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THE LANTERN



WINTER 1965

The Lantern

URSINUS COLLEGE
January, 1965

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FROM WHENCE THE LANTERN SHINETH

"I can repeat as well as other folk if it comes to that—."

"Oh, it needn't come to that!" Alice hastily said.

Lewis Carroll, *Alices' Adventures in Wonderland*

But it has, dear Alice, believe us, it has. This issue of *The Lantern* is composed entirely of selections from previous issues of at least four years ago. The quality of the material is good; the content, interesting; and all of it, produced by previous Ursinus students.

And yet, be the material a fit morsel for the discerning mouths of the editors of the *New Yorker*, still, someone will ask *why* this issue is a composite of the past. *The Lantern* staff had a dual purpose for taking such action: first, we realized that 1964 was the year of reveling in past accomplishments and of a marked absence of present creativity in politics; and secondly, there was simply an inordinate lack of submissions. Therefore, in order to present a *Lantern* containing readable, intelligent, original, and uninsulting literature, we delved into the past.

Good, bad, or mediocre, this lantern is a reflection of past student interest and the present lack of interest.

The best literature is yet to be written, WRITE IT.

The Wise Man

—Philip Sterling Rowe



The Wise Man sat in the shade on the edge of town and thought. He thought of the universe, and God, and Man; he contemplated the Beginning and The End, the problems of This World and The Next. He was very old. As long as memory had accurately served them the villagers remembered seeing him in that same shade, thinking. People

for miles around had come to ask him questions or to seek advice. And because his was the wisdom of the ages he had never been known to answer mistakenly.

This day was made for thinking; a gentle breeze toyed with the Wise Man's silver hair, and the tree's mossy sheathing felt comfortable beneath it. He rested and waited and thought.

Out of the heat of afternoon a tired stranger, drawn by the impetus of doubt, thirsting insatiably for knowledge, approached him. The stranger was troubled and weary; the imprint of fear was upon his face; he had traveled far to ask his question:

"Old Man, you have lived long and are wise. Grant me the benefit, the wisdom of your lifetime; satisfy the nameless dread within me; put my mind at rest. I look upon our world and I grow fearful. I see the monster Science which we have ourselves created, and I am afraid—not for myself alone, but for the generations following. When will it end—this

progress in destruction? And how much further can our science go? What can we do to use it for the betterment of Man, as was intended?"

The Wise Man restlessly stretched out his feet and drew unintelligible figures in the warm dust. He studied the wind's rustle in the leaves above, and his shadow's fickle movement on the hot road—and he thought.

"Ours is a world of fear, physical and spiritual. In theory there is no limit to our progress, but, practically, we have now reached the end. We have achieved so much—communication, transportation. We have reached the farthest point. Think how we live today; think also of our fathers. Yet are we any happier? You, yourself, have answered. We have grown more dissatisfied at every new discovery. The product of invention has been insecurity. Our world today—greed, and intolerance, and again fear. Science's every accomplishment put to militant use—out of war comes our scientific progress, weapons. I don't wonder that you fear, for these are fearful times. Yes, these are times when souls as well as bodies stand in danger of extinction. For Mankind, it appears, seeks to destroy itself. Oh, with these modern ways of devastation I long so often for the old days, when we had far less and used it to far better purpose.

"Yet, of course, we must advance. I'm not so old or blind that I can't realize this truth. My only counsel is to advance mentally as well. I believe that we must know ourselves, now especially with this frightening new power. No, I see no further progress in any scientific area; there is no way to go. But do not think that we may now relax. The hardest task of all remains for us, the task of spiritually progressing until we can achieve intelligent control of our own ingenuity. It is the heritage of future generations—this, Man's most important work. But now it is the one road left to us. Yes, I will put your mind at rest. For Science finally is blocked. As I have said before, there is no way to go. And I thank God that we have reached our limit."

So spoke the Wise Man, he who had never erred. The stranger went his way in thoughtful silence, leaving the Wise Man to his shade and to his contemplations.

The Wise Man sat there on the edge of town and thought. He contemplated all that had passed in his lifetime. He studied the heat waves rising from the road, and the dust-devils twisting their way into the distance. With his eyes he followed them. At a far point some children were playing, and he watched them. He watched the curious rolling of the rounded stone they had been playing with. He watched it and studied it.

The Wise Man sat in the shade and thought. He thought for a long, long time. Then he arose, and, putting aside all worry of fire-arrows and spears, he walked out into the sunlight—and invented . . . the wheel.

Of Men and Lobsters

—Philip Sterling Rowe

Joe Gordon paused while crossing the parking lot to gaze up at the sky and reflect for a moment on its eternal production. The night was beautiful. Its thousand eyes winked down at Earth as if in laughter at some celestial joke. And the pale shadows on the newly-risen moon seemed, almost, to join in on the fun as did the whole galaxy. Joe slowly swung his vision in a great arc for as far as he could from one side to the other, drinking deep of the purity of space. He had often admired its timeless perfection. But tonight, somehow, the firmament reached out to him and held him in a splendored bond. He felt an identity, a oneness, with the stars themselves. The heavens drew closer, and the night wrapped round about him, and the infinite vastness of the universe was a nonentity. Caught up in its mantle, Joe thought, "This night is different. Something great is about to happen."

It was; it did.

* * *

It's difficult to explain how it happened. Any reasonably sane person would go quietly mad, rather than admit the possibility. Joe considered himself reasonably sane, and as such, was vulnerable. Well, how would you feel if you suddenly found yourself in Joe's position?

Joe and his wife were shopping, a respected American tradition. In the super market Joe's wife went one way; **he went** another. It's as simple as that.

"Hey jerk," a voice shrilled in his ear, "lay off the aerial, will ya?"

Joe whirled around. There was no one within twenty yards, and certainly no one with—

"Hey stupid, how many times I gotta tell ya? Leggo the aerial."

He glanced down, surprised to find himself bending over the lobster tank. For some reason he had absent-mindedly picked up one of the lobsters, and was gingerly holding it by the antenna. Suddenly, at the base of his spine, he felt that prickling sensation of fear. There was no one around—he looked at the animal in his hands. No, that was too incredible—



"Yeah, that's right. It's me," the lobster said.

It dropped with a splash.

"That's better, Joe. Pick me up right."

Now Joe Gordon, as has been previously stated, considered himself a reasonably sane man. For this reason, and because of a regrettable addiction to science fiction reading, he refused to utter the expressions customarily used at times like these. He didn't say, "Either I'm going crazy or you spoke." He didn't even resort to the screaming hysterics. As calmly as he could under the circumstances, Joe managed to shriek, "Who in hell are you?"

"I," came the immeasurably pleased reply, "am a Martian."

This was going to be a night to remember!

* * *

Regrettably, the next segment of that rather one-sided conversation must be omitted, or if not omitted, then condensed. Certainly a word-for-word record would be in very poor taste. But then, might not the more polite elements of your vocabulary be temporarily forgotten in the excitement of meeting a Martian, and a lobster-shaped one at that? I don't excuse Joe Gordon. I only appreciate his situation.

