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PREFACE

We wish to extend our congratulations to Eleanor Aiken, whose story, "The Hide-Out," recently won the coveted Winnie Davis Neely Award.

Through the combined efforts of the editors, our advisor, and our printer, the Vehicle has successfully survived many trials during the past year. To cite just one example, it proudly boasts twice as many *different* authors as the last issue! This not only indicates greater variety in content, but, above that, proves Eastern's literary dimensions are growing. Our thanks go to the real creators, many whom we never see!

Paula Bresnan

Nick Dager

The Trip

It had been light for more than two hours when he crossed the Mississippi River into Missouri. When he was beyond the city, he ate two doughnuts and drank milk from a thermos, not bothering to stop the car. In another hour he had the window down. He knew already that it was going to be very warm, as it had been the other time. At 10:30 he crossed the Missouri-Kansas state line. No visible change yet, he remembered. But he knew it would change. He knew because he had made the same trip four years before with his family. They had been on their way to Colorado and Wyoming. It had been his first trip west, and he remembered it well. He remembered what his mother had said about Kansas. A long old state, she'd said. Nothing to see but wheat field after wheat field. We want to get through that state as fast as possible, she'd said. He hadn't expected to like Kansas much. He certainly hadn't expected to love it. But that's what had happened, and that's why he was making the trip again.

The names of the towns were familiar to him when he saw them again. There was Troy, Hiawatha, Baileyville, Home. At Marysville he stopped at a cafe for a quick lunch and then drove on. Washington, Cuba, Belleville. The land was becoming more and more like he remembered it. The highway rolled over the gently sloping hills straight on ahead of him and disappeared in the distance. On either side of the highway, the hills stretched away to infinity. They were beautiful hills, he thought. But he knew that few others would agree. He knew his mother wouldn't. He knew his father wouldn't. His father had thought the whole area was a complete waste. Maybe it was, he thought. It was a dry, barren land. Little could grow on it but small, dirty-green, almost gray, shrubs. The land was almost like a desert, but not quite. Yes, maybe it was a waste, he

thought. But he still loved it. He loved it because there were so few houses and fences—sometimes he drove several miles without seeing either. He loved it because it seemed so untouched.

Formoso, Montrose, Mankato. He was beginning to feel the old urge coming back, and he was happy. He knew now that the trip wasn't going to be for nothing. He looked out at the hills baking in the sun and knew that once he should lose sight of the highway, he would be completely . . . utterly . . . totally . . . alone. At last! he thought with breathless anticipation: The nearness of such an experience made his heart beat faster and brought a glow to his face. Alone! He longed to be alone. It wasn't that he hated people and felt that he had to escape them. It wasn't that at all. He liked other people. He loved other people. But he felt that he had to be completely alone before he could feel truly free. He had tried to be alone sometimes, but he had never been able to get far enough away. The door to his room had always proved to be a poor barrier. Here, though, here he could get far enough away. He was sure of that.

The farther he drove, the faster his heart beat. His breathing was shallow and quick. And there was that gnawing sensation inside him that he always felt when he was acutely excited. Just as before, he remembered. Only this time he was going to satisfy the urge. He pulled off the highway, locked the car, and walked north into the hills. It was mid-afternoon. He had several hours of daylight left. He tried to walk calmly at first, until he should be out of sight of the highway, but his feeling was too much for him. Soon he started to run, and he ran until he was some distance from the highway.

He was hot and tired when he stopped, so he sat on the ground for a moment to catch his breath.

The air was dry and gently stirring, and it absorbed his sweat and cooled him quickly. Soon he felt completely refreshed. He stood up, looked at the hills around him, opened his mouth with a joyful smile, and started to sing. "The hills are alive with the sound of music . . ." He sang very loudly—more loudly, he thought, than he had ever sung before. Out here he was not afraid of anyone's hearing him and making fun of him. He was free . . . uninhibited. He could do anything he wanted to—anything. "On a clear day, rise and look around you . . ."

