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# The Room Across the Hall

James F. Martin

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AFTER THANKING colleague Coogan for his penetrating report on the Osborne play, I'd like to close by mentioning briefly what is coming up. After a singularly dank early December, the Philadelphia theater promises much more for the winter season. By the time you read this piece, localities will have seen *Seventeen*, reportedly a pleasant if non-historic musical. Also *Bell, Book and Candle*, the van Druten play about witchcraft in modern Manhattan, will have held the stage, along with the always capable Kaufman's latest, *Fancy Meeting You Again*. Also promised is a musical version of Victor Wolfson's admired, but unsuccessful, *Excursion*; they've retitled it *A Month of Sundays*. For many of us, the most exciting news is that we are to get, along about February, Christopher Fry's *Venus Observed*, with Rex Harrison and Lilli Palmer playing the leads. *Venus Observed* is not, I think, as good a play as his *The Lady's Not for Burning*, in the reading. But it is somewhat better constructed, and should be a delight. Mr. Fry, for the information of shut-ins, is the Britisher currently engaged in irrigating the Waste Land.

## ***The Room Across the Hall***

● James F. Martin

The open door across the hall  
 Bids black against the long white wall,  
 But yet I know a boarder's there  
 I've heard his footfall on the stair.

A time there was when I was ill  
 And saw him on my window sill,  
 And asked if I could visit in,  
 But all he did was stare and grin.

A time there was when I was well  
 And crossed the hall to ring the bell,  
 Because I wanted much to see  
 That misty face that looked at me.

The room may be a darkened tomb  
 Or filled with life like nature's womb,  
 What's in that room men may agree  
 But I shall want to wait and see.