After a while, Joe examined more closely the specimen in his hand. It was hardly extraordinary, just a normal looking lobster, if you

can call any lobster normal looking, a statement for which I excuse myself to all lobster lovers. For undoubtedly to some a lobster might quite conceivably look attractive. It only happens that my preference in such things runs toward the broiled state and well-cooked variety—a phrase which, if unnecessary, at least adequately describes Joe Gordon's feelings.

"How is it you can speak our language" Joe asked.

The Martian snorted. (A difficult feat for a lobster, but one which, when accomplished, adds infinitely more emphasis to the gesture.) "Speak your language! You Earth people have no language, just a nauseous jumble of ugly, irritating sounds. You're not only dependent on your primitive vocal chords, you must also use gestures to be understood. It sure beats me how you ever get anything done. You don't even have a standard system. And those of you who seem to speak the same language are different, too. Why even I find myself using your slang, now and then."

He went on, "Pure thought is the only true communication. I send mine to you through these aerials, and it seems as if I'm talking."

"Antennae" Joe suggested.

"That's the natural species," replied the lobster. "But you see, as I said before, I'm a Martian." He continued, "I use the word aerial as the nearest meaning in your vocabulary. Actually, it's much more. It controls my every move, and is so sensitive that any prolonged handling or pressure, such as you gave it, could damage it beyond repair."

"But of course you wouldn't be interested in my anatomy. Right now you're wondering why I'm here. Well, I'll settle your doubts now. It's an invasion, and I'm a scout. Yep, just like all the stories. I make my report tomorrow, and," he added playfully, "if I don't show up, it's all off."

The sudden hope set Joe aflame.

"The aerials," he thought, "his weakness. If only I—"

Slowly Joe crushed his fingers together. Then his fingers stopped. He hadn't meant for them to stop, yet they had.

The air was filled with the laughter of one little Martian.

"That's better, Joe. I like action. I'm surprised you didn't try sooner. Why, I was told that you'd try to kill us on sight. Earth creatures don't like things that are different. These other lobsters in the tank, they sense a difference, too. They'd kill me if they could, but they know I could handle them all. Oh, wait Joe; don't get to doubting your strength. See, I can handle any rational being, mentally. Why I could clamp a block on your brain so you'd never even remember this. But I won't have to. No one would believe you and it won't matter anyway after tomorrow. Now don't look so desperate. Oh sure, we'll kill you all off, but would that be so bad? Look at the mess you've made of things. Besides, you knew this was coming. You've talked about it for years— invasion from Mars."

He laughed again, and Joe felt the bottom drop out of his stomach.

“Joe Gordon, put that filthy thing down and help me carry these groceries.”

Joe looked up helplessly at his wife, then placed the Martian in his tank, and turned away.

“Aren’t you even going to say goodbye, Joe?” the Martian called. “Well, never mind,” he added cheerfully, “I’ll see you tomorrow—D-day you know.”

In a daze Joe stumbled after his wife. Of course the Martian had been right. No one would believe him. And tomorrow—Joe shuddered.

One thing in particular was burning through his mind—the answer to his question, “Why lobsters?”

“Why not?” the Martian replied frankly.

Why not, of course, why not? What had Earth expected—Wellsian monsters, fanfare, flying saucers? What better way to study Earth than from the safety of a supermarket lobster tank? What better way to observe the stupidity of their ridiculously easy prey? And tomorrow—what difference did it make? Man had made a mess of things. But if only they had known; if only they could try again.

Joe bowed his head in resignation.

“So long, Kate,” he started, “I’ve got a long line of bars to hit before morning.”

But Kate wasn’t listening. She was looking backward in fascinated horror.

“Joe,” she cried, “look at the terrible thing you’ve done.”

He looked back. Some children, their natural fear overcome by his example, were curiously picking up the lobsters for closer examination. Children—irrational, cruel, so prone to mimicking adults. One little urchin, a broad grin on her childish sunny face, was busily twisting the antennae off the head of the largest lobster. Joe could almost hear the Martian’s scream of pain. He looked at the child. “I can control any rational being, mentally.” It must have been frustrating, the attempt to control that mind.

Children—what could be more irrational? The saviors of the world—what could be more fitting? The best laid plans of men and lobsters—

* * *

“Let’s go home, Kate. I’ve got a lot of life I want to start living. And Kate, I don’t know how long it’s been since I told you this, but in case you’ve forgotten it like I had, I love you.”

They walked together beneath the same night sky, but it was different. The timeless aura was gone, and it was fitting.

* * *

The next morning the seafood manager, much to his consternation, found a dead lobster in the tank. It had been torn to pieces by the other lobsters while apparently helpless, for it appeared that somehow it had lost its antennae. Lobsters aren’t so far removed from humans in hating anything different.

It is interesting to note the curious fact that, while making out his report, the manager could find no actual loss on the books, even though he knew he had a dead lobster. It seemed almost as if he'd had one too many, in the first place. But the mind plays funny tricks sometimes.

At any rate, it isn't too far fetched to imagine, somewhere, a Martian Task Force Leader, faced with the unexplained loss of his scout, addressing the army:

"I guess we'll have to postpone the invasion—at least temporarily."

* * *

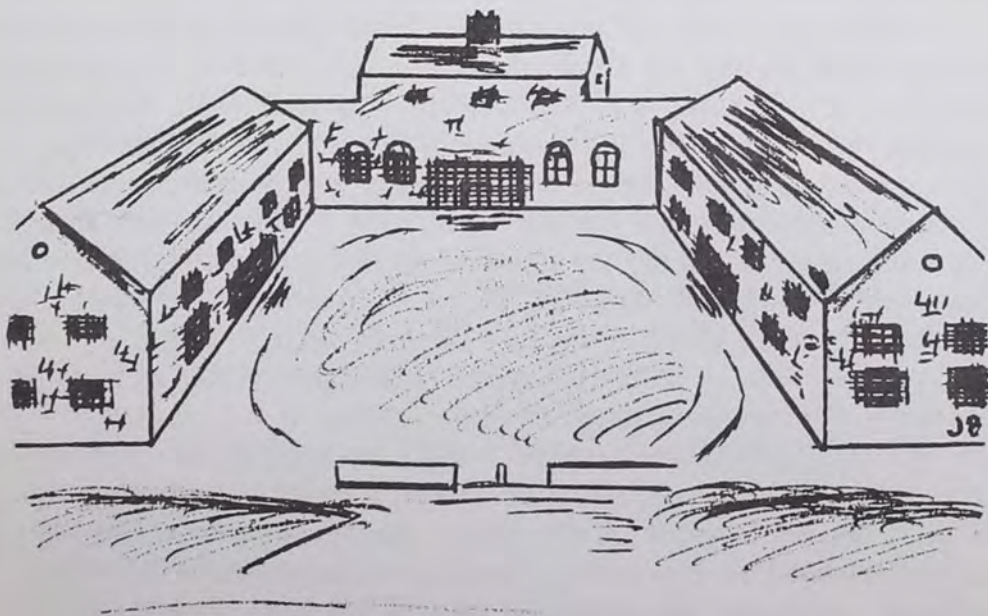
Directive to GHQ No. 1

Commander Qrl,
Greetings:

