



# THE IDOL

*the Literary Quarterly*

*of*

UNION COLLEGE

A man perishes in the end  
if he  
hides  
his sickness!

-- ROBERT ROZHDESTVENSKY, "Morning",  
trans. A. Yarmolinsky

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# Editorials

## SPRING AND THE STUDENT

I have little doubt that the disturbances of last spring were of some surprise to Union's administrators and those ethereal beings from which these administrators take orders regarding the welfare of the students. I have even less doubt that any disturbances in the future will catch them even less prepared to give a meaningful answer to the question, Why? The idea that it is just spring is about the most inane ever coined. Sure, no one's going to freeze their feet off in mid-winter; but there are other things to which we relegate the label "cause" while the time of year is a convenience. To find any single cause is a form of rational blindness analogous to color blindness.

## THE IDEAL UNION STUDENT?

He's in the middle of everything — although he has an even chance of preserving his prejudicial blinders all the way through Union and grinding to the top or coming to a screeching flunk. He's headed for a desk job, in insurance or advertising perhaps, which he may come to suspect is nearly meaningless, regardless of the ridiculously high salary he may command. And when and if he nears this realization, he may either speed up his work schedule or break down like hundreds and thousands of his fellows. As a student at Union, fulfilling his requirements for his unioncard-diploma, he may even have an inkling that it's all over. Diamantes welcomes him; and college and fraternity property suffers a mounting damage rate.

Both students and faculty have voiced complaint about the admissions office here over a long span of years. Not because of athletes signed or intellectuals enticed; but because of this model Union student. And may I humbly suggest that this is a poor time in the psychological and sociological history of our society to bring together in one camp such a large number of this type without offering them more help than a one man counselling staff and an apartheid faculty policy can give them? (The counselling staff will be doubled next year according to recent information. It is thus hoped to more nearly meet the rising student demand which will approach, if not surpass, 25% of the student body this year.)

This summary stops short of completion; and the picture, at least in my opinion is a sad one. Sadder yet, is the fact that members of the faculty have vainly raised this information for years. It is no wonder that one faculty member remarked, "Perhaps there have to be places like Union. . ." What a sad epitaph.

## OTHER FACTORS

Here then is a contributing factor to unrest—the directionless and unproductive model of the Union Student. The other reasons? I cannot now give them as full treatment as I would like; but I would suggest that they include the coldness and dogmatism of the administration ("If you don't like it, go somewhere else.") and the apartheid attitude mentioned above. Professor Fried has found a direct connection between student "morale" and "individual contact with faculty." He goes on to say, in a 1964 report, "This finding is in accord with my observation that depressed and dissatisfied students often complain of lack of contact with faculty outside the classroom, while students with high morale like to tell about faculty friends."

The following questions cover another segment of the answer to the shocked questions "Why a 'disturbance?'" or "Why do the alumni of the last ten years tell the fund solicitors to jump in the Mohawk?"

#### SOME QUESTIONS

Where will the increasing number of freshmen be fed? Anyone observing West College these days sees that the servers can barely keep up with the influx. The glass counters are bare sometimes, and desserts are passed directly to the waiting students. The wait in line is becoming ridiculously long.

Will the proposed student union be run with as little regard for the students as is the present Rathskeller? In its present condition the Rathskeller serves only those foods which the counter people can make convenient change for; the motive is profit for Saga. And it is in Saga's interest for the 'skeller to be a money making business. I say this without irony. Unfortunately such a place should have as its motive serving student tastes. We also must hope that the projected union will not be a chrome and formica wasteland.

When will the bookstore get rid of those cheap teddy bears and stock new paperbacks only a week after the Union Pharmacy instead of a month? Perhaps a co-op could be arranged including the Rathskellar and the bookstore. I understand the bookstore committee has big plans.

When will there be an increase in extra-classroom contact between professors and students? Recently an instructor was reproofed for eating lunch with students too frequently. Full professors evidently have learned better.

Why is the size of the administration increasing so much more rapidly than the size of the faculty? It has been said over and over again that certain departments are sadly understaffed. This is well documented in the *Concordiensis*.

RODHAM E. TULLOSS

#### IN THIS ISSUE

New writers appearing in this issue are Donald Abood and Harold Neunder, both of Professor Gado's Creative Writing Class. Professor Gado's notes comment on them as well as other pieces appearing in this *Idol*. Paul Sherwin contributes two poems showing the profound influence of Dylan Thomas, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and the folk singer-poet, Bob Dylan. Jeffrey Hedquist and Douglass Allen contribute two pieces of verse in conventional style. And Martin Jay returns after a year in Europe with two precise pieces. Lawrence Weitz is the present Counsellor to Students and an instructor in psychology; he contributes the record of an intriguing dream.

#### NOTICE

Alan Dugan, poet, will read and discuss his poems at Union College on April 9, 1965. Mr. Dugan will come under the auspices of the Academy of American Poets. The reading was arranged by Aaron Rutherford, the *Idol*, and the funds of the Student Tax Committee; it is the second such reading this year, the first being given by Howard Nemerov.

# Some Rambling Thoughts on the Student Writer at Union

BY FRANK GADO

The theme, "Lamentation for the state of the arts at Union" has had more replays than the second feature on the Late Late Show. By now, the predicament of the muses superintending our music and art departments, to choose only two samples, is at least as familiar as the plight of the sisters Gish in *Orphans of the Storm*. One more diatribe probably won't help, perhaps because the roots of the cause are not local. The pragmatic nature of American society has traditionally caused it to view the arts with suspicion, and Union's greater distress in this area may only reflect the greater degree to which it has conformed to the demands of the commercial community than other schools of its kind. The arts will continue to occupy the penumbral edges of the curricula of "well-balanced" liberal arts colleges so long as they are regarded as boot camps for future Rotarians.

But the intention of this introduction is far more modest than an exploration of the dilemma of the arts as it devolves from the *primum mobile* sphere of American society or even from the empyrean sphere of the academic structure of Union College; my concern lies with the student interested in writing.

Although it seems more like a decade than a scant two years since I left the Duke Graduate School incubator, I vividly remember my excitement at the prospect of teaching creative writing at Union. At Duke, writing was in a state of ferment. Everyone seemed to be working on a novel, a series of short stories, or a sheaf of poems. If not actually writing at the time, one expected to start as soon as that overdue paper was in, or that thesis was completed, or that baby was born (or, at least, those were the excuses that sustained us); in the meantime there were always the latest efforts of our more diligent contemporaries to discuss, evaluate, and measure ourselves against. In the spring, the college sponsored literary arts weekend would bring writers to campus as an added catalyst. Seedy neighborhood bars, cheap flats, and the circular parlor of an unlikely castle in Chapel Hill served as our literary salons. For most of us, scholarship was our profession, but literature was our passion. We would leave the tired language of PMLA for a lively fight with our fellows over aesthetics or a new novel with the celerity of a desert traveler sighting a spring. Naively, I expected Union to contain a colony of young writers in a similar state of agitation.

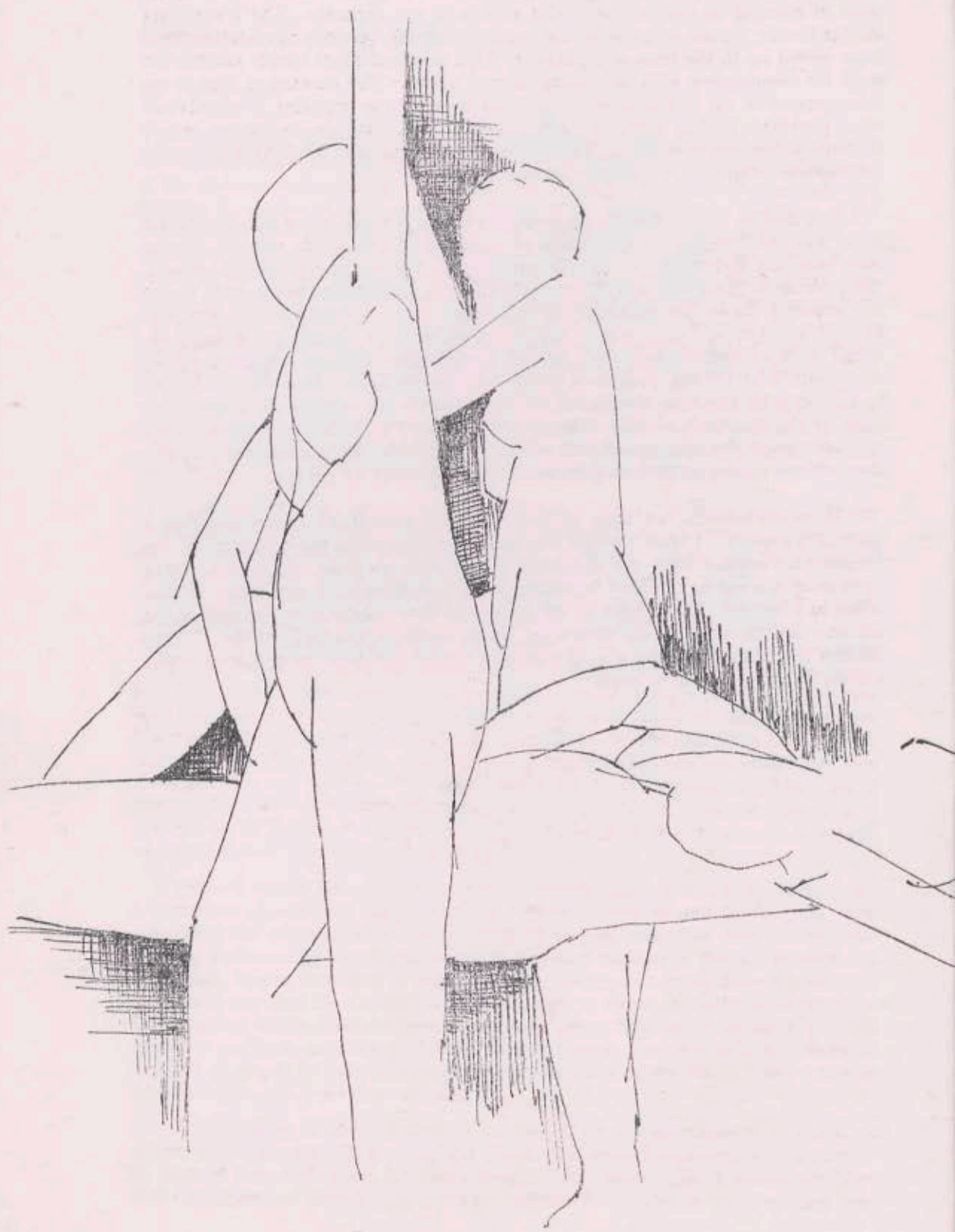
What I found instead in my creative writing class was, for the most part, a collection of students hoping for three more credits toward graduation. Not only were the majority of them not English majors, most had only the vaguest interest in literature. Even the works of standard authors — Joyce, Hemingway, Anderson, Wolfe, Faulkner — were, with the infrequent exception of a whilom encounter required by a course syllabus, foreign to them. To be sure, there were fundamental distinctions between the Duke group, composed in some part of graduate students, and the students I had at Union, but the striking difference was not so much in their levels of maturity or even talent but in their attitude toward themselves as student writers.