As he sang, the gnawing sensation returned to him. Unable to stand still, he stopped singing and began to run again. He ran because he wanted to. It felt good. And out here, he felt like Jim Thorpe. He ran until he was tired again, and he stopped at the top of a hill. Breathing heavily and quickly, he stood still and looked at the sky and the ground around him. Suddenly he was awestruck. He had never before realized how extensive his surroundings were. The sky was bigger than the segments he had seen between city buildings. There was more than what was straight ahead. Why had he never noticed what was on either side before? Suddenly his eyes seemed to be able to grasp a wider picture, and he was overpowered by what he saw. He was breathing even more heavily and quickly now. It was so beautiful! The sky! Not a cloud in it except for a low gray bank to the east. And the color was almost indescribable. Molten, he thought. Yes, like hot metal. No, it was more than that, he thought. It seemed to be vibrating. Maybe electric blue. Even that didn't fully describe the color. I know, he thought with a laugh. It's sky blue. Of course. And he realized for the first time just what sky blue was. Then he remembered the walls of the kitchen

(Continued on Page 8)



← Hook

A NIGHT

drinking our sweet beer
we discussed how grateful
the world should be for people who discover
such things as root squashing.
I fumbled on my harp
making a beautiful music
our laughter mixed together above other sounds.
our world in itself
outside of itself.
she said she had a friend
so we went to the country
and danced with her house to the music of a frog-dog band.
after the dance ended
we sat on her house's lap and ate star pies.
silence interrupted our feast with a conversation
not meant for us but which included us anyway.
(silence is a very gracious host)
as we were leaving she said goodbye to her house,
the conversation continued as we went down the road.
before she and I parted that night
a dog jumped from her mouth and chased a cat
from beneath a bush where an Easter Egg should have been
but we couldn't find it
and she said it didn't matter.
because we could surely find it next year.

by Roger Zulauf

LOST

And what of paradise?
Will it be always sold
In cathedrals with the
Smell of death?
The time of joy is
Now.
Behold the smell of spring.
Taste the sweet delight
Of love's reward.
Watch the sparkle of the
High snows thaw.
Listen to the fragile music
Of the stars.
All this yours with the answer of
Your freedom's call.

Jim Biro

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD STUDENTS

Sixteen-year-old students with impatience and imprudence
Are bound to open their cracker-jacks from the bottom of the box.
But you know the crowd I run in, have fun and get my sun in
Would find this childish practice highly unorthodox.
We practice social graces, get no chocolate in our faces.
We, of course, integrate the races but never in our blocks.
I always hold my cool, I'm straight A, you know, in school,
Just as healthy as a bull and as hard as rocks.
But this military service it quite frankly makes me nervous
And I broke out in influenza, bronchitis and chickenpox.

NB

THE AMATEUR

A child
A street corner
 giggles
At the old whore
 ragged
 wrinkled
 weathered
The gushing waters
A thousand floods
 have smoothed the jagged edges
 of youth once known

The pro smiles
At the innocence
 The amateur
 The child

Then cries

Roger Zulauf

MAN

The Artist
Painted the Man's picture
After seeing it once
The man stabbed the artist
After seeing it twice
He stabbed Himself

Roger Zulauf

MY CAMELOT

Oh come ye prophets of liberality
Oh come ye prophets of doom
Witness my Camelot.
How fair are her fields and forests
Gather and I will prophesy true her doom:

Her doom arose in every heart
It grew off your hate
The left hand arose so mighty
That the right had to destroy it.
Torn against herself, my Camelot falls.
Your children will ask,
"From whence is this tyranny upon our land?"
And you will have no answer
T'was in your heart.

My Camelot! My Camelot! How I love thee
But they were too busy with false love
And true hate that undergirded your foundations
I now weep for thee, my Camelot.

Ronald Garner

(Continued from Page 4)

where he had lived as a boy. They were supposed to have been sky blue. But that seemed ridiculous now. Such quality of color could never be duplicated. And even if it could be, to allow it to be confined to four walls and a ceiling—No! It couldn't be done. Out here there were no walls. His eyes couldn't focus on the sky. He could see forever.