This text has been relayed verbatim, exactly as it was found in a leading Earth publication. While published as fiction, the simile is too strikingly accurate to be accidental. I have no doubt that it explains, fully, the disappearance of Scout 17. Furthermore, I feel that it is to our advantage to delay matters for a while. It is obvious that we cannot now continue with the present plan. However, this story's very form proves our main strength—time. A patient race, such as our own, can afford to wait, for Earth will never suspect or believe until it is too late. Meanwhile, I respectfully submit that we follow the story writer's suggestion and postpone the invasion, at least until we have discovered a better way to plant our scouts, and can observe more closely. It appears that there is a great deal which we do not know about these humans. Let us then employ a term which is strictly Earth-like, and alien to our thought processes. Let us postpone the invasion—*temporarily*.

Respectfully,
Scout 14

Spring 1958



Deliberate -

Beyond Conception

—Carol Flood

Revenge—that was all we wanted, although at the time we had no conception of its macabre outcome. How I wish now that we had never settled on the idea! When I think back, nothing could seem more inhuman and unjustified when one examines the reasons, and nothing could seem more typical of private school brats. I know now that ever since the “accident” I have carried a deepening feeling of guilt within me. But at the time the only emotion embedded in our minds and hearts was one of revenge. Pure, simple malicious, feminine revenge. How could I have ever let myself be involved in such a petty incident? It all comes back to me now as I think about it—those intervening years melt away

* * *

As I walked along the flagstone paved walk between the cottages, I asked myself, “What kind of retaliation could we use?” Before me stretched the broad expanse of our beautiful golf-course-like campus.

Fall was coming; one could feel it, and how it lifted the spirits!

Suddenly, I forgot all thoughts of Daphne, and I just wanted to go for a long walk during the time before the dinner hour. I went back to the porch of the cottage, took my bicycle, and rode down the lane past the younger girls’ cottages and the dean’s house, past the swimming pool and the cabins of a long since unused camp until I came to a turntable before tennis courts which no one used now. They showed their ruin quite plainly—grass peered through cracks in the asphalt, and the guard screens were broken and sagging! I took my time strolling across them. Their melancholy air added to my now pensive mood.

I had no fear of meeting anyone in this part of the campus for no one bothered to come here anymore.

I now approached the path leading up through the rock-covered hill. Slowly wandering along the meandering path, I stopped and picked some thick blades of grass, and, placing one between my thumbs, I blew on it and listened to the hoarse, honking noise which issued forth. It was a trick which had fascinated me as a child; I repeated it now.

Memories from past years suddenly floated through my mind triggered by my childish game as I came to the top of the hill and started down the other side.

At the foot I stopped and went inside an old, deserted spring house to listen to my voice echo among the moss-covered stones. A trickle of water ran across the floor, and I stooped, cupped my hands and took a drink of its refreshing coolness.

Figuring it was safe now that I was far away from the main campus, I pulled out a cigarette from a concealed pocket in my coat and lit it, enjoying more the breaking of a rule which branded smoking as unlady-like than the act itself.

"Do you always come here and smoke?" a cold voice came out of the dim recesses of the spring house and echoed eerily. Startled, I spun around and saw Daphne step out of the darkness. Her eyes met mine and gave me that faintly amused look which seemed to be her perpetual expression.

"Don't you know that young ladies don't smoke? But, then, I guess one of your kind wouldn't know about such things as being a lady."

I looked at her cruel, mocking, yet beautiful face and felt the sudden urge to slap it again and again.

But, no! I'll not do it; it would be just what she would want. Then she would have a good reason to get me into trouble.

"How much does it mean to you not to have me tell?" asked Daphne. "I could really get you in serious trouble, you know. No, I don't think I'll even demean myself by bargaining with you. I'll just keep this in reserve for a time when you particularly irk me. Just watch your step." And with that she moved past me, on up the hill, and out of sight. I watched her move away and noticed the provocative swing of her walk, part of the method she used in ensnaring the opposite sex.

I stayed in the spring house for a while longer and had another cigarette, hoping it would have a calming effect on me. But, as it did not, I finally climbed up the hill and down across the tennis courts to where I had left my bicycle. But when I came to the place, I found it gone. Immediately to my mind came a picture of Daphne happening upon the bike and deciding to ride it back to spite me once again. Looking around first to make sure she had not just hidden it, I finally decided that my first deduction was correct.

I walked quickly back to the cottage, fuming and becoming more angry every step of the way. When I came back, there under the porch was my bike, muddy from where she had ridden it through every puddle she could find, but at least it was in one piece. I went around to the side entrance of the building, opened the door, and walked in. Who should be standing there talking to our bloodhound of a housemother, but Daphne! She gave me her faintly amused look again, turned back to Mrs. Pippin, and resumed her conversation. As I came nearer, Daphne moved back so that I had to walk between the two of them to go upstairs.

Suddenly, Daphne commented: "Do you smell anything burning, Mrs. Pippin? I'm sure I smell smoke."

I could have told Daphne what she smelled if anything, but I decided it was better to let the chance pass. I might say something I would regret later.

Mrs. Pippin sniffed around suspiciously, and said, "I think you're imagining things, Daphne."

I relaxed, knowing she would not conduct her usual test to prove that I was smoking by having me come and kiss her.

I walked on up the stairs, gave Daphne a withering look, and said to her under my breath as I passed, "I'll get you sometime, and you'll never forget it when I do!"

* * *

"Damn it all, she's done it again!" I yelled as I burst into my room. My roommate and some of our friends looked up in surprise as I plopped down on the bed.

"I tell you, I can't stand it any longer. I'm going to fix Daphne but good, by myself too, if none of you will help."

"But I thought we were all going to do it together," said Jayne, a small bouncy redhead. "I know that I'm not going to stand for some of the things she does any longer. I've had just about enough of her little tricks. Why just the other day"

"I know," said Meg. "You don't have to tell us. It'll be just one more of the typical, little games she likes to play. I think she really gets a kick out of making people dislike her. I vote for doing something that will really give her reason to hate us."

"Another vote here!" spoke up Chris. "I'm sick of the way she goes around stealing my boyfriends. You don't know what it's like to have to room with her. It's plain hell!"

"I'm glad you all feel that way," I said, happy to hear that others felt the same way I did. "Now all we have to do is devise a plan."

* * *

I remember now how we thought out that calloused little scheme—how our diabolical and childish little minds took such delight in forming another's misery. But then this seems to be the way among adolescents. Indeed, I see how people can say that young people are more merciless than anyone in the world.