A flourishing of student writing cannot be forced from above. It must, of course, well from genuine interest and talent. But even these two qualities, except in cases of rare dedication, are not enough. The climate that a school provides and the senses of community among students interested in writing that can

develop in that climate are equally important. That Union has been falling short of meeting its obligations in this area is all too apparent. The few writers on the lecture circuit brought to the campus to speak before a convocation have been served up in the form of lagniappe. Such minimal effort hardly satisfies the need for communion with producing literary artists. The absence of formal encouragement of the young writer would not be nearly so crippling if stimulation were provided by his peers. Unfortunately, Union has not sought to recruit students interested in writing. The occasional aspiring poet or short story writer has been something of a curiosity on our campus.

Yet, despite all the handicaps, current student writing is not in a moribund state. On the contrary, if the efforts of members of this year's creative writing class offer any indication, we can be optimistic. The writing of Messrs. Abood, Blue, Neunder, Sherwin, and Tulloss, culled from submissions made early in the fall semester, forms the backbone of this issue. It has a freshness that the *Idol* has not enjoyed in recent years. For the most part, its authors are being published in the magazine only their first or second time, and the single veteran in the group, Rod Tulloss, presents a sketch far superior in its richness and vibrancy to anything he has done before. If we do not make the mistake of judging this issue by the standards of *The Atlantic Monthly* or *The New Yorker*, I think we must recognize the stirrings of real talent. The nucleus for a community of student writers exists; its growth depends on the nutrients we supply.

In recent months, we have all heard a good deal about Union being in a state of transition. I trust that by this we mean more than the transferal of the Presidential mantle from the shoulders of one man to those of another. Dean Lockwood has taken the lead in calling for a redefinition of our vision of ourselves as a college. Somewhere in the process of that redefinition, the role of the creative arts in shaping the future of Union must be decided. If the College decides that they constitute a vital part of a liberal arts education, it must make known its commitment to them.





# The Earth Is Not Too Low

BY HAROLD F. NEUNDER

## I

Gordon Lightfoot kicked his way through the thick carpet of leaves on the coroner's front lawn. As he reached the white-painted front steps, he noticed that the little red flag on Charlie Crow's mailbox was up, signalling the mailman to pick up an outgoing letter. "Probably the report on my father's death," he thought, knocking firmly on the front door. Only a few seconds passed before Charlie stood before him, black hair slicked straight back with a big grin on his face. "How's the college boy," he said to Gordon as he pumped his hand.

"Pretty good, Charlie," said Gordon, more gruffly than he had intended.

"Come on in, Gord, I can see you want to talk about it. Best powwow in the world is over coffee and a smoke." Charlie scratched a big blue-tip match on the grate and lit a burner under a blackened coffee pot. Gordon reached automatically for his cigarettes.

"You really going to do it, Charlie?" he said.

"Do what, Gord?" Charlie was measuring coffee grounds.

"Burn my father's body in your goddamned oven." Gordon pronounced the words slowly, but his cheeks colored as he spoke. "You were the one who told me I wanted to talk about 'it' a couple of minutes ago. Why are you playing dumb?"

"Sorry, Gord, I guess I was avoiding you. I wish you'd quit talkin' like I'm the devil himself. I'm only doing your father's wishes."

"How do you know what my father's wishes were?"

"Your mother showed me the will."

"Oh, she showed you that will?" Gordon stood up and walked to one of the windows that showed the path through the trees to the road. It was very quiet in the kitchen. Charlie struck a second match, and it sounded for a moment like the angry hiss of a hot iron thrust into water.

"You know I wasn't home when my father wrote that will over. I was away at school. That was only about six weeks ago."

"I know, Gord, but Lena and your mother both swore he was in his right mind and that everything was straight."

"I used to trust them too, Charlie." Gordon was staring out the window with his hands thrust into his pockets.

"That's a pretty awful thing to say, Gord."

"I know."

There was another silence. Charlie Crow was a little uneasy. In his monopoly of services to the dead in that county, he had discovered that it was much more trying to deal with living people. The Indian families in the area called Charlie automatically. The white building appended to his house served as morgue, mortuary, and coroner's office. Charlie exhaled smoke audibly and wished for the unstrained quiet of his working rooms in the back. When Gordon Lightfoot had left his family's small farm to go to the big agricultural college, he had removed himself from the world that Charlie knew. He had seen Gordon boarding the train after a vacation once, and his clothes had looked strange. He sometimes used the words that Charlie didn't know. Charlie wasn't quite sure what to expect from him anymore.

"My mother and sister think it was my fault," said Gordon.

"What? Your father's stroke?"

"Yes."

"I ruled natural causes on it."

"I know. They think he died of a broken heart because I decided to leave farming."

"Hard to say what causes a stroke."

"Yeah. Sure is a mystery when an old man pushes a hand plow through thirteen acres of ground, autumn and spring."

"He could've used some help," said Charlie.

Gordon whirled from the window to face him. "He sent me away with his blessings! He knew he could leave the land alone and live off government money. He's the only one of all of you who wouldn't chain me to this stubborn earth forever."

"Easy, Gord. I wasn't accusing you or anything. I know he always said you had to have the chance to break loose."

"Yes. You don't believe in that very much, do you, Charlie? You'd have told him to keep his boy at home if you thought he'd listen, wouldn't you?"

"I never said a word to him about how to do with his life, Gord."

"You bet you didn't. He would have given you that slow smile and pointed you toward the door. You never wanted to risk that, but you shook your head at me often enough before I left."

"What difference does it make, Gord? You went away all right. Lots of folks would have been glad to see you stay, but it don't matter now."

"Yes it does, Charlie. It matters enough so that Lena and my mother decided to mock me till I die with a stinking urn full of ashes."

"The will says he wanted that."

"The will . . . the will! Charlie! How long did you know my father?"

"Since you were born at least."

"And a few years before that?"

"Yes."

"Then you of all people know how he loved the land. He'd stand in that first spring furrow with both hands stretched out in front of him full of that blasted sandy soil, and he was king of the earth. He loved the plowing most of all because it got him right down into his land. He was like a dead man in the winter. You've seen him go out and kick through the snow to find his frozen earth. I don't care about that 'sound mind and body' business, do you really believe he'd want to rest anywhere but in the ground that gave him life?"

The coroner was very slowly crushing out the butt of his cigarette on the old stove.

"My mother and sister told me," said Gordon, "that he lost his love for farming when I left; that he didn't want to be buried in the earth. I know better, and so do you, Charlie!"

The coroner poured coffee and said nothing.

## II

The train left at noon for Bismarck. Gordon and the two women of his family sat with the coroner one car forward of the baggage car where the coffin lay. They would burn the body in the city. "The city has everything," thought Gordon. "The slaughter house, and the penitentiary, and the place where they burn bodies to ashes." He closed his eyes to shut out his mother, and Lena, and Charlie Crow who stared out the window. The rhythm of the train was that pulse heard in the ears when there is silence like death. Gordon slept, and dreamed . . .