Now he looked down at the bush in front of him and squatted to examine it closely. The shape of the branches reminded him of the Japanese bonsai that he had seen pictures of. He knew the bush was hardy, but he thought it looked very delicate and graceful. The leaves looked like tiny, flat footballs, and they were coated with dust. Beautiful, he thought. Then, as he brought his face closer to the ground, he realized that the bush was crawling with life. A little beetle was trying to take a bite out of one of the leaves while a red ant was sunning himself on another one. A copper-colored ladybug was scurrying up one of the branches after a measuring worm. The worm came to a fork in the branch and stopped. When the ladybug caught up with him, she waited patiently a few seconds for him to move and then spread her wings and flew away. He looked down at a rock by his foot and saw two black ants carting a red ant away to their pantry. Suddenly a big brown beetle appeared and scampered into a hole underneath the same rock. Shortly, another beetle followed. Then one of them came out again and hurried off around the rock. Almost immediately the other came out too, then turned around and thrust itself back down the hole, and finally appeared again, only to meet the other one returning. After some confusion, both disappeared once more. He had no idea what the purpose of all the bustle was, but he enjoyed the performance immensely. He had never seen anything like it before. Suddenly he laughed. To think he had driven clear out here just to watch the antics of two brown beetles.

Now he stood up, tilted his

head back, and closed his eyes. Silence, complete silence. But it wasn't a melancholy silence or a frightening silence. It was a soothing silence, a restful silence, he thought. He filled his lungs with fresh, dry air. He had never felt quite so full of life before. He opened his eyes and began to walk aimlessly down the slope. His eyes were glowing and his whole face was smiling and he wanted to sing, but he couldn't think of any song that could even come close to expressing his great joy. His whole being was bursting to let out a song, but the right words would not come. Finally he settled for one of his old favorites, but it seemed unusually lifeless right now. He wished wholeheartedly that he had the talent to compose his own song, but he knew that he didn't have it. He stopped singing.

Suddenly, on an impulse, he turned a cartwheel. He smiled. It had been many years since he had turned cartwheels as a child. People his age just didn't do those kind of things. He didn't know why, because cartwheels are fun, but they didn't. He turned another one.

He walked happily, turning cartwheels now and then, for several hours. Sometimes there were tears in his eyes because he knew he would have to leave this place soon. He didn't want this experience to end. He felt so uninhibited and free here. He could do whatever he wanted to. He could run wildly if he wanted to. He could sing loudly if he wanted to. He could turn cartwheels if he wanted to. He could take off his clothes and run naked in the sunlight if he wanted to. All of a sudden, he had a desire to take off his clothes and run naked in the sunlight. He left his clothes spread on top of a shrub so that he could see them from a distance and began to run lightly across the ground. The ground was warm under his bare feet, but the wind was cool as it swirled around his body. He stopped running and just let the wind caress him. He saw that the sun was slipping down towards a bank of clouds on the western horizon, and he knew that he

could not stay much longer. Tears filled his eyes again, and he flung himself face down on the ground and clung to it, clawing at it with his fingers. What he had begun to realize earlier in the afternoon had now hit him full force. He suddenly felt very much a part of the earth, and he struggled to clasp it to him, or rather, him to it, as if he were afraid that he might fall away from it. The coarseness of it felt good pressed against his cheek and against his bare chest, and suddenly he felt safe—safe as a baby on its mother's breast. His grip relaxed. He lay there peacefully, and after a while he rolled over on his back and looked straight up at the sky. He spread his arms in an effort to embrace the heavens. He loved the earth that he was lying on. He loved the sky, which he held in his arms. He knew that he had never known them before, and he thought he knew why. He had always thought that people were far more important than nature. He had always put relationships with them ahead of other things. Maybe they were more important, but now he wasn't so sure. He was sure that nature had its values and that life wasn't complete without it. Yes, right now, anyway, he decided that nature was every bit as important as other people, and he was sorry that he had been so critical of nature-lovers. Both matter, he thought.

