as she tripped over the tub of water her husband was leaning over. The contents of the tub went cascading over the basement floor toward the open sewer near the washing machine. Mr. Geeny stepped over his wife and out of the cellar in time to see a scaled tail give a last flick as it disappeared down the opening.

"Timothy, you beast, you tried to drown me. Do you hear me? Help me up. Oh, wait until I get my hands on you. Come back here, you coward."

Timothy brushed away a tear from the corner of his eye as he stared at the open hole in the basement floor. He smiled sorrowfully to himself as he turned to the clamor in the cellar. "Yes, dear."

# Intermission Riff

Charles Jorgenson

An old, battered, greenish yellow sign hangs outside Simon's pawn shop. The blotchy, black letters tell one that Isac Simon loans money on everything from jewelry to musical instruments. Horns belonging to some of the country's most famous musicians are on Isac's shelves. The life of a musician and especially a jazz musician is rough, and many a time the horns are never claimed. Why do the musicians hock their horns? Maybe it is to get some travel money, maybe to buy more wine, or maybe it's to pay off that heroin pusher. It may be any number of reasons, but irregardless, the horns are there on the shelves.

But the horns never cease in getting in their kicks even though they are in a pawn shop and not in an after hours spot hitting a few licks. It is midnight and one by one the instruments begin to come down off their shelves. The trumpet, the trombone, the tenor sax, the clarinet, the bass fiddle and the drum all begin to run up and down scales, playing first low tones, then high, then maybe breaking into a riff or two. Suddenly, as if by a pre-determined schedule they stop. Then they begin to play together. They are warming up on some "C" blues.

Then the horns stop blowing the blues and again are silent. The big one is coming. Now they start. All of them together on the first 32 bars of the melody. It's the old favorite, Perdido.. The first 32 bars over, the trumpet takes off on his solo. As he blows high and wild, he thinks of his days at Basin Street in the Village in New York. The time is early morning and the customers are barely visible as now the smoky haze has reached the floor. But still the music goes on until the last customer has left and the horn is finally placed in its case to await another evening of Basin Street jazz.

Now the tenor sax is going. Intricate modern chords broken into scales and arpeggios, the sax blows both sweet and raspy. He thinks of the evenings at Sardi's on Hollywood and Vine. He remembers how the Hollywood crowd typically hopped from club to club but usually ended up at

Sardi's and stayed there until the sun glistened on the Pacific.

The sounds of the sax fading away, the trombone is at the imaginary mike. The first strains are slow and mellow, almost suggesting a low down blues, but he begins to pick up the tempo and is soon wailing like he used to when he was at Tony Almerico's Blue Room in New Orleans. He had come to that city when jazz was coming back to New Orleans and he had enjoyed every minute of it.

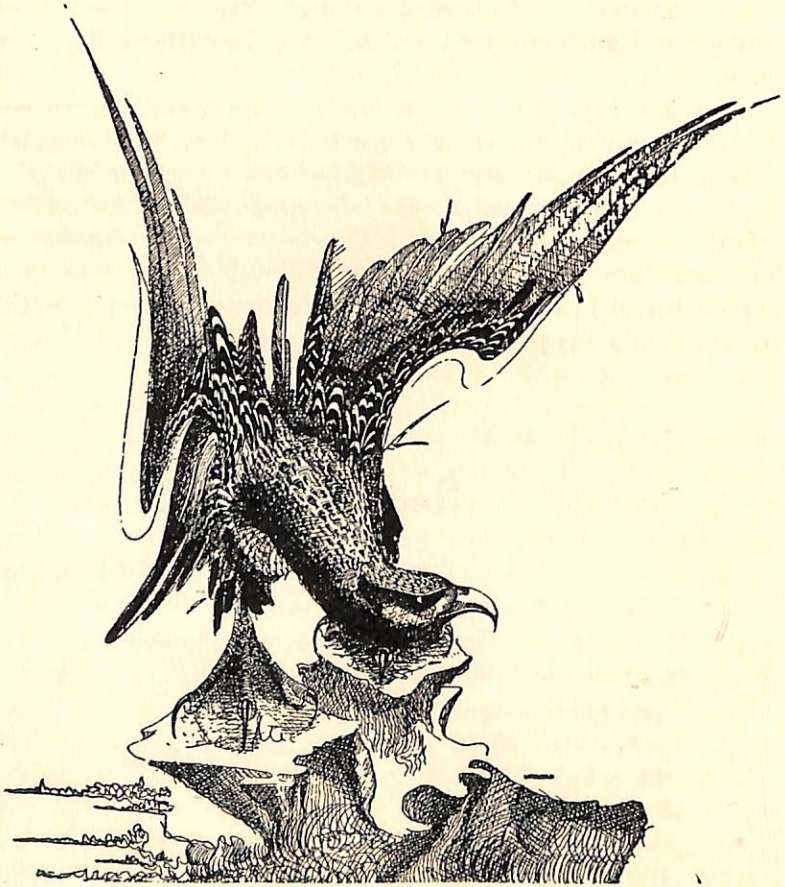
The clarinet is last in the solo order and he begins now. First he blows some high sounds with some mellow chromatic work. Then he comes back down and plays in the fast, staccato style that is reminiscent of his days at the 11-11 Club in Chicago. He remembers well the long narrow club, its plaster coming off the walls, and its torn booths, and shoddy entrance, but some of Chicago's best jazz came from there every morning until 4 A.M. But now those days are gone.