I finally devised our scheme. I thought then that genius had suddenly taken up residence in my mind for fashioning such a brilliant piece of planning. It fit in so well with the circumstances. I had hit upon the idea of posing as a fortune teller at our school's charity fair to be held during the weekend. We seniors were responsible for a tent. And since no fair could be complete without a fortune teller, I thought we could get back at Daphne by telling her a fortune that would really shake her into a better attitude, or so I had hoped then. I remember now how that ill-omened affair came about

* * *

The evening of the great event turned out to be beautiful. It was a reasonably clear night. A few stars were out, and the moon was not entirely hidden by the clouds. A slight breeze ruffled the trees and blew the leaves down the paths. On the campus there was unusual activity as preparations got under way. Upon the lawn in front of the cottages, lanterns were being strung up, a few booths erected, and many stalls set up for selling refreshments and holding games. The fair was to include amusements, rides, ponies, a small circus, and the rest of the usual attractions.

I dressed in my costume, complete with long dangling earrings, bangles, and a full, peasant skirt. We had all pooled our clothes and jewelry resources for this get-up, and now I surveyed myself in the mirror while the others passed approval. But I could not decide whether to wear a mask or not. Finally, I determined not to, so as to get the full effect of Daphne's expression as she came in the tent and saw me there. I knew that she would not be able to resist coming in when she heard that the tent held a fortune teller, for Daphne's one weakness that we knew of was her tendency to be superstitious.

"You look great; you really do," said Chris. "If I didn't know you weren't for real, I would swear that you just got off a cart and hadn't taken a bath in weeks!"

"You just be quiet, you jealous thing! You're mad because you aren't doing it to her."

I put on my make-up and really brushed the mascara on thick. Then I grabbed the crystal ball we had resurrected out of the costume room and walked to the fairground. Everything was in full swing by the time I arrived. And a good crowd was milling around, spending lots of money, I hoped. After all the work that had gone into the fair we should have a good take to show for it. I went over to my tent, pulled the flap back, and lit the lantern for atmosphere. It cast a dim glow throughout the room and made the dark shadows in the corners more pronounced. I stood back and surveyed the scene.

"If this doesn't make it seem real, I don't know what will," I said aloud.

"Are you open for business?" a squeaky little voice said. And around the corner peeked a little, old lady, her buttony, brown eyes bright in anticipation.

"Of course. Come right in," I said in a low voice, keyed for the role.

She scurried right in, sat down on the chair and gazed raptly at the crystal ball shimmering on the table. I thought to myself of how she would probably believe every word I told her.

"Cross my palm thrice with silver," I intoned.

* * *

The evening wore on, and I had many customers. The hour grew

late, and I thought that Daphne would never come. After all the conniving we had done—what if she never appeared? It sure would be ironical, although the whole evening would be wasted as far as we were concerned. Many of the other kids had stopped in earlier asking me if she had come. I was really beginning to wonder if she would show

“Oh, so you’re supposed to be the great fortune teller everyone has been talking about, huh?” said that low, mocking voice. And in walked Daphne, dressed for goodness knows what occasion, but certainly not this one. Her cocktail dress, chiffon stole, and silver heels were entirely out of place.

“Yes, don’t you want to know what the crystal ball has in store for you?” I mocked right back.

“Oh, well, although I’m sure you don’t have any supernatural powers, let’s hear it anyway,” Daphne retorted.

“Cross my palm thrice.”

“Oh, here. Cut out all the jazz. But remember in the future how generous I am.” And she threw a five dollar bill down on the table.

I was almost beginning to believe that she was a little high from the cider that was being served outside.

“Put yourself into a communicable state of mind so that the spirits beyond can reach you and tell you what the future holds in store,” I commanded, thus setting the stage for carrying out my plan.

Daphne leaned back in the chair and stared sardonically at me as I gazed at the ball. I could see it in the reflection of her beautiful, yet cruel face, and the light flickering on her gold hair, and bringing out the unusual formation of her high cheekbones. Her dark blue, brooding eyes—serious now—followed mine and contemplated the crystal.

I had a speech all rehearsed in my mind—especially made up for her and the occasion—and I started to say it. But suddenly out of my mouth came strange words forming themselves into even stranger sentences.

“You, Daphne, are one who is haunted by dark memories of past days and tales.” And into her eyes flickered a startled expression. I paused, and tried to continue with my planned speech, but my tongue erratically rushed on, and the unfamiliar words came more quickly.

“In the dim past your grandmother died mysteriously by her own hand. And not so long ago your mother did likewise. You, also, will follow the same fate!”

A frightened and shocked gasp came from her whole being. I leaned back, exhausted by the effort my speech had caused me. Upon looking up at Daphne, I saw such an unmistakable expression of fear upon her face that I would never want to see again. She jumped up, knocking over the stool, gave me one bewildered glance from wounded and pained eyes, and rushed out of the tent. My spontaneous words had evidently hit home in some mysterious way. I began to feel a twinge of conscience, as I thought about it, and desperately wished I were any-

where but in that tent, and doing anything but being a fortune teller. Up to now, I had gotten quite a kick out of the whole thing.

In burst my roommate Bobbie. "I saw Daphne run out of here back to the cottage. What happened? Did it go off all right?"

"I can't talk about it now," I answered. "I'm afraid that something else is involved here—something. . . . Whatever made me say it?"

"What are you talking about?" Bobbie asked. "You don't make sense at all!"

"I'll tell you later. Don't ask me now. Please go."

A remorseful feeling of guilt was by now quite persistently bothering me. I felt as if I had almost plunged a knife into Daphne's back when she gave me that one unforgettable look before she fled. I knew I would never forget it.

Bobbie finally left, but not before giving me a queer look and shrugging her shoulders as if offended. She must have told the others to leave me alone, because I saw no one else that I knew for the rest of the evening. The time dragged on, but finally the hour of closing drew near. I got rid of my last customer and left to go back to the cottage after turning in my profits.

I saw no one I knew on the way and guessed that they had all gone back to wait for me to tell them what had occurred. Slowly, I walked back brooding upon Daphne. I had had many odd and eccentric people in my tent that evening, but none had affected me as Daphne had.

Back in my room it was as I had imagined. All my friends were gathered eating, talking, and listening to records. But I knew they were in there primarily to hear my story. As I came in, all talk stopped. I sat down on the bed and slowly and painfully told them what had happened—how she had finally come, how different words as the fortune came to me, and how she had fled so suddenly.

"I know," said Chris, Daphne's roommate. "She's locked our door and won't let me in. She sure is acting queer. Before, I could even hear her pacing overhead."

I looked up as if I would be able to see Daphne walking, but instead, through a crack in the thin, white, plaster ceiling, there was a dark, red stain seeping through and slowly spreading.

The others followed my gaze.

Winter 1961

VILLANELLE

The tragic eyes of night (withholding tear)
Envelope misty silence o'er the town.
Black-shrouded Death, I beg you, be sincere.