A dervish of leaves frightened up runs at the feet and away, brown puppy with a rustling bark. Charlie's iron front door radiating heat, the knob burns the hand. It opens and the sweating coroner with iron wristlets smiles and offers a hand. Charlie talks of coffee and fire, college and fire, always fire — in his words, on his breath. The kitchen is black as November night for a moment, and Charlie's match flares blinding daylight with a tall flame. The fire is lit. A hat and a coat on the hook fill up with his father and move dangerously close to the coroner's cigarette, and vanish in its smoke. The window catches the light from the room and reflects brown fields plowed deep enough for burial. The long, deep graves are empty, empty, and the wall map has "Being of sound mind and body I permit myself to be burned," written in black across the state of North Dakota, with the scrawled "X" over the great lake.

"I used to trust them too, Charlie," says a voice, and the kitchen table top is black with the crowded scribbles of a plot. The coffee pot clanks back onto the stove like the closing of a lock, a lock on chains, and the chains run deep into the sandy earth. Charlie speaks again with hot breath, and the door to his awful back room glows cherry red in the center.

The station platform is bare. The coffin feels warm to the hand and a tilt of the head makes the wood like a window in a trick of light. Inside is the old gray head, and the only good gray suit, and, God! gray ashes. A tilt of the head wipes it all away but the angry groan, "I won't go!"

"They'll burn him like firewood. They'll burn him like the stubble of his own fields, the dross of the harvest."

"I must go."

They load in the mail and then the coffin. Charlie buys a paper and every page he turns declares, "Being of sound mind and body . . ." Mother and Lena are crying with veils in front of their faces, with veils in front of their eyes to shield against the glare of the flames, and wet handkerchiefs to keep out the smoke. In the car is the smell of burnt flesh and the hanging gray smoke from the one good, gray suit. The land begins to move reluctantly, then faster. This will be his longest journey ever, except for the far travellings of his body's smoke. The fields are plowed for winter wheat all along the way. They are plowed deep enough for burial, and long enough for all the dead who ever die in weariness upon their land.

## Sonnet

BY DOUGLASS ALLEN

Mountains are the marvel of God's kingdom.  
No noisy city's insidious smog atmosphere  
Will vault this always vacuum-pure  
Where hazy greyness does not grow not here.  
The sleeping snows of spring sustain northside.  
The sun is like a candle, not neon  
Or arc-burning billboards of man's pride.  
This candlebeam brightness I know is Thee, on  
And above the Altar, soul and summit  
Raised high and recognized, perceived from far  
Fumbling State. Sing, say Lord! far from it  
For me to maim and murder on a mountain star.  
With roaring tide-temper springs sprint on down.  
God's grandeur is mere mountain and mere ground.

## R.'s Dream

BY LAWRENCE JOEL WEITZ

R., aged 15, is in a large room where she sees a former playmate lying dead in a white, satin-lined casket. The dead girl is wearing a pale blue dress, her hair is perfectly arranged, and all about the casket are beautiful flowers. Then on the other side of the room, she sees a narrow table, and on it a small child is lying dead, covered with a sheet except the face. Going nearer, she sees that the child is herself at an early age, perhaps 5 or 6. Her eyes are closed, her face very pale, and her hair uncombed. There are no flowers. Everything is bare and plain. She feels no surprise at seeing herself dead.

This interesting dream had no meaning for the dreamer nor for her father and mother, to whom she repeated it. However, she remembered it and often thought about it.

The playmate in the dream had actually died and her funeral had taken place the afternoon before the dream. R. had seen her in her white casket surrounded by flowers and wearing the pale blue dress — everything about the actual circumstances was identical with the scene in the dream. This, of course, was the immediate stimulus.

R. considered it highly interesting to see herself dead, particularly at an age perhaps ten years younger than she was at the time of the dream. She wondered why she, as the dead child, had been left lying there neglected, without any of the attention the dead playmate had, although, she, herself, was the only child of very affectionate, well-to-do parents. At the time of the dream, these were the only thoughts aroused.

Three years afterwards it became necessary for R. to have a major operation. The family physician, her father's closest friend, told her father and mother — but not R. — that there was something they must know before the operation was performed. When R. was five years old, this doctor had removed her tonsils. She had seemed a little weak and pale afterwards but had recovered fully. The doctor had visited her two or three times daily for a week or more, but this close attention was attributed to his friendship for her father. Now, however, he informed them that she had actually *died* on the operating table and had been for a period of five minutes "as dead as she would ever be," as he explained it. This near-catastrophe had been the result of the anesthetic. The doctor described the all but superhuman efforts to revive her. He related the circumstance now only because he wanted her parents to be aware of the possible danger in a second operation.

R.'s parents were badly shocked even after the long period of years, and they did not repeat the story to her. The second operation went well, without complications. No one outside the operating room had ever known what had occurred. A year or two later they told R. the story — nearly five years after the dream.

It is necessary to believe that in some inexplicable way the unconscious (dead?) child had had some knowledge of the experience, and that her unconscious mind had reproduced the scene in a dream after ten years — from five to fifteen. At last she could understand why she was lying on a table, without flowers or casket. This impression, so long retained below the level of consciousness, had been re-activated by the sight of her dead friend. R., herself, remembered the dream instantly upon being told the story.

This seems to be pure reproduction — nothing more.

## A Walk too Late in Season

BY AARON RUTHERFORD III

A while walking to the reeds  
along a shore road as stone cold  
as the driftwood near it,  
I touched your breast and  
fell into November.

We saw ahead a house like  
Victoria, the queen, squatting  
on the world with a tricycle  
outside for endurance and  
shutters that clapped their  
hands to the sea.

But now the grey rattly beach  
is so alone with wind and you and I,  
but for the sea birds  
their gulf swoops ghostly  
above our heads.

I feel your hair, the color  
of a winter sun and put  
my body in your places;  
with only the tears inside  
the slight addition — that  
girl you'll never be enough.

## The Sound to Raise the Lyre's Chant

BY PAUL SHERWIN

Let love be not a wedding of words, saged  
By sullen scribes in dungeons void of air;  
Not texts of lofty laws and reasons raged  
By men of meditation, in despair.  
Let love be not a scheming children's game,  
Played by love-longing lovers, cold as clay,  
Who, longing for love to trumpet their names,  
Find not the rose, but the stem — agapé.  
Let love be not the act of loving, twined  
Among quilts in the night's engulfing tomb  
Of dark or loving in the bush of time,  
Longing wild in the ever-burning womb.  
Let love be the sound winds weave through a lyre —  
The heart's eternal miracle of fire.

# Execution

BY DONALD C. ABOOD

The four of them were standing outside the laundromat waiting. He noticed them for the first time as he took his wash from the dryer. The proprietor had quietly left the shop through the back door; he wanted no trouble. There was no one else in the laundromat. Benny realized he was alone; the sudden horror chilled his body. Trembling, he stuffed the clean clothes into the laundry bag. He half hoped that they would come inside and get it over with but knew that they wouldn't. They would rather wait outside for him and make him suffer.

Benny hadn't meant to tell on Eddy; the words just happened to come tumbling out when De Roche hit him on the mouth knocking him off the chair and sending him sprawling across the floor of the police station. Benny had known they would find him sometime.

His mind raced; in a few minutes he would have to walk out the door. He thought of going through the back but gave that idea up in disgust. Rondell probably had some of his friends in the rear of the shop and Benny would rather take a chance on the open street than in the alley.

He finished putting the clothes away and looked out the window. Rondell flashed him the finger; Badger reached in his pocket and pulled out the blade. Benny could hear the soft click as the stiletto opened and closed. Bondo and Drake stood up with their thumbs pinned in the belt hooks of their levis. Bondo raised his right foot and dropped it; the heavy black boot crashed on the pavement. They all laughed.

Benny's footsteps echoed off the walls of the empty room and came racing back to him magnified by his imagination. He thought his head would split. He stood on the doorstep with the laundry bag over his shoulder held loose. He opened the door and stepped onto the sidewalk.

"Hello, Benny," Rondell speaking.

Benny looked straight ahead without saying anything.

"Good to see ya' again, Benny." Badger's knife went click, click as he spoke.

"Yeh, good to see ya', Benny," the others echoed. Cleats scraped on the pavement and they moved closer, formed a circle around him.

In one rapid motion, Benny brought the laundry bag from his shoulder and flung it into the group knocking Rondell to the ground. He started to run as Badger's knife tore into his stomach. Spinning, he lashed out blindly until he managed to tear himself free and started running down the street his hands pressed over the knife trying to stop the blood from flowing down his shirt onto the pavement and listening to Rondell scream, "Get the bastard."

*Behind him Rondell and the boys are coming on strong. They watch Benny stumble, fall, get up again. Rondell slows down and the others follow suit. They know that it is safe to lessen the pace. The victim is tired, wounded, and it is a long street. Even if he reached the fence at the end he will be unable to climb over. They know that he is trapped and dying; like vultures they stop and wait.*

*He is aware that they have stopped and that he is running along, but he wonders what they are doing behind him. A pain sweeps from his kidneys up through his body searing the senses and blotting out his vision for an instant. He weaves along; runs blindly tripping on a crack in the sidewalk. He falls, smashing his elbow on the concrete. He can hear the laughter behind him. As he lies on the ground the blood flows through his fingers, spreading out in front of*

him making dark blotches on the pavement. He vaguely remembers the knife as it went in above the belt, struck bone, tissue, fluid and then tore open his stomach in one swift motion. There was no hurt at the time, only surprise. They had expected him to fall but he had run, the knife still stuck in his stomach. He puts both hands to his body and tries to push his guts back into their proper place. The pain becomes more intense; he tries to rise, to escape, but his knees buckle and he pitches forward on his face.