He rolled over on his stomach again, closed his eyes, and lay securely, as if asleep, on earth's breast. He almost wished he could spend the night right here, but he knew he couldn't. After a few minutes he stood up and walked slowly back to the shrub where he had left his clothes. He brushed some of the dust off his body and reluctantly got dressed. By looking at the sun, he knew which way to go to get back to the highway, and he set off in that direction—south. He was a little tired, but he was very happy.

During the last couple of hours, the sky to the north and overhead had filled with clouds. As soon as the sun disappeared behind the bank to the west, it lit

THE ROSE AND THE BRIAR

up the clouds all across the sky. An unusual sunset, he thought when he turned around to look at it. Almost as if the sun had set in the north. And it couldn't be any more awesome than it is, he thought. There doesn't seem to be any end to what I've missed seeing and feeling. He gazed weakly at the sky for some time. Like a vast show window, he thought, draped with miles and miles of white taffeta and flooded with pink, blue, and purple light. One spot to the north and slightly to the east was brighter than the rest of the sky. The pink was more intense, the blue and purple were deeper here than anywhere else. It would have made a beautiful painting, and he wished he could paint it, but he knew he couldn't. He just hoped he could remember it. He blinked back the tears. Sunsets had always made him a little sad. They were kind of like saying good-bye. This time it was good-bye to an experience that had been far more exhilarating than he had ever dreamed.

By the time he reached his car, the sky had faded to almost complete darkness. Only one small patch of pink remained. He regretted leaving this place because he loved it, but at the same time, he was anxious to get back to Illinois so that he could see it.

Charles White

It was a morning in early spring,
two seeds, waited through a long winter,
sprouted and began growing side by side in the sunlight.
Their early shoots gave no indication of their natures;
the two were almost identical.
The season was right for quick growth,
enough water and food for both,
and they quickly sprang up to be handsome stems.
The spring was short and the days soon into summer.
The stems now beget their own natures;
one was a rose, the other a briar.
The rains were less frequent—
The competition started between the two.
Each sapped water from the ground
and the grass between the two wilted and browned.
Now the rose tried to protect the beauty
which had been destroyed in the dying grass
by bringing forth a beautiful flower,
but the briar robbed the rose of strength
and could only manage a small bud.
The days passed and summer surrendered to autumn.
The rains came again more frequently,
but neither could immediately show gains.
The grass struggled after its unreturnable green,
and returned some of the beauty to the small area.
Mid-season, the rose flowered—
A big beautiful red rose,
which almost obscured the briar.
However, the end of autumn came quickly
and the rose and the briar died.
Once again they became indistinguishable
and all their fibers were the same.
The only thing remaining was the memory
that this was the Rose, and
that this was the Briar.

Kenneth L. Folkerts

WHO AM I?

NOTE: A personal experience (a bit weird yet none the less true) that was the unexpected beginning of my "education for privacy" in relation to Ten Hoor's idea of organizing one's mind. At the time of this somewhat sudden insight, I was literally on the verge of insanity. This experience led to many great re-arrangements of my conscious mind.

Who am I? This is not a simple question but rather a grave problem that cannot be solved until the awesome chaos of one's mind becomes a usable tool and not a weapon of self-destruction. But, the mind cannot be refined until one discovers that his mind is, in fact, a lurid chamber of horrors and not a bookcase filled with childhood eroticism. The door to the dungeon can be opened slowly by the prepared, inquisitive mind; or it can be sprung open unexpectedly, swallowing a young, uneducated mind—a terrible experience for an imaginative youth such as I was.

As I peered into the abyss, I could hear the rumbling of ancient voices, and I could see archaic characters reenacting my experiences of times past. But my vision blurred as the stage became obscured in a hideous spectrum of colors, as if the earth had retched and vomited on it. I eased through the entrance and into a hell I never realized existed. I began my personal *Fantastic Voyage* into the realm of my mind.