Your hidden mysteries are source of fear
To those who cannot see, within your crown,
The tragic eyes of night. Withholding tear

The frightened fawn becomes a stately deer
Who pleads, with earnest eyes of velvet brown,
"Black-shrouded Death, I beg you, be sincere!"

The ripples of the stream leap up to peer,
Before the groaning current forces down
The tragic eyes of night, withholding tear.

And so, though it may be but one short year,
Though you may sense a harshness in my frown,
Black-shrouded Death, I beg you Be sincere?

'Impossible,' you say? I still would hear
The final gushing breaker as I drown;
The tragic eyes of night (withholding tear,
Black-shrouded)! Death, I beg you, be sincere.

—Allison
December 1961

VILLANELLE: INTERLUDE

The moon's a bright new penny, still not spent,
A gift for those whose love can reach the sky—
Come walk with me, and dream, and be content.

I think they'd never give you their consent
To love a bankrupt madman they've heard sigh:
"The moon's a bright new penny, still not spent."

I know you're weary of their argument
That those who live on love will see love die,—
Come walk with me, and dream, and be content.

That two can't live as one without a cent,
For their confusion, love, we'll not deny:
The moon's a bright new penny, still not spent.

They think that love with pennies must be lent,
They're right, if dreams and pennies have a tie;
Come walk with me, and dream, and be content.

Their bankruptcy of heart we'll not resent,
Someday, perhaps, they'll learn what dreams can buy:
The moon's a bright new penny, still not spent,—
Come walk with me, and dream, and be content.

—*Bill Lybarger*
December 1961

RUNE GREEN STONES
(For Betty-Gene)

I

Ah, Jean, the night is cold.
I think you sleep; and that's as well.
The nights, a thousandfold,
Have rasped against your ruin, Jean.

II

Her eyes were cold; by God,
A green that never knew a hearth,
Nor gave a man a nod,
Nor raised its arch for comforting.

We came, all of us that could.
She had no need of lovers then,
And summoned who she would,
For she was different, you see.

For all your wizardry,
She never quite was there.
Her lips were sorcery
To watch, to watch.

Her hair, no, not a wisp awry;
She spoke a melody . . .
Her softness just a lie . . .
And warmth was only coquetry.

She smiled for us all—
And touched, forever, everyone;
A phantom Helen, sent
To win all hearts, for she had none.

III

The snows of new years followed,
Seeking candlemas—
Some love had grown to scorn
And time, like all things, passed.

IV

Changes come briskly, by the back stair:
An old man, wizened, dry,
Who ran the tinker store where
No one seemed to go

(So pale he looked, she wondered if
He were alive at all;
His smile seemed a hieroglyph
And presence bode no good.)

And so to vend his wares he came.
He smiled, and knew
That she would never be the same.
He smiled and knew.

In spite of all presentment,
And even if all purgatory
Rose in its resentment,
One can not twist fate's allegory.

"I sell", he said, "what you would buy.
I sate all appetite.
And since I sell all valued things,
What is your heart's delight?"

"They say", she said, "I have no heart,
I have all else, and so.
If you are truly what you say
That's what you will bestow.
My lovers call me fickle, for
The lack of it. Exhaust
Your wares, but get me it.
And just what is the cost?"

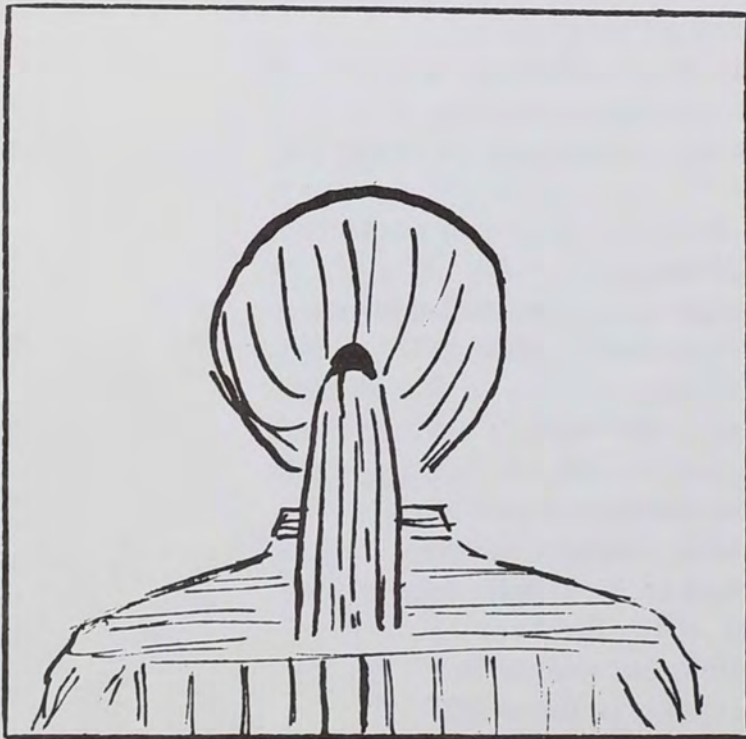
“The price”, he said, “is only
In the wearing of it. That”,
He said, “is cheap, perhaps I have
No need of assignat.
What’s done is done, to coin a phrase,
And can not be undone.
Accept this thing, I’ll go,
And each to his own benison.”

He laughs; she smiles, and accepts
No low moans arose,
But not because the specters slept—
The choice was hers; she chose.

No sooner had the heart assumed
Its place than it began
To ache and burn
As only nemsis can.
There dawned surprise, disdain,
And finally, pain.

V

But, Jean, no night is ever cold
For dreamless sleepers, you as well:
We hear the tolling chapel bell.
And shiver when a tale’s retold.



—Peter Vennema
Spring MCMLXII

REDEMPTION

Through revolving doors they go
a fighting, kicking, sulking mass,
treacherous, leering, brooding.