The first rays of the morning sun creep around the corner of the window as the session comes to a close, the horns all coming together for one last kicking around of the melody. With one tremendous, always changing chord, the night's affairs come to an end and the horns settle themselves back on their shelves hoping that today they may be purchased by someone who will again take them back into the world of jazz people.

## Reprieve

Darol Valder

Because the Governor in stern judgment  
had decreed "Winter!"  
the clouds gathered in angry protest  
and milled about the courtyard;  
the winds added their dissenting voices.  
From his balcony  
the Governor viewed the turbulent masses  
and revoked the proclamation.  
The sky smiled and the winds  
frolicked in the unseasonal sunlight.



The Eagle

John Linahan

## Dilemma

Janet Langenfeld

Perfect! Everything is just perfect. These were Faye's thoughts as she slowly walked home from school Friday afternoon. The day had slipped by before she realized it. For once she had had no tests or nasty little quizzes, and better yet one of her classes had been omitted because of a surprise assembly. Besides it was Friday, the time for all good students to let down their hair until the eight o'clock bell Monday morning. But, there was an underlying reason for Faye's high spirits, namely Ted Derbe. He had finally broken the ice and asked her to go to the movies with him that evening. Ted was just about the neatest guy around. Any girl would tell you the same thing. Of course, Faye had to put Ted on a par with Phill Dunn since she also had a date with him in the near future. Faye thought both Phill and Ted were extremely handsome, well-built, athletic, etc., etc., etc. She kept putting off choosing which one she liked the best, but now she realized the time had come for some kind of a decision. After going out with both of them she'd be in a better position to make the choice. Faye had been paying a noticeable amount of attention to Ted in their biology class, but yet she also listened attentively whenever Phill brought up the subject of track. She'd even gone to the library to find out something about the broad jump and the shot-put so as not to appear overly ignorant to him on the subject.

Faye had stayed at school later than usual this afternoon to help Mr. Edwards mimeograph some programs. Now she had to walk home alone, but she didn't mind. She had so many thoughts crowding her mind. After all, Ted and Phill would keep any young, healthy, American girl thinking. Besides it was a lovely day—one of those perfect spring days you often talk about but rarely see.

"Let's see," Faye thought to herself, "I'm going with Ted tonight and with Phill . . . my goodness, when am I going with Phill? I think it must be early next week, maybe Monday. No, that isn't right. Oh dear, I ought to be able to remember that. Let me think now. He said he'd drop over to the house about seven o'clock, but what

night was it? How could I forget? I guess I must have been awfully excited. Oh well, I'll think of it sooner or later."

It proved to be sooner, for she had just turned down her street when it hit her like a ton of bricks.

"Oh no, I've made two dates for the same night. How in the world could I have done such a thing? I was so eager to go out with them both, I guess I didn't really stop to think. This is actually painful. What am I going to do? I could kick myself."

As she reached the front steps leading up to her house, she was still mumbling reprimands to herself. The day that had been so perfect only a few minutes ago was now one big confused mess. Faye usually closed the door quietly through the constant encouragement of her mother, but today she let it bang shut. Her mother looked up from her ironing as she came into the kitchen.

"Why the long face on such a beautiful day?" she inquired.

"I don't see what's so beautiful about it," Faye retorted.

"Why Faye!"

"I'm sorry, Mom."

Faye wasn't very anxious to admit her stupidity, but she had to let someone in on her dilemma.

"Mom, what would you think of a girl who made two dates for one night?"

"I think she'd be a pretty busy gal."

"Seriously though, Mom, I'm that gal and I'm at my wit's end. What can I do?"