I had stumbled onto this vast, uncharted land quite innocently. I was standing with several hundred young men, strangers it seemed, at the Air Force induction center in St. Louis. I was very much alone in the crowd and very frightened. We had been standing several hours, and I was on the edge of becoming a vegetable. The situation was beyond the point with which my mind could cope. The interminable waiting was beyond my experience; I was no longer in control of my fate. Suddenly, from directly behind me, a harsh, raspy voice bellowed in my ear, "Who in the hell are you?" At this moment, reality vanished, and I found that I was at the entrance to my mind.

Not knowing the return route to reality, I had only one choice: enter and find a way to the other side of the cavern and possibly escape. I eased into the Devil's cathedral, being careful not to step on the scattered momentoes of since past vacations scurrying at my feet. After careful surveying of the chaos that lay before me, I could find no visible path. I could only plod through the jungles of confused memories and waves of mixed emotions.

I edged into fear, spiders and coffins swirling above my head, jeers and criticisms tearing at me from snarled thorn bushes, failure's luring voice beckoning me into the fathomless depths beside my chosen direction. As I moved on I found lost girl friends lounging with my prejudices and marching soldiers in bottomless wells filled from the overflow of huge damns. I began to run blindly. My naked skin was shredded by the poisonous leaves of laxity; my legs were torn by the decayed teeth

of religious hypocrites who were skewered on the sharp ends of burned swastikas.

A short distance from what seemed to be the opposite side of the cavern, I stopped to rest among nymph-like flowers of ecstasy pollinated by the athletic heroes of my childhood. The books of Poe, Marx, Huxley, and the words of Christ, Mohammad, and the Prophets swarmed around me and filled my head with the resonating voices of philosophy, pornography, atrocity, and love. From the clouds of embracing nudes and Quakers nailed to crosses came showers of blood and urine.

I ran hysterical for years across the few inches to the wall. After decades had passed I was able to reach out and grope the slimey, decaying surface of the wall for an opening of escape. I found and squeezed through the narrow passage of tranquillity and insanity into a small, brilliant room containing thousands of mirrors, each distorting my image. Each reflection was that of a stranger. I stared in horror as the walls began to close around me. The images became millions of projections of my life on one screen. Water, a solution of Bach and the Doors, began to rise in the room; there was no drain. A whirlpool! I was in a gigantic whirlpool!!!

"Boy, who are you?! Answer me when I spak to you, damnit!" screamed the man behind me.

"I think I'm Frank McKennedy, but I don't know; I don't know..."

"What in the... Never mind, go to room B for your physical."

Frank McKennedy



Mr. Samuel Clemens

Ten minutes late, Mr. Samuel Clemens came out from behind the stage curtains into the Victorian parlor setting. He sauntered in, with a slight self-fashioned limp that caused his wide-legged trousers to swish back and forth. From the top of his white frenzied hair, to the bottom of his white cuffed trousers, he was a study in white. Such an appearance befitted an aged man, rather than an author of adventures, but his randomly chosen words reminisced of immortal characters, Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. Soon his legs tired and he settled into a great rocking chair with a sigh. Producing a cigar, striking a match,

and inhaling deeply, he lit the cigar. Now, with his cigar in mouth, and his hand on cheek, his words were slurred. Soon even his slurred phrases were unheard as his head bobbed up and down in a "jerky" fashion as he momentarily succumbed to sleep. The effort of staying awake finally became too much for Mr. Clemens, and rising slowly from his chair he walked away. Brushing aside the velvet curtain he left . . . and except for the slow rocking of his chair one would never had known that Mr. Samuel Clemens had been here.

Larry A. Miller

LOCK OUT

none listens

_____ nothingness is heard.

Open mouths.

_____ ears shut tight

Lock Out, the light . . . of listening.

Hold to a fantasy of a oneness with the

Self, none others.

_____ eyes shut tight

Lock Out, the light . . . of seeing.

None feels.

None sees.

None listens.

Disease.