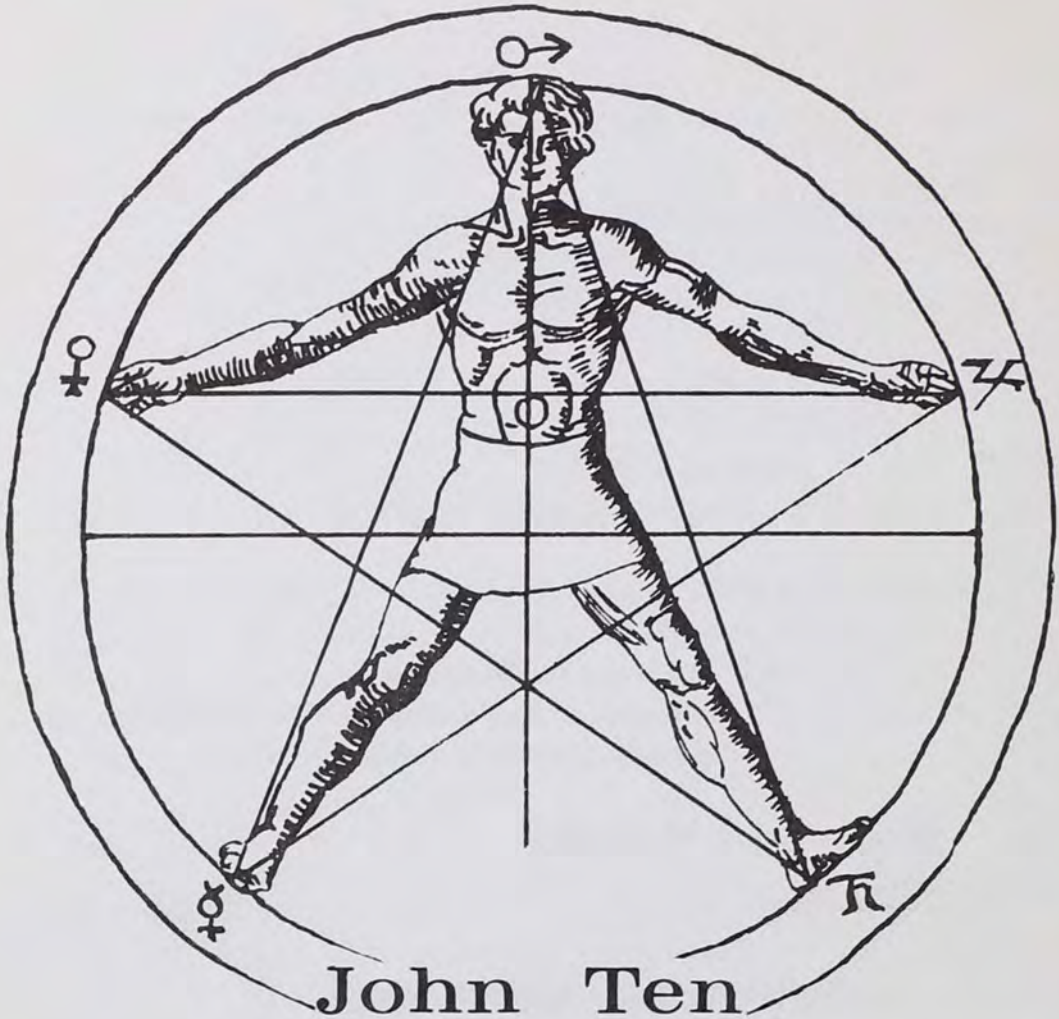
The world is but a crowd of frenzied women
on an escalator,
battling their way
to the bargain basement.

And I am a piece of discarded merchandise
kicked through the aisles
by these large situations
with spiked heels, massive pocketbooks,
and albatross-like foxes about their necks.

Perhaps I shall be bought.

—*Harry L. Serio*
1962





—Phyllis Furst

The door opened noiselessly and John Ten, in the two hundredth year of his man-made immortality strode effortlessly across the translucent domed room. At the far side, he stopped before the wall, pulled switches, turned dials, delicately applied paired electrodes to temple and wrists, punched three buttons and waited. The wall hummed. Man-created machinery probed, analyzed, and presently synthesized the delicate balance of compounds necessary for John Ten's physical and mental health.

While waiting, John Ten scanned the screens built into the wall. The year, 5025, the month, the day and the hour flashed on a perpetual calendar. A kaleidoscope of current events, (encapsulated, predigested, and without advertisement) was accepted by his resting mind. Finally his attention was drawn to the screen which depicted his commitments and assignments for this day. With pleasure he realized he was free. A day of rest and leisure was his to spend as he saw fit.

The humming wall was quiet now and from ejector tubes he took and swallowed the prescribed pills. He detached the electrodes, switched off the machinery and turned gladly to his day.

Across the domed room facing huge light spaces was another instrument. In physical form it resembled an organ with banks of keys, stops and foot pedals. However, John Ten was not aware of the word "organ" nor did he know of music. But this instrument, before which he stood, went far beyond music. In it, modern technology had incorporated the memory of all sounds, of all time, occurring in all space. It was the history of the Universe, the knowledge of the Universe, the key to the Universe. But to John Ten it was a plaything for idle hours. Of such men as he was the Universe composed in the year 5025.

John Ten seated himself at the console of the machine and allowed long, spatulate fingers to find harmony and melody in past ages and other worlds. Effortlessly he crossed space by pulling out two stops. Aldeberan, his home, faded and Earth's green hills, the cradle of his forefathers, was present. Time fell away until he reached his favorite jumping-off place. His fingers idly played a fragment of time in a miniscule of Space—

*Stars of the Summer night
Far in yon azure deep
Hide, hide your golden light
She sleeps, my Lady sleeps.*

"Lovely", he murmured. Without conscious volition he pulled out two more stops and two more centuries ceased to exist—

*Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make
Ful blissful may they singen whan they wake;
Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-shake,
And driven away the longe nightes blake.*

He was deep in reverie now, playing an enchanting game. Without pause he selected stops and two thousand years fell away and ceased to exist.

*οὐ χρὴ λέοντος σκύμμου ἐν πόλει τρέφειν·
[μάλιστα μὲν λέοντα μὴ ἔν πόλει τρέφειν]
ἦν δ' ἐκτραφῆ τις, τοῖς τρόποις ἵπηρετεῖν.*

Suddenly the instrument was quiet. John Ten sat upright, his fingers groping for the rest of the story and song he had begun to live. No sound, no meaning came from the silent machine. The balance of this fragment had been lost from the memory of man.

"Damn", said John Ten loudly. With the use of the archaic word

his fingers accidentally touched the theological connotation the word had once held. Immediately he sensed a shock, watched in amazement as a bank of lights on the keyboard blinked out. A fuse had blown. "Damn", he said again in another time sequence and another register. A second fuse blew; another row of lights went out.

He sat quite still now, a perplexed expression on his ever-young face. "Curious," he thought, "why should an archaic combination of sound and meaning evoke such a reaction in an immortally perfect machine?" Softly he experimented, playing the letter "D" in all time-sequences, not neglecting to add sufficient stops to correct for local superstitions in primitive worlds. The machine responded smoothly and with no deviation from a normal performance. John Ten added the letters "A" and "M" to the "D". The additional letters brought no change in the machine's behavior. But when he added the letter "N" there was again a small shock, followed by a blown fuse. By experimenting he discovered that the abnormal response was only evoked between the years one and two thousand, and only occurred on the planet Earth. Prior to, and after this period the letter combinations behaved as usual.

Fully aroused, and conscious of a novel feeling of fearful expectation and discovery John Ten played the 5025 version of four and seven letter swear words. He played them in all time and space combinations. Nothing whatsoever happened. Thoughtfully, he rose and entered the room housing the machine's soul. He replenished the exhausted fuse bank with freshly synthesized fuses and returned once again to the console.