"Well, Faye, I think this is your problem. Any girl who is capable of making two dates for one night should be able to work out some solution. You'll probably just have to call up one of the boys and explain the situation."

"Oh, but Mother I couldn't. I've heard that you sometimes have to sacrifice truth when trying to get out of a social engagement."

"As I said, dear, it's your decision."

"I guess so, but what a decision."

Faye wandered aimlessly up to her room. How in the world could she be so stupid as to ruin her chances with Ted and Phill. She'd just have to call up one of them now and break their date, but which one? Suddenly the phone jangled.

"Maybe that's one of them now. Maybe he can't make it."

Faye descended the stairs in a single bound. She grabbed the phone up without waiting for the customary four rings. This was no time to be sophisticated.

"Hello," she answered breathlessly.

"Hello, Faye," returned a squeaky adolescent voice. "This is Stanley."

Oh, thought Faye, not Stanley at a time like this. "Why hi, Stan."

She tried to cover her disappointment with a loud care-free voice.

"Thought you might like to study Latin with me tonight," he said methodically.

"Well, er, Stanley, I . . . well you see something has come up. I'm afraid it would be next to impossible," stammered Faye.

The moment she gave her excuse she realized how weak it was, but how could she think about Stanley and Latin when she was hanging on the horns of a dilemma? Anyway Stanley was far from handsome, non-athletic, and a next door neighbor.

"Well, that's okay, Faye, just thought I'd ask. I'll be here all night if you change your mind."

"Thanks anyway, Stanley . . . bye."

"Bye."

Faye trudged up the stairs once again.

"I've decided. I'll just have to call up Ted and give him some big excuse. After all, Phill asked me first so it's only fair that I keep his date. But what can I tell him? I could give him the headache routine. No, he'd see right through that. I know! I'll say we're going to have a house guest and I'm needed at home to help Mother. After all, Phill is coming over. I suppose I could call him a house guest," Faye rationalized.

She traipsed down to the phone for the second time and made the fateful call to Ted.

"I thought he took that rather nobly," thought Faye as she hung up the receiver. "Wonder if he suspected something fishy."

The day took on its original brightness for Faye. She had a date with Phill for the evening after all, and she'd probably go out with Ted some other time.

R-r-ring!!

"What now?" Faye asked herself as she descended the stairs.

This time she let it ring four times. She lifted the receiver gingerly and said hello in a very calm voice, mastered through much practice.

"Hi, Faye, this is Phill."

"Hi."

Faye gave out a little nervous giggle as she answered. She could have slapped herself.

"I hate to say this, Faye, but I'm afraid I can't make our date tonight."

"Oh."

Faye let out a slight gasp but quickly recovered.

"I'm sorry to hear that, Phill. Is anything the matter?"

"No, it's just that coach decided to call a track squad meeting tonight of all nights. He says it's important, something about next week's meet. That means we're all supposed to be there. No excuses allowed, if you know what I mean."

"I think I do," replied Faye weakly.

"You've been awfully nice about this Faye. Sorry it worked out this way."

"I am too, but I understand, Phill."

"That's good. See you Monday?"

"Sure thing."

Faye let the receiver slip slowly from her fingers. Gloom settled upon her once again. She began to think that teenagers lead most unbearable lives at times.

"And I thought these are supposed to be the best years of my life," she mumbled as she sat down for supper.

Her mother knew better than to bring up the subject at the table, but later that evening as she heard the front door open, she inquired into the matter.

"Are you going out after all, Faye?"

Faye returned an unenthused reply.

"Just over to Stanley's. Thought I'd study a little Latin for a change."

As Faye's mother fondly watched her daughter go down the walk, she remarked to her husband, "I don't think I'll ever quite understand that girl if I live to be a hundred and fifty!"



The Denial By Peter

Thelma Christensen

## Void To??

Marilyn Ward

Void and darkness. Nothing glowing.  
Nothing gleaming. Nothing seen.  
Absent breezes. Absent sunshine.  
Absent life and living things.

Then a tiny, whirling atom  
Lives, expands, makes Nothing cease.  
Not a mishap; not an error;  
Purposed plan and planned release.

While this atom turns and trembles,  
Holiness continues on.  
Heavenly voices speak together;  
All at once the first known dawn.

Light and darkness. Growing atom.  
Firmament is suddenly seen.  
Swirling waters whirl together,  
loosing land with grasses green.

Day and darkness insufficient.  
Sparkling stars are sprinkled in.  
Sun and moon rule over seasons.  
All is quiet, free from sin.