Rondell is walking now. Badger's boots snap on the tar. The sound of the street reaches Benny's ears, he must go on or die.

He begins to crawl but they are standing over him. They say nothing, they don't have to. Rondell's foot lands in Benny's groin. Badger begins laughing hysterically. Bondo and Drake start to snap their fingers and kick Benny in the stomach. Benny raises a hand but Rondell stomps on it, breaking it. With his good hand Benny covers his face so that he can't see their faces and without a word lets them stomp, and kick, and beat him until there is no more day or night.

Somewhere in the city a drunk will find the laundry bag full of clothes and take it to the pawn shop for beer money. Sometime, the cop on the beat will notice the trail of blood from the laundromat to Benny's body. Tomorrow Eddy will die for the murder of the liquor store owner. Eventually, Rondell will crumble in an alley under the weight of Hell's Angels' chains. Bondo and Drake will be sent to reform school to become worthwhile members of society. Sooner or later the world will end. Science says the life span of the average man is getting longer.

## Diversion

BY MARTIN JAY

Prate on, jester, languish not in your pace,  
Spin still higher the bright mesmeric spheres  
Of earthly station and celestial grace.  
Fail for but a moment and dormant fears  
Surge in urgent tumult through the well-worn  
Tunnels of my soul, stirring sullen pools  
Of self-deceit with torrents of self-scorn.  
Shedding innocence, the guardian of fools  
And unsuspecting youth, once did I sip  
The bitter wine from Eden's apple pressed.  
Till life's brief feast ends and this goblet's ripped  
From my desperate grasp, your witful jest,  
Sly sorcery, and agile juggler's craft  
Deny my lips a second, fatal draught.

# Jessica

BY DONALD C. ABOOD

He stood on the back steps, knocked twice, and waited for her to come to the door. Seconds later she appeared. He could not distinguish her features in the dark but could see the outline of her body pressed against the door frame.

"Who's there?" She had opened the wooden storm door, but still held the screen fastened shut. There was no light and she could not make out the figure on the porch.

"Jessica, it's me. Let me in." The tone of voice was firm and implied other means of entrance to the house if necessary.

She opened the screen door; and he stepped inside, waited for her to close both doors again, then followed her down the dark familiar corridor to the kitchen.

Jessica groped in the dark for the light switch. Suddenly a bare bulb hanging from the ceiling burst into brilliance spreading a harsh light over the gray walls. From the doorless cupboard she took a gallon of wine and two glasses and poured two drinks, offering one to him.

He took the wine from her and drank greedily until the glass was empty. He did not look at her when she spoke.

"I didn't think you'd come until tomorrow, James. Did you bring some money?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"The usual."

A long silence was interrupted by a chunk of ceiling plaster falling and breaking on the floor. Startled, James looked up to see a small hole near the light fixture. Dust fell slowly and diffused throughout the room, settling on table tops, chairs and the floor.

James had seen the kitchen many times, but each time he looked at it he felt guilty about leaving her. But the feeling of guilt soon passed when he was not near her home. The stove was covered with grease and the ice box leaked. Ice melted inside and the water would run out the bottom of the cooler and flow along the floor. Dishes and garbage cluttered the sink and the smell of rotten cantaloupe hung heavy in the air. James grimaced and turned his attention to Jessica.

She was a slim woman, not too tall, with blue eyes and a large full mouth. Her skin was a lovely chocolate color, her nose rounded. She had very high cheekbones but they complimented her other features. Barefoot, a blue night shirt hung from her neck to her ankles so that only the flat of the foot was exposed. James looked at her in silence. She returned his stare compelling him to speak.

"Does Jimmy know I'm here?"

"No, he's sleeping and there ain't no use waking him now."

"Do you ever talk about me to 'im?"

"No." She never talked to Jimmy about much of anything, especially his father. Jessica had been trying to forget that he existed for two years, but he kept coming around. At least he brought some money usually which helped them live another week.

"Why not? I'm his father. He's got a right to know about me."

"It ain't the same since you been gone James. You ain't his father no more. That just the way it gonna be."

James grabbed her. "Don't you ever say that again, you hear?" He held her



by the wrists and shook her violently. She kicked and clawed until she could twist away from him.

"I don't need you no more, James. Not ever again, not ever." The scream faded to a whimper and she began to sob.

"I loved you once, James, but I don't no more and I never will so why don't you go away and let me alone?"

James laughed. He withdrew a five dollar bill from his wallet and threw it at her feet. She hesitated, then all pride gone, stooped to pick the money up. She walked out of the kitchen towards the bedroom mumbling to herself, "Let's get it over with James."

## The Gentleman in Ward Number Seven Blames Salome

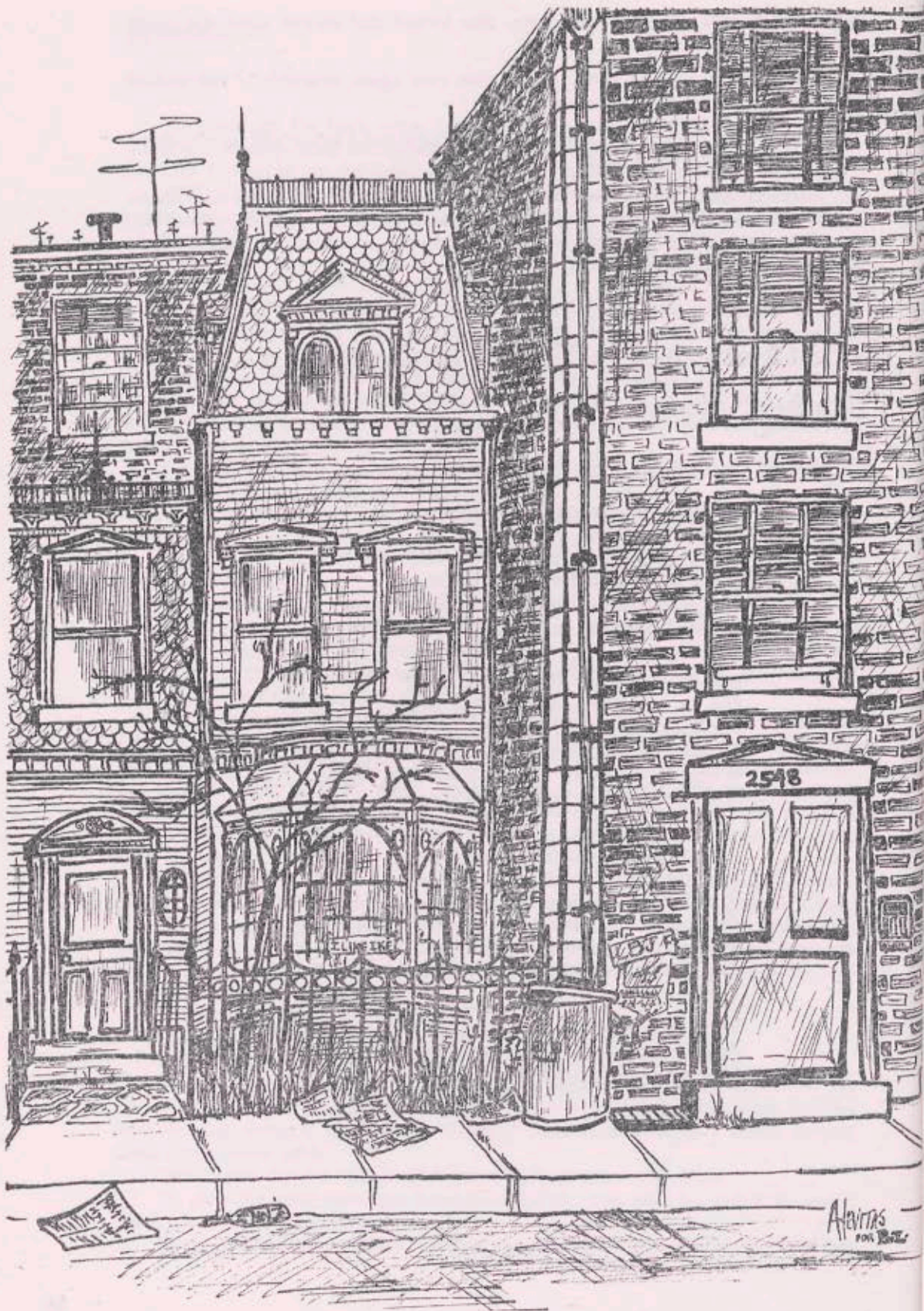
BY RODHAM E. TULLOSS

One day's Salome, had she pled aright,  
Could have in an eternal moment  
Saved our lives from marching Day and Night,  
Saved us from the clicking torment,  
The metronomic fiend that kills the sight,  
Gnarls fingers on a hand that it has bent;

But dull, unread, without foresight,  
She, at question, gave into her bent  
For vengeful action; and that very night,  
Ended in a well-known, bloody moment,  
When an unknown axeman's aim was right,  
A celebrated Baptist's earthly torments

And damned us to this stream of days and nights.  
Had she considered that one torment  
That levels and disperses wrong and right  
And ordered in that long-remembered moment  
The striking down of every clock in sight  
And left them to be found red-rusted and all bent,

We would never know a torment but was right,  
And never lacking sight, not miss a moment  
Of time so bent that never falls a night.