Long he sat staring through the opalescent lights that were native to his home. Although the possibility seemed remote past his wildest imaginings, it appeared that the machine was capable of major failure. Never since man had achieved immortality and had departed from the restrictive confines of Earth had the omniscience of the machine been questioned. But this was not the loss of something simple, like the loss of the end of the early Greek tale. No,—one word used in a special sense over a period of two thousand years on the planet Earth had been left out of the machine's memory bank, and this same word used in a special sense of which he had no understanding was sufficient to cause a short circuit. A short circuit in a perfect machine which had had no mechanical failure in almost 3000 years of continued use.

John Ten gave careful instructions to the machine. The result was increased resistances in the critical area of the circuits where the short had occurred. He stepped-up the voltage and rebalanced the circuits. At length he was satisfied and began to play systematically backward through 2000 years of Earth history. He locked the stops of the instrument in the positions in which they had been when the original short-circuit occurred. Then he played every combination of letters in every language which had existed on Earth during that period. Each time he played a letter combination that had theological significance the

machine faltered. But many instructions to the machine rectified each error and strengthened and reinforced its capabilities.

John Ten was really excited now. Here was a whole area of knowledge not originally included in the machines' memory banks. How a mistake of such magnitude had occurred 3000 years ago he did not know, but he, he would correct it, and undoubtedly receive the Citation of Merit from the Citizen's Supreme Council.

When at length, as the day was waning and the green Aldeberan night was closing in, he felt satisfied that he had fed the machine enough examples of words to enable it to reconstruct the old discipline called Theology.

He drew a deep breath. He pulled stops and played a chord. Softly, faintly came the words:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.

John Ten smiled with quiet satisfaction. The machine *was* omniscient! Man and his works were supreme. As his hands lay quietly in his lap and the machine stood quietly awaiting his next command, there came a sudden loud, clear voice:

Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

With these words the world of John Ten disappeared.

Winter 1961

Torch ends sputter in the pail,
Blood and tumble fill the tower,
Star-flat lords bedeck the hall;
Dawn has caused the mead to sour.
Having been a bad lad learning
How to douse the mental light,
I see the sun a-burning
Up the alcoholic night.
Having laid a rose wreath there
On the corpse of drunken fun,
I turn my back and stoutly swear
Against the sober sun.
Another eve come sweet and soon
When I can toast a Bacchic moon!

—D. Newcombe
January 1961

The General and the Birdnest

—Roy Christman

The uniforms were grey, there was no question about that. One was hard put, though, to distinguish whether the grey was from the powdery dust of the road or from the natural color of the cloth. At the head of the column rode an erect man on a big white horse, obviously a leader and a soldier to the very core.

Two other officers were riding alongside the general on the white horse. The column was stretched out for miles behind the three, containing everything that an army needed in 1863.

The general and his two companions came to a fork in the road shaded by a large oak tree. The three paused. The man on the right suddenly leaped off his horse and reached down to a place on the ground just in front of the horse's hooves. He brought up a birdnest with four chirping baby robins.

"Look, General Lee, a birdnest. It must have fallen out of the tree. There's four babies in it."

The general said almost tenderly, "Give them to me." He then proceeded to rip their little heads off one by one. "Let's go," he said. "We got to make Gettysburg by nightfall." He wiped his bloody hands on his pants as the column began to move down the road once more.

1963

Not Quite Free

—*Steve Dearsley*

“Well,” he thought as the key turned in the massive lock, “the time is here at last.” Then he faded slowly away into the newly fallen shadows. He was next seen strolling away from the building that had swallowed the sun only minutes before, but on his way there he didn’t neglect to admire the flowers and vegetables that lined the path. As he left the grounds of the building, his brown clothes merged into the similarly colored clay wall around it, and he vanished. Now out of sight, he stood before a tree growing against the wall and grabbed the thickest branch that presented itself. His hands struggled to remain wound around the branch as he hoisted himself up to where the flailing legs under his overfed body could find rest in a cranny in the wall. Peaches came tumbling down onto the newly hoed earth and among the crops; swears were mumbled, and a very quiet “God forgive me.” He rested for a moment wedged between the tree and the wall, then he began inching upwards again. Upon reaching the top of the wall, he rolled onto the layer of loose stones that completed the wall, and in doing so, he tore his wrap, which brought forth oaths slightly stronger than those before. He jumped down to the other side; his knees collapsed under the flesh that had developed above them over the years and he sank into the dew-covered weeds. He salvaged himself and strode off down the path that wound by the wall.

His whistling during this walk was interrupted by the flapping of wings, and for the next ten minutes or so he amused himself by throwing pebbles at the bats flapping through the vestiges of daylight. He soon came to a stile that separated the road from a pasture; he stepped over this and immediately stopped whistling. He now concentrated intently upon where he placed his feet as he wound through the pasture. Upon reaching the fence on the opposite side, he climbed up the three split beech railings that formed the fence and then climbed down them to another and larger road. About a hundred yards to the left was a light, which he walked towards with such zeal that he stumbled in a rut.

As he opened the door of the house from which came the light,

all heads swung to see who had come to join them. As soon as they recognized him and his garments, they shouted and bade him enter, which he did silently. He wormed his bulk as best he could through the men, and gave a signal to a man in a leather apron; within a minute the large man in brown had a mug of ale in his hand. Only when half of the ale was inside him did he condescend to speak to the men surrounding him. Then his jolly face came to life. The laughter he caused was amazing—considering that he was so somberly dressed. People milled around simply to hear him talk.

Later in the evening, after a good number of the men had left, the man in brown shouted for a chess board and pieces. It was quickly produced. He chose a partner, one he thought he could defeat, and the two set up the pieces in their proper places. The man on the white began the game. As each piece was moved, the mover signified by means of a long draught of ale, that he was satisfied with his new position on the board, and that the game should continue. It was a long game, but from the amount of laughter which went on, the two players enjoyed themselves. When the challenger saw he was actually losing, instead of finishing the game, he swung his arm across the board so that his heavy sleeve swept the pieces onto the floor. They went rattling down, and came to rest just after the man in the leather apron bolted over, swearing at the offender. He was forced to grovel on his hands and knees and pick up the pieces. His brown cloak swept the oaken floor clean wherever he crawled, and his face became quite red due to the uncompromising mixture of ale and exercise. At the end of a few minutes, he had found all but one of the pieces, but since the bishop couldn't be found, the man in brown was allowed to return to his humorous stories.

Presently, a man dressed in brightly colored clothes swaggered in and drew a mandolin from under his coat. The eight men who were left inside the house congregated around the musician, and began to sing. The tunes were made slightly less enjoyable because of the voice of one certain man who was a good deal out of key. However, as with the chess game, all enjoyed themselves. Even the man in the leather apron mouthed the words, although nobody could hear him. By the time the mandolin had vanished, it was well into the morning, and only a few men were left; the man in the brown wrap was among them. After a final mug of ale before the fire, to which no more fuel was added, even this man left and went into the chilly morning air. When the door had closed behind him, he took a deep breath so as to tuck in his belly, and pulled the cord around his middle a bit tighter. He began to retrace his steps of six hours earlier.