Crawling creatures, singing swallows,  
are created, multiply.  
All are thoughtless, cannot reason.  
Nothing yet can question why.

Enter in a new creation,  
one which reasons, rules the rest,  
Placed within a holy garden,  
granted grace and by God blest.

Silly creature, knows no better,  
disobeys its maker's law,  
Finds itself outside its Eden,  
growing helpless, growing small.

Sin surpasses, strikes so fiercely,  
fallen figures fail to fight,  
Yield to evil, yield to passion,  
yield and lose their source of might.

Onward. Onward, cursed and craven,  
crawling, creeping, seeking grace.  
Beaten being is forgiven,  
is allowed to raise its face.

Son of Heaven, Holy helper,  
comes to earth to love, forgive,  
Is rejected, not respected,  
gives His life that man may live.

Man grows careless, cruel, not Christian,  
wages war and sanctions sin.  
For this purpose uses reason,  
reckons not that he can't win.

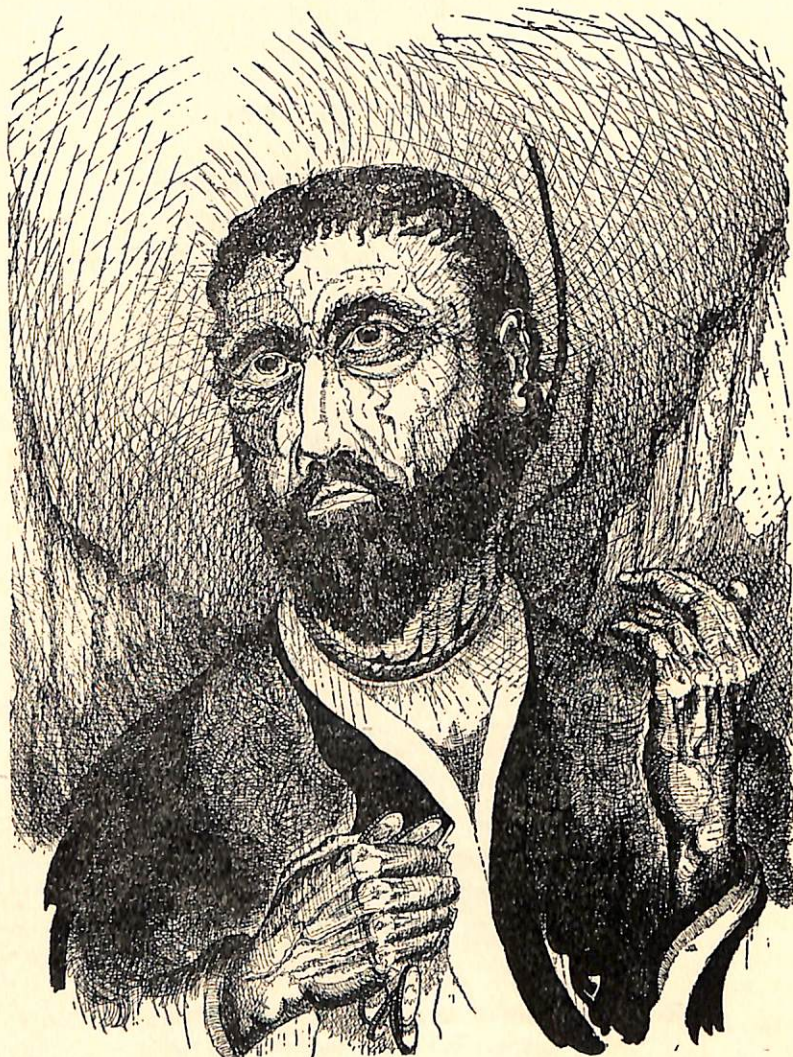
Guns and gases; bombs and blitzes;  
killing; crazy, mad with might.  
Science searches, seeks and savors—  
What one thing can end this fight?

In the midst of all this madness,  
saner souls still seek release,  
Hoping, praying, pleading, saying,  
"Blessed Savior, grant us peace."

Peace they pray for. Prayers they promise.  
Promises they do not keep.  
So they shudder, shake and shiver,  
when they're given cause to weep.

Brightest brightness, darkest darkness,  
Man brings his destruction down.  
Tears and torments, trial, travail;  
frightened, fainting while God frowns.

Void and darkness. Nothing glowing.  
Nothing gleaming. Nothing seen.  
Finite creatures meet their maker;  
Shade and shadow—Yet a gleam  
Glow.