Alvaras  
FOR ART

# Aunt Elda

BY RODHAM E. TULLOSS

The two great-great-aunts, when they were living together, were of no special interest to the rest of the family; but the death of Aunt Petty called their attention to her sister. And so, both from love and guilt, Aunt Elda was taken for Sunday rides along the maze of turnpikes and beltways that surround the city. On these occasions, Clayton and his parents and, perhaps, an odd aunt or two would pick her up at the house where she had been born and would have died if someone hadn't found her and had her removed to a hospital.

Clayton could never remember exactly where the house was. It was somewhere north of Fort McHenry and west of the Washington Monument and the City Zoo, where the streets are lined with look-a-like, turn-of-the-century row houses (among which the aunts' townhouse was a white crow in the true sense of the old expression); where the tiny, Negro children, their swollen bellies bulging over their brothers' old underpants, splash in the water from open fire hydrants; and where the sewers, clogged with gumwrappers, religious tracts, and palmists' handbills, each have their share of the neighborhood improvement council's rat poison.

McPherson Street is better described by its people than by its objects: the fat, brown mothers pulling up a shoulder strap, gossiping in a yell over the river of trucks and buses and the Pontiacs at the curb, keeping the mother's eye on the semi-naked children splashing in the gutter or jumping rope or pulling sister's pigtails (each of which has its own pure blue ribbon), and trying to feed the children and hold the family together, and more than likely only succeeding in saving a daughter or two that will take up all the tasks and tribulations for the next generation, never escaping the ignorance because there is always too much work;

the old men in off-white undershirts leaning out of the upstairs windows with eyes yellowed by drinking and with the old razor scars running half-way round their necks, and remembering their running out of Florida at night with a drunken mob somewhere behind them on the moonlit highway, or remembering a life of relative ease as deacon of the local church or as owner of the bar or the corner candy store;

the young men kicking around the kitchen or the pool hall or in the basketball courts behind the public school, at the CYO or Methodist Youth dances, carrying a razor to make themselves men, snatching pocketbooks to make themselves a dime, hearing their mothers cry and say, "God knows, the' mus' be one boy on this block gonna tu'n out good," and laughing because they know better than *that*;

the preacher sweeping out his store-front church ("Alpha and Omega, Inc. — Jesus Saves"), smiling greetings to the sisters on their front stoops up and down the street, thinking how he knows the reason that his colleague down the block isn't up yet, making a mental note to offer a prayer of thanks for the little things like age that keep a man pure of heart, and thinking then that the picture of Mount Ararat in the window needs a little touching up. And then the objects which all the streets within a square mile have in common: the houses stretching up and down McPherson Street, squatting on their antique beams like a row of dumb, brick toads;

the fluorescent stickers saying, Keep your block clean;

the odd-looking weeds growing in the gutter that an associate professor at Johns Hopkins will identify in a month or two as marijuana;

and the famous marble steps stained with rust and soot and with one riser replaced by a dull concrete slab. And then the only thing that makes McPherson Street different from any other within that square mile is the townhouse — a gray-ing, mid-Victorian Humpty Dumpty with a bay window gaping onto the twentieth century like a painted mouth.

Fifty years ago, a sandstone lion playfully pushed a sandstone ball beside the steps that slide under each other toward the street like a tipsy pile of coins; now there is a mild-mannered, wrought-iron dachshund set in the sidewalk in the hopes that someone will think of the aging carpet in the entrance hall. A sliver of a yard remains running down the south side of the house where dark heavy-curtained windows stare at the blank bricks a dozen feet away. And absorbing all this, Clayton's family would go up to the door, knock, and wait for an eye to show at the peephole which Aunt Elda's lawyer had suggested she have installed after she had opened her door to the same thief three times on three consecutive days. Aunt Elda followed the suggestion; she likes toys. They had never on any visit seen an eye at the hole; but during the long waits at the door, the thought occurred to Clayton that Aunt Elda, who was all of four feet tall, might be maneuvering one of her monstrous Chippendale chairs, clambering up on it, scrutinizing their faces carefully, and searching about in her memory for the names and characters that went with them. In a few minutes the door would finally open:

"Come in," she would say in a very high-pitched voice; and they would, in silence, looking at another century, seeing again, in the dim sepia hallway, the antler hat-rack above the clouded mirror which was stuffed in every flagree and cranny with little, wan forty-eight-star flags, "V" stickers yellowed and peeling, calling cards toasted and crumbling at the corners, ticket stubs from decade old circuses; on an intricately carved teak stand, a Chinese vase containing pinwheels and puzzles and pennies and those paper cigars that have a fan which pops out of one end; the rooms stuffed with heavy furniture; what was once a grand, old kitchen, now filled with bowl-shaped objects carefully wrapped in newspaper so that they could be inherited; and they smelled an odor which brimmed in all the rooms and to the peak of the old slate roof which was the odor of very old objects and very old people mixed with asafoetida and the presence of generation upon generation of cats that had made the basement their domain.

And Clayton's family would sit in the chairs which the cats hadn't frequented too often; and Aunt Elda would offer them candy that was stale and stuck to the dish and speak as gaily as she could, which was very, about the affairs of the late President Harding, just as she must have seen her mother do among her guests half a century before, or as she had entertained her beaux with their ruffled sleeves and shirt fronts and pomaded hair and talk of Goethe, and von Kleist, whom her mother had, perhaps, forbidden her to read. She stumped between them with her cane rattling against the furniture or ticking on the tiles of the hearth showing them (going after the candy), picture postcards of Christ and Eisenhower and the Washington Monument in 1905 and blurry photographs, in leather albums as large as her own body, of the Hacksel family Bag Works and faceless ladies in bustles (which made Aunt Elda giggle) who had a different name on every page. Then they would go for the ride.

And on these rides, Aunt Elda would insist on sitting in the center of the front seat and, hunching over her cane, would read every billboard aloud or tell confusedly redundant stories of Easter pageants in North Dakota and the times when she got into the circus free because she told the manager that she was ninety-two and had never missed a circus that came to Baltimore. And Clayton's mother would say, "You *flew* to North Dakota? Aunt Elda, you *are* courageous. Why, I

could never in my *life* step onto one of those things." And Aunt Elda would say, "Yes, I thought so too. It was very beautiful, but I can't remember who played Mary." And Clayton would almost be able to smell the cold, damp church air in the way she said "Mary"; and he would try to think about the horse chestnut she carried in her bag to prevent rheumatism and how it worked, too.

Once on a Sunday-crowded road, after driving in the country and buying cider, they were waiting in a long line of fuming cars at a toll booth; Aunt Elda said:

"I'm getting married."

"Gmmp?" said Clayton's mother swallowing her chewing gum.

"He's a very nice boy, about twenty-one," said Aunt Elda.

"What? *What? Married?*" shrieked Aunt Mary from the back seat.

"No, no, he's nothing like that. He's just a sweet boy. Very kind. I think we'll be married in a month or two. There are still a few things. . ."

"Twenty-one! *Elda!* Good Jesus! *Elda!*" said Aunt Mary.

"Don't use the Lord's name in vain," said Clayton's mother swallowing repeatedly.

"Elda, you're ninety-three," cried Aunt Mary throwing up her hands in horror. She looked to Clayton for support, but he made a wry face and said very softly: "Do it, Aunt Elda." His father seemed to be choking over something; his face was twitching as if he'd just bitten into a wormy apple. The car moved forward a bit in the line.

"I'm getting married," Aunt Elda repeated. A joyful smile spread among the wrinkles of her face; and little, half-stifled squeaks of happiness appeared to come from the air around her like the laughter of ninety-year-old cherubs. Aunt Elda bounced her cane on the floor:

"He's twenty-one and such a nice boy. Oh, it'll still be in the family. Don't worry. He's a very nice boy." A pause.

"What do you mean by 'in the family'?" asked Aunt Mary.

"In a month or two I think. He's from Kentucky." And Aunt Elda gave a big smile to Clayton's mother.

Aunt Mary bit her lip ferociously and leaned over the front seat. The car moved forward a space. Aunt Mary shouted in Aunt Elda's ear:

"What do you *mean* by 'in the family', Elda?"

"I wish I could," said Aunt Elda, looking downcast for a moment. "I would love to take you all with me, but it's so expensive to fly to Dakota. It's very expensive. There are Indians out there."

Aunt Mary became quite frantic and began yanking on Clayton's arm, evidently wishing him to add his voice to the question. Together they shouted, "What did Aunt Elda mean by 'in the family'?"

"Don't shout," said Aunt Elda sternly. "What did you say?" Clayton repeated the question.

"Oh," said Aunt Elda. "The tea service. The old, Barstowe tea service."