He returned to the beech railings, but instead of climbing over them, he squeezed through the spaces to enter the pasture. By this time, he wasn't concerned where he stepped in the field, but simply walked to the bothersome stile. He became rather entangled in it, although he managed to free himself without mishap. Once back on the path that con-

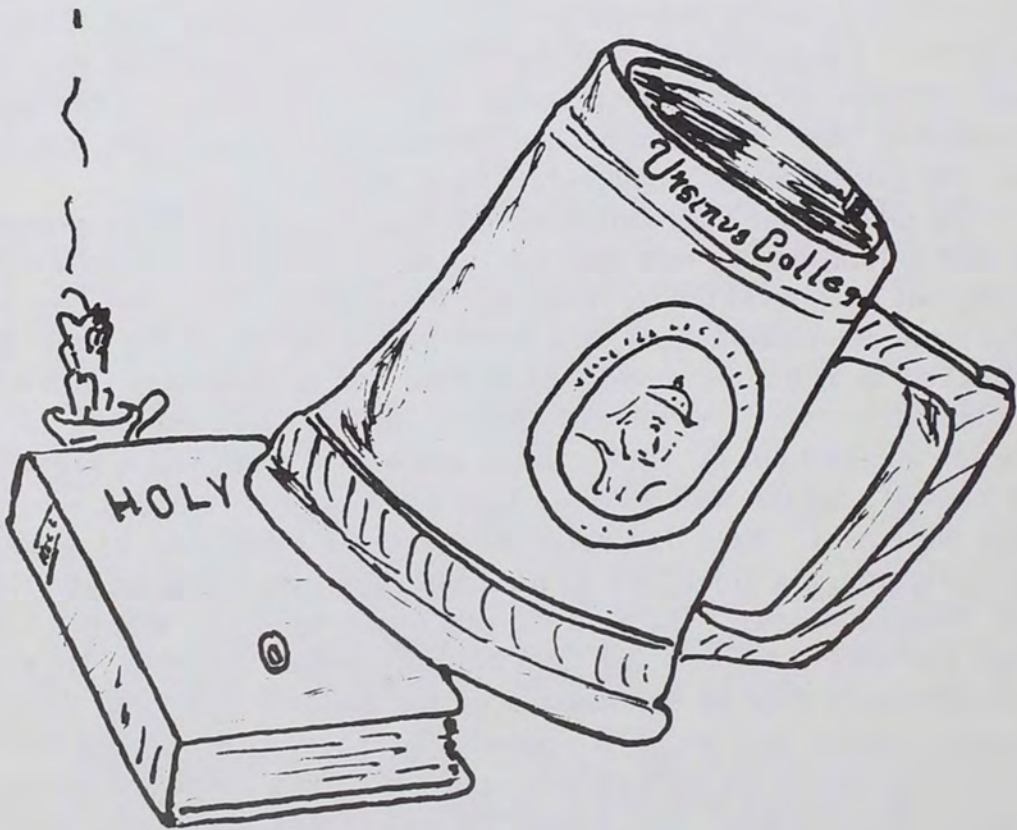
tinued at least as far as his starting place, he walked slightly faster with the intention of going straight home, but he stopped abruptly upon seeing a coop just behind a hawthorn hedge. He stood still for over a minute, as if thinking over a grave problem; he walked a few more steps and stopped; he returned the few he had just taken; then he hopped over the ditch that divided the hedge from the road and turned his back to the thorns and pushed against them with all of his remaining strength. He went tumbling through without a scratch, for his face had been protected by his thick hood and his hands had been inserted in the tubes of his sleeves, onto the mud and straw enclosed behind the hedge. He walked to the hut, drew back the wooden door and cautiously, if somewhat unsteadily, placed a foot inside. Then he drew himself in after it and peered about. He took a hen off her nest but replaced her with a minimum of noise. He did this with four others until he found an egg, which he put into one of his pockets. By this time, the hens had made quite a noise, so he quickly backed out of the coop and exited through the same hole in the hedge he had made minutes before, and disappeared around a bend in the road just as the owner of the birds came to see what the disturbance was. In leaving the pen, the rowdy gentleman had scratched his exposed feet, so that when he came to the bridge under which a stream ran, he attempted to reach the water in order to wash them. He stepped on the mossy floor that was hidden from the sky by a shivering curtain of foliage above, and slid to where the water babbled over marble-like stones. He unstrapped his sandals and dropped his feet into the stream, left them there only long enough for the blood to be washed from his scratches, then took them out and placed them straightaway into his shoes. He groped up the slope and resumed his journey.

He reached the wall surrounding his building about three quarters of an hour before the sun was due to rise, and stood perplexed before the decaying but lofty solid fence. He took off his cloak, which had now become a mass of wrinkled cloth, and threw it onto the top of the wall; the egg cracked as it hit the stones, so that he had to throw away his proposed breakfast. Next, he clumsily placed his right foot and both hands into holes scooped out by Time's hand, and with a groan and a heave he found himself atop the wall with his face down and his right leg hanging against the stones. When he finally jumped to the other side, he seemed to have forgotten his cloak, but as his head sunk from sight, an arm flew up and dragged it down. Once on the other side again, he wrapped himself up and walked towards the lone building within the wall. He cautiously opened a door on the outside of the building and crept through the short passage into which it opened. He passed two closed doors, one on either side of the passageway, and went into a courtyard that was surrounded by cloisters. Just inside the arches was a walkway open to the weather, and it was around this that he walked to the base of a tower at the far end, almost opposite the door he had entered. He brushed himself with his hands to get rid of most of the loose leaves and dirt, and

retied the cord around his middle; then he pulled the rope hanging down in front of him.

A bell sounded loud and clear for about a minute. When he had finished ringing the bell, he walked to the main gate, produced a key and undid the lock. As he shuffled back through the garden with his hands clasped and head bowed, he passed one of his associates already working down among the radishes and interrupted him with, "Isn't it a lovely morning, Brother?"

Winter 1961



HYMN TO THE MORNING

A soft refraction, dulled by mist, arrives
To tint the lightest of my almost things—
They doze, when darkness comes, and purge their lives
Of that reality which waking brings.

A ringing silence hangs in shrouds, and then
Is sundered by the sound of warmth that moves.
Her garments float through trails of dreams and wend
Through currents, furling; whispering that soothes.

Her lips, too red to form a smile, are lost
From view as fevered moistness numbs the nape.
Resistance merged with an eternity,
Inertia floundering in a maelstrom's rage is tossed.
I fear it's hard enough to find escape
From dreams, but then if they're reality?

—*Peter Vennema*
Spring 1961

WALKING TOGETHER

We walked apart together
in the mist that fell between us,
you were sad when I was not.
And the trees you saw were lonely
while the ones I saw were brave.
And ahead, the path seemed different,
though we knew it was the same.

—*Linda Leeds*
Spring 1961



THE EDITOR REQUESTING CONTRIBUTIONS