Judas

John Linahan

# A Pressing Problem

Charles Jorgenson

Todd reached over the side of the bed and felt along the row of buttons that were set there in the side panel. His hand paused on one, he pressed it, and the bed stopped its gentle vibration. He had an ordinary buzz type wake-up machine, but when this failed to awaken him, the bed vibrator went into action. This apparatus started a gentle vibration and it increased in intensity until the person asleep woke up and shut it off. The vibrator had been running a full minute this morning before Todd had finally awakened. But then he hadn't gotten much sleep last night and he was terribly groggy. Something was bothering him. Something that made him feel almost miserable at times, but he wasn't able to determine exactly what it was all about. Even now as he swung his feet over the side of the bed, this thing was bothering him. He got up and started toward the shower. As he stepped into the shower room, he brushed the first of a row of buttons on the right and the water started out of the shower head. He reached in and adjusted the spray to just a little under brisk. Todd turned toward the mirror. He looked at himself. He noticed how his slightly graying hair showed up a little more in the morning. There were the beginnings of some lines in his face. He thought to himself that he had aged considerably since he and his family had moved into this new house just two years ago.

By the time Todd stepped under the spray the water had adjusted itself to a temperature just a little above that of his body. Even now as he stood there, the auto-shower scrubbing him up and down, he was a little melancholy. Not even the auto-wipe, as it kneaded his thin white body, could invigorate him in the least.

He stood in front of the mirror and pressed the button marked shave, and he let the auto-shave trim off his scraggly little beard, and then dash him with a tingly lotion. As soon as the auto-shave was through, the auto-dress took over and dressed him completely. This was great, he thought to himself. Yes, the auto-dress had cost \$349.50 plus tax, but why shouldn't he have the luxuries to enjoy like everyone else.

Completely dressed now, Todd thought he ought to feel great, but he didn't. "Have I forgotten something?" he asked himself, speaking audibly now. His wall reminder spoke up with a list of the things that he was supposed to remember. "Buy some stamps, pay the electric bill, the man from the finance company is coming tonight. . ." the reminder went on, but Todd reached up and turned it off. No, it wasn't anything that he had forgotten to do. Well, it was time for breakfast now anyway, so he started out to the kitchen.

Todd's wife Alice was busily pressing buttons along the main wall panel in the kitchen. She looked up as Todd entered and said, "I'm sorry, I'm a little late this morning dear. I think that vibrator on my bed is on the bum again. But I'll have all of these buttons pressed here in a minute."

"Alice, you know you wouldn't have to get up at all. I can press those buttons myself and get my own breakfast."

"I know you can dear, but I enjoy making breakfast for you. It's kind of old fashioned and I like it. Tell me, how do you feel today?"

"Oh, all-right I guess. Can't seem to shake this mood though. But let's forget that for awhile and talk about something else. How is Frank getting along in school?"

"His teacher spoke to me the other day. She says he seems to lack ambition. That is, he has no desire to get his studies done. You know as well as I do that he is full of ambition. Always working on that rocket of his and talking about being the first to go to Mars."

"I don't know what is wrong with that boy. Can't understand why he wants to go to Mars. He'll have a fairly easy life here if he stays. We'll leave him with only \$340,000 of debt. I was talking it over with the finance man the other day. If we continue buying the automatic appliances at this same rate, that will be the debt that we will leave Frank. Practically all the fellows down at the plant are leaving their sons with at least \$400,000 of debt. No, Alice, I just don't understand that boy. Well, I guess that I had better be off to work now. I'll see you this evening."

Todd walked out to the garage and climbed into the car. He pressed the button labeled "plant." This was just like those push button radios they had in the old cars. You could set the buttons for whatever particular area you wanted to travel to, and the car's radar system would take

you directly there, even obeying all traffic regulations, and letting you sleep or do whatever you wished while the car was doing so. Todd settled back to read his newspaper. There was a small caption in the lower right-hand corner about a jet airliner flying from New York to London in 25 minutes. "Hmm. I can remember when we thought flying from Seattle to Baltimore in 3 hours and 45 minutes was fast."

The car pulled into Todd's spot in the lot and Todd stepped out and onto the rolling, rubber belt that took him directly into the plant. Pushing the button below his name, he was all set to go to work. He walked over to his chair alongside the conveyor belt, sat down and waited for the belt to start rolling. Suddenly that feeling was on him again. He had been able to forget it at least for awhile but here it was again, gnawing at him.