Ara Childs

EXCUSE ME

excuse me
do you have the time
you don't?
well thanks any way
goodby
isn't that sad
there goes another one
who just doesn't have the time

Roger Zulauf

ON SHADOWS FROM A CANDLE 67

I see the shadows on the paper
Candle cast down,
Crying on the white,
Like tallow wax dropped,
Lying with the night.

I wonder where the day will be.
Flat fingers idle on the page
Touch up to pen point,
Dangle on a word, unwritten.

They fondle to the meaning,
where the linen cloyed
Runs out its plane
In endless falling wisdoms.

There are edges sharp defined,
Or twilight shaded abyssal slopes;
They fall away, I fall away,
Where depth cast up
Their symbol,
Silhouetted,
Half lost in the dark.

So shadows on the paper,
Candle cast down,
Intercourse my soul.

Michael G. McKee

beginning of an end

I grasp to cling on-
to remember the time when...,
a feeling of wholeness arises,
rose petals produce velvet soft glances,
salted tears upon a puffy cheek,
an undefinable moment of calmness
the dark sheet of night contains a lit star,
old conventions: ideas discarded,
a prosaic conversment in bed,
laughter dented dimples,
meanings attached to each word,
a slit mind revealing a true self,
empty glasses producing true thoughts,
real living has begun,
I fight not to say the inevitable-
good-by.

Caryl Dagro



MAD

“WA AIN’T UN HUR.”

Henry Bush is a neighbor man who lives with his wife in an old but sturdy shanty. He owns one or two of every farm animal and enjoys spinning yarns about them. He also likes to relate humorous incidents that happen to his closest neighbors. One particular tale seems to be his favorite: when his neighbor could only say the wrong thing at the wrong time.

Pauline Boone lives alone down the highway from Henry about fifty yards. She lives in a home constructed of two-by-fours and patched together shingles. Every year she plants a garden for her subsistence. The story takes place when her tomatoes had begun to blush and shine.

That particular day, Pauline, a genial colored lady, went on a friendly jaunt to Henry’s house. Pauline and Mr. and Mrs. Bush perched themselves on the porch and jawed about everything from Henry’s geese to Pauline’s ducks. After they had talked for a while, Pauline noticed two dark forms slyly sneaking their way up the slope to her humble abode. The taller of the two peeked in one of the windows to check if Pauline was home. No sooner had he checked than the

shorter one ran to the tomato patch and started pitching the fruits into a gunny sack with all his might.

“Calvun Davis is a stealin’ ma termaters,” she growled and bounded up like a new-mother cow and went jogging toward her home. Her hefty form jiggled up and down as she ran; the patter of her feet advised the thieves of her advance. They scrambled into some weeds, as Pauline approached the garden.

“Calvun, is dat chyou in dem weeds?” she snarled breathlessly.

“Calvun ain’t in dem weeds,” a voice ventured forth.

“Whod dat chyou brung wid chya?”

“Joe nuva cum.”

“Aw know betta, Aw seen you runnin’ tru da woods.”

“Dat’s funna, Aw nuva seen ana wun a runnin’ tru da woods.”

“Awma gonna cum un dar und git chyou.”

“We ain’t un hur.”

She pushed back the weeds and there lay the culprits: “Wull thar ya sit, Calvun and Joe Davis. Aw wanna no wat chyou wur a stealin’ ma termaters for?”

“Is you accusin’ us a stealin’ you termaters.. Lawdly all to mighty, wa wouldn’t do ana ting of the sort to chyou. Chyou just gotta be do best womun un da world. Wa wouldn’t dar sit a finga on ana of you belongins. Chyou know wa is gud people. We seen you termaters was ripe, so wa was just a pickin’ um fur ya.”

“If ya ain’t got no more sense un ta say dat, you mighta dumb. Now git on home bafour aw chase ya.”

Calvin and Joe wheeled on their feet and took out a flying for home. Pauline snatched a big juicy tomato, bent back her arm and made ketchup of it on the back of Calvin’s head, as the duo hastily retreated down the slope to their home.