"What?" asked Aunt Mary feeling somewhat relieved because she didn't understand; and then when understanding crept into her eyes, she whispered, "Elda," and fainted. Clayton tried to straighten her out on the seat, but she was very plump. Clayton's mother was saying, "Aunt Mary? Aunt Mary?" as sternly as if she were asking who took the last root beer out of the refrigerator.

"Give her some of the cider," said Clayton's father pulling the newly purchased jug out from under the front seat. Clayton's mother poured a cup and handed it back to Clayton.

"I remember when my father took me out to see the Indians," said Aunt Elda. Clayton didn't know exactly what to do with the cider, so he threw it in Aunt Mary's face.

"Clayton," cried his mother.

"What?" Aunt Mary spluttered; then, "Elda!" and she was out again. Clayton's mother was pouring another cup when the car struck the car ahead of it in the line with an enormous jolt. And Clayton's father quickly put his foot back on the brake; and Clayton's mother was wiping cider off of Aunt Elda who was licking it off her face with a remarkably long tongue, jouncing her cane against the dashboard, and wheezing, "I'm *fine*, hee, hee. I'm just fine," while Clayton's father apologized profusely through whatever it was that was stuck in his throat. "Elda," moaned Aunt Mary from the back seat. "Elda, you didn't give some *hillbilly* that *priceless* tea service? Elda, say you didn't. Elda, in the Lord's name. . . ." Clayton's mother gave Aunt Mary a stern look. Clayton transmitted the query into what was evidently Aunt Elda's good ear.

"Oh, don't worry, Petty. His name is Barstowe; it'll still be in the family. It's not as if he were a red Indian. I remember when my father. . . ."

"I'm not *Petty*. I'm *Mary*. Elda, you're an old fool. You'll never see that priceless silver again. He probably pawned it immediately. I'm sure he pawned it. You must *never* trust these people."

"The Indians smelt funny," said Aunt Elda. And Clayton's father got her home as quickly as possible.

As they said good-bye, Aunt Elda began to stare smilingly at Aunt Mary and to ask repeatedly if they wouldn't stay for tea. But, no, they couldn't; and all the way back to Aunt Mary's house, she said: "She's *mad*. She ought to be put away. For her own good. She'll give it all away. There'll be nothing left. Nothing."

When Aunt Elda died, Clayton inherited the Hacksel family Bible in which she had changed all the dates of death and birth and even some of the names to fit her own peculiar chronology. There were some yellowed notebook pages, too, containing information from historical societies, court houses, and church records that must have been intended for use in a genealogy; but which had all been corrected in an old woman's hand and turned into documentation for myths. The family seemed to have direct ties to George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Charles Lindberg, John Barrymore, and Herbert Hoover. Aunt Mary's name was conspicuously absent.

## November 21

BY MILES P. JENNINGS, JR.

Walking in silence:  
I can see you —  
Behind your golden shock of silk,  
your eyes: blued, bathed in the  
Luxury of turmoil —  
Stepping in snowflake perfection  
Along the imperfect way of the road —  
Cold hands holding warmly,  
All impressions being blanketed by  
Later light-falling flakes —  
Gently-frosted breaths of conversation  
Dancing their fleeting dance.

## Three Sketches

BY KEN R. WILKES

### The Last of the Marshmallow Men

Eyes, blue and hard, meet the dry green warmth of morning. Lips parting, a smile breaks and the green has gone. The air is soft, a gentle clutching at the arms and legs. The sky, yellow speckled white, is very far and fingers yearn to touch and grasp it. To put it in a pocket.

There are no voices here. He fears the voices a day may bring. Any day, any voice. He feels the bumpy-lumped scar on the elbow from when, some kid pushing up behind, he toppled off a slide when little. He hates that kid. An own backyard and he falls off! The scar is ugly and sometimes aches of its own. His only scar.

The body quivers. Theodore's body. It is a small tight frame. No bulk, it is swift. People would say how, moving pretty-step by, he was like a runner or something. That was good. He likes runners. They travel smoothly by. Never a sideways glance.

Off the blanket, kneeling, the crusty sand scratches bare legs. A musty odor lifts around and over him. Waves are breaking to the side. Theodore doesn't bother hearing them. Funny how you can stop hearing stuff. The stomach rumbles and he gulps. There is a hunger in him. Reaching down, sand parts and a hand goes deeper still. Theodore hopes to find a diamond or a ring or money but ends up cutting his finger on a lousy piece of glass.

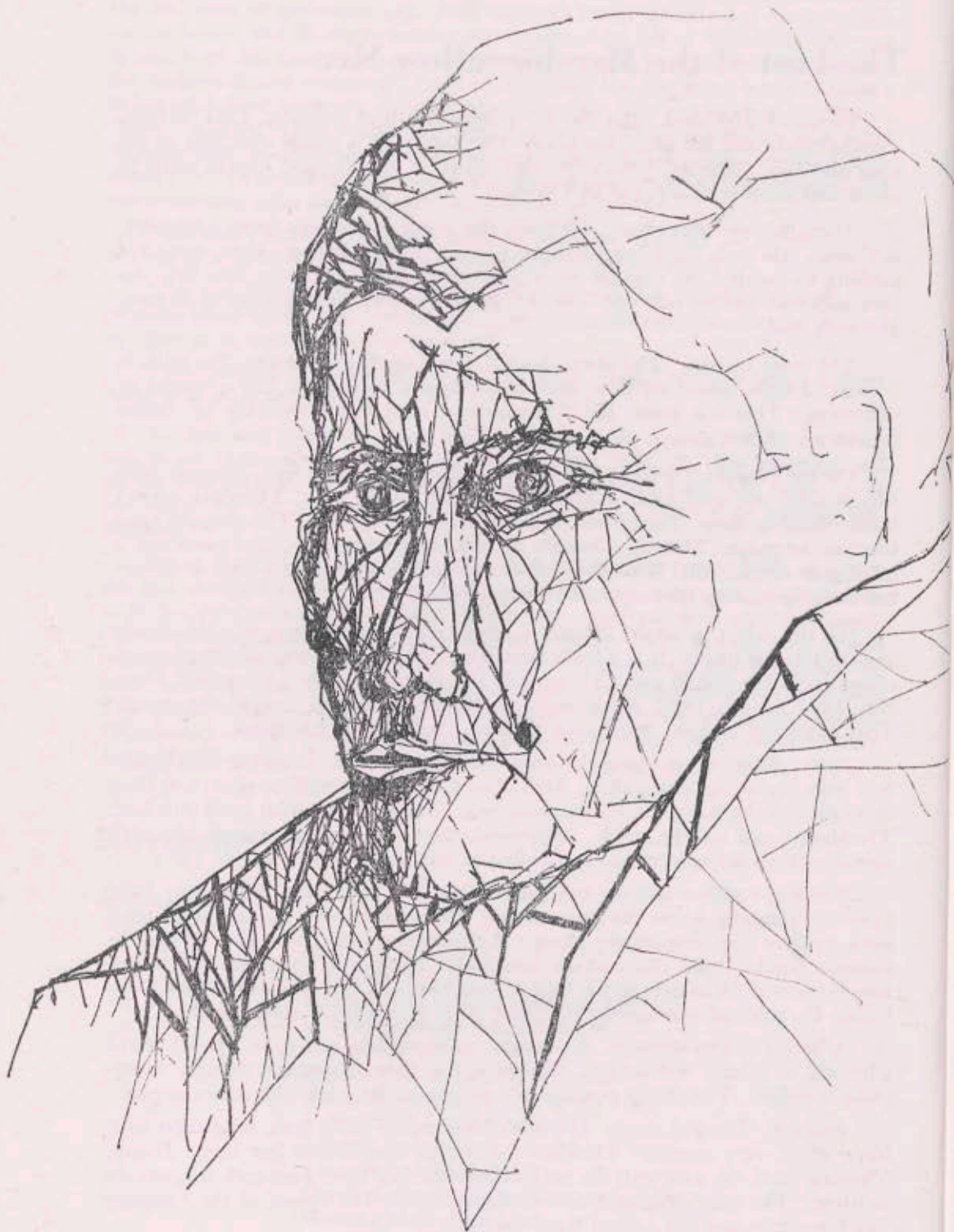
To the calves in water, Theodore stoops and heals the wound. He cringes as pain jars the finger. It is a fresh clear pain. The slit gushes red. Weedy junk clings about the ankles and kicking high and fast against the jolting surf Theodore loses it. His 100% nylon swim trunks are too small around the crotch. They're strangling him. Next time he'll get a medium and in black.

Shore. Slipping on along the edge, Theodore cruises. Jumping back goofy-foot from the waves' last trickles. He's played the game a million times and likes it. On slowly, he listens to the churning now. Then, reeling with teeth clinched, Theodore heads for the swirls. Salty-sweet, the ocean's caress relieves him. He swims back up the way, no sweat. Riding in on a crest, arms out head up.

There is a silence and the sun hangs there low. It is early. Some crazy little birds are jumping across the ground, and Theodore chases. Damn things can't even fly, just hop bippity-bop along. Rubbing the belly, he walks. Tugs the crummy trunks. Sand lifts and sea falls back. Theodore's up higher and lowers into the weeds. A muscle in his back is twitching and the neck itches something fierce. Cattails lash out against the body, their brown heads shedding fur.