Now the belt started to roll. Exactly one and one-half minutes later the first refrigerator went by. "Ready to freeze," a voice said. Todd pushed a button. It was all right. It always was. The next one came by. "Ready to freeze," press a button. "Ready to freeze." "Ready to freeze." Push a button. Push a button. Todd suddenly realized what was bothering him. He hated pushing buttons.

## To Carol

Mel Sick

A warm but windy day  
She left us, but not alone.  
All joys we've known,  
Have gone their twisted ways.

It's been almost a year,  
Since we saw the bend.  
How could one so dear,  
Be the first to ascend.

## Blackbird Hill

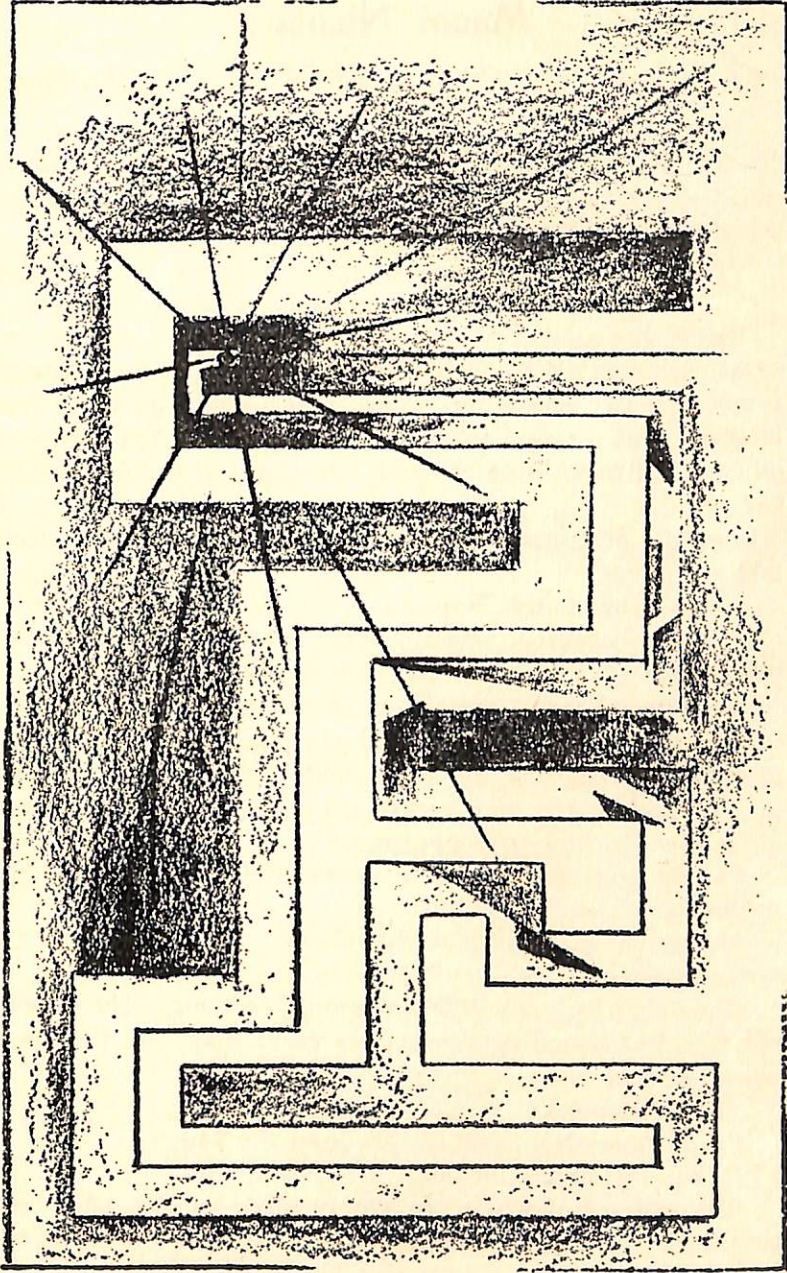
Darol Valder

Across the brow where Blackbird sleeps  
The coyote wind pads softly. It pushes  
Through the dormant dogwoods  
And brushes against the faded sumac, pausing  
In the lee of the lone elm. It rises again  
From its haunches and moves warily down the long slope  
As it catches the scent of the wide river below.

## February Spring

John Klug

Wind calling,  
sun strengthening,  
life returning.  
Earth an early Dutch painting  
with an ochre carpet,  
returning to softness,  
bouncy,  
springy,  
gently yielding.  
Trees losing their winter roughness,  
red buds nudging through gray skin.  
Tumbleweed resting against a fence,  
fragile,  
intricate,  
Spanish baroque.  
Red tipped corn stubble,  
parchment rolls,  
pointing toward the sky.  
Gray traces of snow,  
hidden in the furrows,  
surrendering  
to the strengthening sun,  
bringing new life.



Solitude

Richard Brink

# Macht Nichts

John Klug

He toyed with the drink in his hand, touched it to his lips and returned to making ringed patterns on the chipped, marble-topped table. He tapped his foot unconsciously to the blare from the jukebox.

"The Yellow Rose of Texas,

The sweetest flower that grows . . ."

Texas, the states, it was all a million miles away as far as he was concerned. Schwabish Gmund . . . ten thousand people and two gasthauses where a G.I. could go for a few laughs. No wonder some of the guys cracked up and others tried going over the hill. Just where could a fellow go?

Snatches of conversation drifted to him from the other tables. . . .

"Now I says to this sergeant . . ."

"Listen, Kamerad, where I come from they got farms a million acres. Verstehen, eine million acres?"

He glanced up at some loud laughing as a soldier tried to get up from his chair, tottered as if on the edge of a cliff, stepped back against his chair and grabbed for the edge of the table. He was wearing his uniform and it was obviously his first pass overseas.

"I told you that was some strong stuff, Joe. You're not in the states now."

He turned at a touch on his elbow. "Hey, boy, you got a cigarette?"

She didn't look any different from the others. The young-old face, bored and tired eyes, too much make-up, the dress worn once too often . . .

"I don't smoke."

"You know Dick Smith? He from the 34th."

"Naw, I'm in the medics."

The girl sat down in an empty chair at the table and continued talking. "He my boyfriend but he no come see me tonight. His captain no give him pass."

"Tough luck."

"What you say?"

"You got the shaft."

"What you mean I got shaft?"

"Beat it."

"What?"

"Scram, 'raus, macht's schnell. Don't you understand English?"

"Son a gun what you think? I learn English in school."

"Sure you did."

"You think I no good for you maybe?"

He sighed to himself and thought here we go again. Always the same old story. "You're okay."

"You like Marie?"

"Why, I couldn't live without you."

"My boyfriend he tell me he bring me to America when he go, you know."

"I bet he can hardly wait."

"I from Dresden but I come in 1946."

"You should have stayed in Dresden."

"Never happen G.I. I stay here. I work in dependent quarter now."

"Ya, well I have to go."

"I see you tomorrow maybe?"

"What will your boyfriend say?"

"Macht nichts."

"Hey, kamerad, how about a taxi?"

The girl followed the American with her eyes as he left with the German taxi driver. She shrugged her shoulders and turned to the table behind her. "Hey, boy, you got cigarette?"

# Child Psychology

Marilyn Ward

Psychosis, neurosis,  
thrombosis, hypnosis—  
Beware lest you injure  
your three-year old's Id!

Frustration, elation,—  
(I need a vacation)—  
Be careful! Don't spank him!  
(Oh! I almost did!)

Rebellious and zealous,  
Obnoxious—(Don't say it!—  
The books warn against those  
who thwart young desire!)

Persistent and patient,  
content doing mischief—  
(He knows we "can't" spank him . . .  
Do children conspire?)

Each morning, each evening,  
from sun-up to sunset  
The book guides our actions—  
(We could use much more!)

Confusion, collision—  
(Our will versus Tommy's)—  
A three-year old's fragile—  
(But soon he'll be four!!!)

# She Promised

Keith Elliot

"I have instructions to wait while you open the telegram, Ma'am," said the young man in the Western Union uniform. "All right," replied Mrs. Halgren. "Excuse me while I get my glasses."

The young man watched her walk over to the desk. When she walked, all of her movements flowed into one, and she seemed to glide effortlessly across the floor. He noticed her soft golden hair and peaches and cream complexion that belied her age. She's an attractive woman, he thought, and seems so nice too. I sure wish I didn't have to give her this telegram.

"Here we are," said Mrs. Halgren. She put her turquoise framed glasses on as he handed her the telegram. She opened it with a perfectly manicured fingernail.

Mrs. John K. Halgren: I regret to inform you that your son, Pfc. Kenneth A. Halgren RA17316290, has been killed in . . . . "NO!" screamed Mrs. Halgren. "No! No! This can't be true! Not my son, not Kenny," she sobbed. "There must be some mistake. Oh God! Please . . . No!"

"Are you going to be sick, Ma'am?" asked the young man.