A breeze crosses through. It's caught up about him and spins by. He heard whispers, he thinks. Soft sounds. Whispers? Just then. No matter though. Everything is bright. Theodore's positive he's gliding on ice, each step comes so easy.

Blanket. The girl sleeps. He thinks her pretty. Jelly flesh, long tight hair. Very white, very smooth. Theodore's down on the side to her back. Hands. Turning near, she stirs with the hair all over the face like. Lips curl, tongues are twirling. The heat does well and whimpers flow. The dunes of the summery beach are nice and not a word from the bitch.





## Asparagus is a Funny Fruit

In the white of the afternoon with the hair of the legs sticking to the gray woolen dress pants and an itch in the small of the back, Sidney passes. Why wool? There was no time to bother. He reached and they were wool. So what? The evening will bring a chill. He can wait until evening. Beneath his feet the concrete is melting or the soles of the shoes or something. The station isn't far but what time is the train? He forgot to grab the blue and white sheet that told, with his father screaming and mother gasping.

Sidney reaches and mounts the platform. The man below says something about a 12:05. He waits glancing down the tracks. It arrives and he is pleased to find it one with old cars with fans from the ceilings. The ride seems short and the people, cars, houses and streets come in blotches of blue, green, white. Sidney enjoys this. He likes watching things move up quickly. There's no worrying in that. Chewing a bunch of cinnamon Chicklets, he never takes the eyes away. They hit the tunnel. It's no fun going through this but he manages to observe the others by finding their reflections in the, now, black-backed winds.

On the street. Buses, crowds, stream, noise. Buildings, tall and wide and hard. Sidney loves the city even if it is a thing he must smell and touch. The touch is luke-warm and the smell doesn't linger. That is good.

He nears an area filled with theaters and amusement things. The shapes and figures cruise. Shirt sleeves, Madras skirts, Bermudas, dark glasses. The colors are harsh and, God, how his legs itch! Lousy woolen pants. Hungry, Sidney orders a coconut drink and four franks. The mustard has relish and bits of paper in it. Two Negro guys are arguing about something. Probably a bitch. People gather, he keeps on. Who cares? Store windows. Record albums, shirts, ties, Ex-Lax posters and art books twich in the corner of the eye. Funny how everything's choked up in the windows. Sidney can swear they'll burst of their own in about two minutes.

A hot stench is in the air and he enters a movie theater. Not stopping to check the marquis, he stands in the air-conditioned lobby holding his gut. Somehow, Sidney has a pain. A cramp, maybe. Seated. The picture is about some cowboy trying to build oil wells on his grandfather's property and how he gets drunk with everyone's wife. Sidney sits stiff-backed pretending to be an English guy piloting a Spitfire over the Channel with smoking engine and punctured lung. He leaves soon after ditching.

It is cooler. The back of the neck stiff, the mouth pasty. Sidney lights a cigarette and turns on his heels. A clock says 5:10. The sidewalks are tight and every step brings the brush bods, the caress of hot breath. He hurrys on, straight ahead, into the jostle of flesh. The park behind the library is quiet. People travel around, not through. Sidney strolls and the air is sweet. Coming out, he stops to let a little kid shine his shoes. It feels stupid having a skinny child stooping before him and, paying fifty cents, leaves half-shined.

Dinner. A lobster, butter sauce, French fries and corn. Three beers, black coffee. Hands under the hot air drier, he cries, in the bathroom. The porter, dollar in hand, leaves. Tie straightened, face washed. Sidney goes. If only the girl wasn't so damn pregnant. Right about the evening, though, the pants don't itch at all.

## Turning and Turning

Gerard Kenton stands upon the street corner. There is a glossy texture in his eyes which suggests tears. Gerard has come from a house, his home. He has stopped to find a direction. North, South, East, West? The ground beneath trembles, pavement buckles, and he senses a sweet panic. Eyes strain to read a street sign which, encrusted with dirt, lies invisible in the grey dusk. Why don't they ever wash signs or bridges? Gutters, yes, signs and bridges, never. "Merrick Road and Carling Avenue," whisper the metal plates. People stream towards, around, and away from him. He is a nucleus surrounded by electrons but, yet, is not touched. Gerald feels a twinge of pain, then delight, before his feet propel him forwards, or was it backwards?

His throat is sandy, though the body cool. He enters a delicatessen on the avenue and drinks four cokes, taking a fifth in a bag with a can opener. Five minutes later, the bag is knocked from his hand by a kid on a bicycle, and Gerard manages to salvage the opener. With this, he amuses himself by scraping the pointed edge against the sides of parked cars. It is dark and no one sees.

The air is heavy and weighs upon his lungs. It will rain. Gerard sprints one hundred yards and nearly collides with some old lady and her dog. The animal screams insults but they go unheard. He is happy, and he is alone. Rain. Gerard looks for shelter. None. Drenched, he heads for the center of town.

With seven in the wallet he bought for ten, hand stitched, Gerard calls Jane. He wishes to have someone. To talk, touch? He thinks:

Jane can look great. Wearing a charcoal-grey knit dress that ties at the middle with black leather strips with silver and gold diddily-bops on the ends. Sort of like one big sweater, almost Banlon. Snug around the half-world ass. Go out of my mind! See her in the cafeteria, want to stare all day. I do. Used to be in the same lunch period. Talk to her and never take the eyes away after. Unbelievable! Friggen light then dark brown hair swept to one side, tickling the clear, bright shoulder. Let hands glide through those strands. Could feel breasts with veins of a baby's forehead transparent against glowing, soft, blank skin.

She will meet him in front of the diner at eight-thirty. An hour and fifteen minutes.

It continues to rain. Gerard reaches the diner and, enticed by the red and blue neon flashes across the street, enters the bar and grill. Showing the bartender his phony I.D., he orders an Imperial and ginger. The stinging warmth of the liquor creeps through his bowels and the forehead perspires. Taking a table by the window, he orders again. Gerard visualizes Jane's crinkled-nose grin. Sweet-lipped bitch neves misses a smile. *To be her hands for one day!* One, just one. Peter Carter walks in and seeing Gerard comes to the table. Peter is the kind of guy who pulls the band-aids off other peoples' pimples. He listens to Peter, and finally excuses himself to the bathroom. There, he smokes a cigarette. Carter has gone. The stench of tobacco on his breath, Gerard drinks four beers. Jane hates the smell of burnt tobacco. Gerard grows nauseous. Squinting at the suspended, rotating object behind the bar, one side clock one side Miss Rheingold, he makes out the time to be twenty to three or a quarter after eight. He downs another beer. Eight-thirty. Jane has not arrived. Rye and ginger. Peering out into the downpour, Gerard sees her. His eyes are sore and his armpits itch. He opens his wallet, hand stitched. There is \$3.25.

Stepping high and easily, he leaves. The air is warm, the rain cold. Gerard

halts at the bus stop and waits for the light. She has not seen him. RED. He steps into the street as though it were a wide river. He swims but the current is strong. Water in the eyes, those sore, bloated eyes, soothes and distorts the vision. He can see Peter holding something out to Jane. Band-aids, a handful of band-aids. Handfulls. His limbs tire and numb, but her ghost-like skin beckons. Gerald flounders, swallows, gasps, and spits blood. Her shore is near but his lips are blue and fingertips wrinkled. His head lifts to meet Jane's face even before, his legs kicking freely and carrying the body effortlessly, he runs.

## Dawn Watch

BY PAUL SHERWIN

The city lights, chill white, await the sun's  
irrevocable, promised clarion  
call of winter-song freshness. The dark dress  
of the moon's day sheds with dawn's brightness.  
A glimmer spins a thread of light; it winds  
slowly across the sky-path, faint, and finds  
the simple, silent flowers, bobbing their  
heads in the dewed dingles; lets its mad hair  
toss wild upon the beaches, warms the land,  
dives milky into pools of buried sand.  
The tinkle, tinkling garb of dawn surrounds  
the once night-bright subtle air and abounds  
in the city's waking, symphonic crash  
and cymbolic clatter, warning and flash,  
of morning's hues. I am afraid to put  
my shoes on. I would stand in rank road ruts  
before dawn and hold the wandering night  
by its tail before it leaps into light.  
Day's diffusion. And I must, with shoes, socks  
and half-shut eyes, stumble over the rocks  
of the new day's calling, stalling, sing-song  
path that will take me back to evening's long-  
ago, cold, doleful, easy ebon lies  
and soothe my tearful, morning-blinded eyes.

# Poem

BY R. W. CLINTON

I must kiss your words away . . .  
girl, where have you learned  
these terrible things?

Among the roses white and red  
in the garden spilling like a dream  
across the roadway — travelled  
by the golden saddled horses —  
among the roses red and white  
lies the fairest of the maidens,  
cheeks paled as wintry moon,  
while across her breast runs sweet red warmth —  
blood of her man's dagger, plunged deep  
into the chaos of her life.

I must dust your thoughts away . . .  
girl, where have you learned  
to sing these sadsoft songs?