Mrs. Halgren looked at him with eyes that were wide and dilated like those of a frightened deer. "This isn't true, is it?" she choked. "Tell me it's all a mistake! They can't mean Kenny. Not my boy," she cried softly. "Not Kenny, my only son. Not . . . . Kenny. . . ."

Although the Western Union messenger had been through this before, he was near tears himself. "Maybe you'd better sit down, Ma'am," he said. He helped her to the divan and asked her if there was anything he could do.

"No. No, thank you," she said softly. "I'll be fine now."

As he walked out the door, he looked over his shoulder to make sure she was all right. She was crying softly . . . sorrowfully.

She was still in the same position when her husband came home that evening. He was startled when he saw her face. Her creamy complexion had turned pasty-white, and was spotted with red. Her eyes were swollen and bloodshot. She just sat there, staring at him as if she were in a coma.

"Ann! Darling! What's the matter?" He saw the telegram lying on the floor and seemed to sense what was wrong. With trembling hands he picked it up and after he had read it, he dropped on his knees with his head on his wife's lap. He wept.

During the weeks that followed, they did everything in their power to prove that the telegram was a mistake. They wrote to the State Department, the War Department, and called the governor, but all to no avail. The telegram was confirmed. Everyone was awfully sorry, but Pfc. Kenneth A. Halgren RA17316290, was dead.

When everything else seemed hopeless, Mrs. Halgren turned to God. She prayed continuously. She told God that if she could have her son back, she would try to be the best of all Christians. She promised that she would help anyone in need, even to the point of depriving herself. She prayed earnestly and whole-heartedly. As the months passed, Mr. Halgren began to believe that their son was dead, but Mrs. Halgren continued to pray.

Then one day, approximately a year after they received the news of Kenny's death, the phone interrupted their evening meal. Mrs. Halgren answered it, and the voice at the other end of the line said "Hello, Mom."

Her hand flew to her heart and she gasped, "Kenny! Kenny, is it you?"

"Yes Mom, it's me. I just landed in San Francisco. They told me about the telegram you got, so I thought I'd call you and tell you that it's all a big mistake. I'll be home in a few days."

"Oh Kenny," Mrs. Halgren sighed. "It's so good to hear your voice again. John! Come quickly! It's Kenny. He's alive! He's coming home!"

Mr. Halgren came rushing to his wife's side, bug-eyed and open-mouthed. "Is it really Ken?" he asked her in astonishment.

"Yes. Here's your father, Kenny."

"Hello, son."

"Hi, Dad, how are you?" said Kenny.

"Fine, son, just fine," boomed Mr. Halgren, "And how are you, my son?"

"I'm okay, Dad," he said. "Say, I'm going to have to go in just a minute. Can I talk to Mom again?"

"Sure, son, you bet," replied Mr. Halgren. He felt as if he would burst with pride and happiness.

Mrs. Halgren took the phone again. "Yes, Kenny?"

"Say, Mom, I told you that I'd be home in a few days, and I was wondering if I could bring a friend of mine with me."

"Certainly, Kenny, that's fine. Anything you want."

"Maybe I'd better explain first, Mom. He's a real swell guy, but both of his legs and one of his arms were shot off in the war. He doesn't have a home to go to, so I thought he could live with us. He's got wooden legs and can get around pretty well, and he's going to get a hook for his arm soon. Is it okay then?"

"I didn't know he was like that," said Mrs. Halgren dubiously. "It would be all right for a week or two, but I'm afraid I couldn't take care of him any longer than that. It would take most of my time and be an awful bother. I feel sorry for him, but I just don't think I could do it. You're not mad at me, are you darling?"

"No, Mom," replied Kenny. "I understand. I'll see you in a few days."

"All right, son. Hurry home now. 'Bye. Oh, John! Isn't it wonderful? I knew God would answer my prayers."

Kenny's mother and father spent the evening cleaning his room and getting all in readiness for his homecoming. They finished around midnight and were having coffee when the telephone rang again. It was the San Francisco Police. They had just found the body of Kenneth A. Halgren in the bay. From the information in the billfold, they deduced that she was his mother. Would she please come out to identify the body?

Mrs. Halgren, startled, whispered, "Yes, of course." She looked at her husband. "This is absurd. It must be a mistake. Someone's made a mistake!"

Two days later they were in San Francisco. Mrs. Halgren was a bundle of nerves when they entered the morgue. When the slab was pulled out and the sheet lifted, Mrs. Halgren looked at the body. "Yes, that's Kenny," she said, then quietly fainted.

It was Kenny, but he had three members of his body missing. Two legs and one arm.