The priests have strange faces  
close to the edge of the wood;  
trees moving high branches  
limply, as the hands of a dancer . . .  
and away where shadows of birds  
perish silently on weeping wind-thoughts,  
light moves slowly, drifts down  
on green-masted sloops,  
sprinkling blue patterns like love songs  
on the cool earth. And somewhere  
in a sunset meadow  
far in the forest, lies the maiden,  
her breath hushed now by wings of  
silent green birds . . .

I must smooth your cares,  
as snow across a meadow is smoothed  
and rolled by blind white zephyrs . . .  
O girl, sweet girl, where have you found  
this other world?

Laurel trees, laurel leaves . . .  
the priests have strange eyes  
around the deep green laurel grove  
while upon the stone altar  
burns, smoking with breath of  
swallows, the small orange  
flame of oracle . . . laurel leaves  
float sadly along the invisible  
lanes of the sky . . . the priests

have strange voices under the clouds,  
leaning over the pale maiden,  
sleeping now under willow's tearful arms . . .  
Maiden, sleep; maiden, sleep . . . awoken  
now in this other far land to the  
high clear cry of red birds wheeling  
out of sight beyond the cloud-sea.

## Grandfather's Guitar

BY JEFFREY HEDQUIST

Searching through a trunk one day,  
I spied an object of the past.  
Amidst the rubble and decay,  
It lay where it had last been cast.

"An old guitar," I first surmised,  
But then with clearer contemplation  
What I heard, to my surprise,  
Was a song for speculation.

With all its lacquered luster gone,  
It told its tale to me  
Of Spanish Main and haunting song  
And days of gallantry.

It sang for maidens sweet and fair,  
And 'neath a willow tree  
Its lusty ballads broke the air  
And set the stage for revelry.

The strings on which the master played  
Were mellow then, in days of yore,  
But now too weakened and decayed  
To capture music any more.

"The master's gone," I heard it say,  
"And I am mere commemoration  
To one who followed music's way  
And fulfilled an obligation."

Let music fill men's hearts, my son;  
I give you thoughts to ponder o'er.  
And when my attic search was done,  
Silent now, it spoke no more.

# The Sun and the Ship

BY RODHAM E. TULLOSS

The world is all that is the case.

*L. Wittgenstein*

All the die long day — the shrieking day, bird-borrowed —  
Terns, breaths unlatched, denying subtle proofs, swing to star-eyed North;  
Apotheosis speculates down wind; and iceberg sirens gibber praises  
'Til jumbled hulk shall think itself upright and flying shameless in a  
pleasure sea —

Until the captain bursts his windy chains, unstops his ears, and revels:  
"Victory!"

Angered, borrowed of morning, betrayed, belied, left a foundling, the dumb sun  
Wakes. Sprinkling a feather of birds with his thistle light and tumbling the  
cretin dark

To the Antipodes, he sets his eye for the tattered sail. What ho! the captain,  
like Houdini,

Hangs out his chains of paradox to dry; the waking sirens lull his empty ears;  
And candles on the yardarms, wickless, burn their bitter wax to tears.

All the long death day—the wind-judged day, ice-feathered—  
The tern-locked glacier of the ship responds beneath rime-dusty throne,  
Rudder catching, wake waves churning up the serpents, arctic apples fed with Eve,  
One-eyed flatfish, smelling herrings, dull whales with their teats bled dry;  
From mountain roots, the grinning septics — sinning, cynic dead — cast out the  
angel eye.

Should ship crack like dry bread and crumble to the yeasty sea,  
The winds would be their own singing pleasure, green as spring, white as a house,  
Winging as their own sweet birds, hot as the earth's hearth heart;  
This the sun foresees, directs his challenge, burning at the stale sea-crutch  
That ignores its fecundating wake and loves the ragged, breathless sails too much.

Shock of contact. Mast in shivers. Captain sleeps on. Crew looks up:  
"Sun bit close," say they. Stop. The sun prepares destruction in his entrails;  
Himself, the fair-haired juggernaut, plummeting — the self-seed spilling;  
Now the crew's prayers are smeared above the focsle and the first born of sirens  
are manshapes in turd;  
Mouths in the sun's thigh scream defiance at the meeting of solar and terror  
worlds.

And here is dying: The glacier shudders; Petrouchka hangs limp from the crow's  
nest in the hold;  
The beams relax their tension; she crevices; she quakes; and her splittings sip the  
lapsing captain in.  
Jack Captain, old rock breaker, old shine and riser, in a numble stew above the  
crumbling:  
"Egypt? The shore? Is this the shore?" he whimpers like a crackerjack whistle;  
And, silver pinstick on a wormy hex, the garden golden man, uprooted, falls.

## Crystal Lake: A Sketch

BY PETER BLUE

As you drive south on Route 153 in early September, some of the branches beside the road have already begun to give their colored leaves to the winds that dance through the trees. The faded center line gamely follows the weathered blacktop around the turns and over the small hills that leave your stomach hanging in midair. There is a fall quiet over the land, not the still quiet you might expect in the middle of a hot summer day, but the quiet rustle of the leaves in the wind, blending with the hum of tires on pavement and the mechanical purr of the motor. A fresh quiet; made fresh by the bright air in the storybook blue sky, stretching far off to the hazy distance of the west. Seven miles from Conway, 153 halts at Crystal Lake and divides, one branch disappearing away from the lake and up around the bend towards Snowville, the other following the lake's curve halfway to the contented town of Easton Center with its small store, antique shop, and whitewashed church pointing skyward. In the middle of Easton Center, 153 makes a quiet left turn, touching the lake again briefly before leaving the valley and continuing south towards East Madison and Effingham Falls. If you don't make the left turn but continue up the steep hill, you come eventually to the Edge's farm, overlooking the lake. In the early fall the Edges have square dances every other Saturday night and the neighbors come and have their fun and talk about last week's rain and the coming winter.

In the evening the older folks sit out in their faded lawn chairs and watch the shadows climb slowly up the pine covered hill to the east. Children play nearby, but their voices seem hushed in the shadows that lead to night. Easton Center is asleep by ten o'clock, a quiet sleep; the father, home from the south forty, has milked the last of the cows, fixed the back fence, been to the town meeting, checked on the sick calf; the children, home from school with its one warm room, have fished in the creek with their old bent pins, gathered acorns, said their prayers as quickly as they could; the mother, home all day, has baked some bread, mended clothes, washed the children, put everyone to bed. Even the dogs retire early, unless the moon is full, in which case they sit in their front yards or down by the gas pump in front of the store and give their white breath howls that trail away deep in their throats.

In the daytime the wind hurries over the low hills and down across the lake, chilling the bathers on their narrow strip of public beach along the northern shore, crowded together in their sandy fun. Behind them an occasional car moves slowly along the road. Bright eyes above peeling noses, far-away eyes, deeply set — all look up for a moment, then return to the growing castle and the fluttering newspaper. Out on the lake white puffs of sails tack back and forth before the breeze, hanging limp for a brief moment on the turn then filling again and straining forward over the deep green water, rippled and sparkled on a bright silk day.

But the wind comes softer in the night; soft like a cat through tall grass the wind whispers along the old stone walls of the land and scurries down the lamp-black roads, breathing down your neck, tugging at your thoughts in the fall-fresh night. The breeze hushes across the silent lake, across the empty beach with its dead cigarette butts, with its empty sand castles. If you sit now on the cool sand it is dry as paper and sifts through your fist in a fine stream. At one end of the beach, a few feet from shore, voiceless rushes nod dark heads, back and forth with the motion of the night. Fresh water waves lap on the sand.

But for the sound of the waves when the wind is up, there is no other noise

in the fall-clear night. The silence is deep, so deep that your mind supplies a faint ring to the ears. The Milky Way travels in grand sweeps overhead, always the same and forever new, the larger stars stark, almost unreal, like the full moon when it rises in the afternoon sky and hangs above the earth like a huge blue-china plate. The distance out to these lights is at once nothing and infinite. On a cool, clear night such as this, you seem to be standing among the stars, there in the flow of the Milky Way through the cathedral silence of the cloudless sky. And, far below, the black road moves on its lonely journey around the lake, through the town, and into the night. Lie on the beach, on the damp sand, and watch the dream of the crystal night, the lazy mist as it rises from the silk black water. Listen to the silence, loud and pure, or the rustle of the wind. Smell the water and the faint odor of shipwrecked leaves dying on the sand. Feel the strength of the land beneath the sky.

## Copernicus

BY MARTIN JAY

Some say copernicus sighed  
As he severed the thin thread  
And set free (let fall?)  
The eternity-poised ball.

Other claim his furrowed cheeks  
Glistened brighter than his blade  
With the saline stains of grief  
At the birth of disbelief.

Yet, in the gleam of his eyes,  
I thought I saw a sly smile:  
His deed then, nought but magic?  
Our epic's woe, mock tragic?



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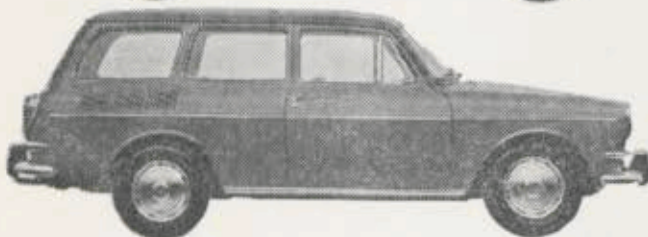
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