Genesis II, 18

'67

- I. She, from the music, came;
For the music of the spheres is she.
The rhythm of a universe . . .
- II. Effused she from the marrow,
For there is in her the blood of living.
Tangent to the earth . . .
- III. She from the spheres, eternal;
She, from the flesh, ephemeral;
And the shadow of the sun is she;
The feeling of the wind.
The heaven for man’s soul is she,
The passion for his love . . .

Michael G. McKee

James Birchler

A Patent Leather Pale

Maria sat on the curb, elbows on her knees, hands cupping her chin. A brown ant hurried across the cement before her, then over the patent leather top of her shoe. She watched it go away, then turned toward the curving drive that disappeared under the shade of the trees. The morning group of kindergarteners had been dismissed and the children of the afternoon session tossed high pitched laughter out of the open windows.

"Why doesn't he come?" she thought and reviewed the instructions of that morning. "He said that he would be here and I was supposed to wait. Mother said if the weather was nice, we were going 'up home'. That meant to grandma's house, but they didn't really live on top of a hill. No, they lived at the bottom of one. But he was coming. He said so."

She heard a rolling, sticking sound of tires on the hot pavement and looked up as a taxi stopped in front of her. "You're supposed to come with me, I think. I'll take you home," the driver said. Her eyes squinted a little against the bright sun as she replied.

"No. I can't. My dad told me that he was coming."

"Yes, well I don't know about that. I'm supposed to pick up a little girl in a yellow dress. I don't see anyone else around. Do you?"

"No, but he's coming."

Maria stood up and walked along the gutter. Her eyes followed a crevice that leaped from the road, up the side of the curb, and onto the sidewalk. A door swung open and Miss Burns came out of the building with the sound of heels striking sharply on the stone steps.

"Maria, your mother called. You will be taking a cab home today."

"No. Dad said he was coming. He will be here soon."

"Maria..." she began. But Maria had turned away and returned to her post on the curb, watching down the road. A pale glimmer emerged from the shade under the trees and took on color as it grew larger. It passed by without stopping.

Miss Burns took the girl's arm as the cab driver stepped out of the cab and pushed his cap further back on his head. Maria stood between the two with her head thrown back and her chin up-lifted, studying the two unsmiling faces. "Well?" he asked. "Did you get everything straightened out?" Miss Burns managed a small laugh and shook her head. She glanced at the child who continued to watch the road where the shade covered it.

The driver opened the back door. Maria hesitated, but she walked over and climbed into the darkened interior. Once inside, she immediately bounced to her knees and stared out of the rear window at the trees growing smaller in the distance. "He didn't come," she thought. "He forgot again. But he promised. He told me he would come."

She turned around and slid to a sitting position against the cushions. At first, she thought that she might cry, but she sat stiffly instead, her eyes fixed on the toes of her shiny black shoes.

On that afternoon nearly fifteen years ago she had climbed the porch steps to meet her mother who tried to explain. "He had to go to a special meeting this afternoon," she had said as she bent to refasten a button on the back of Maria's dress. "And he just forgot to pick you up first. Let's go fix some lunch."

Now she stood in the waiting room under a sign which read: "No loitering." She looked through the heavy plate glass doors into the wide gray afternoon around the depot. She felt

gusts of cold air on the backs of her legs as passengers came and left, fanning the doors somewhere behind her. "Last call for Burlington. Loading and leaving at gate three," the loudspeaker announced. Traveling people hurried in and out.

"For God's sake where is he?" she wondered. She checked her watch with the blinking reports of time and temperature on the sign above the jeweler's shop across the street. "Three forty-five. I know I told him I'd be here at three o'clock."

A tight uneasy feeling began inside somewhere near her stomach and worked its way upward with a tightening and pulsing to the back of her throat. Her hands felt cold as they straightened the collar on her coat. In adjusting it, she bent her head forward and glanced downward toward the marbled tile floor. A strange sensation filled her. It was almost as if she were watching herself or as if she were re-living something. "I'm scared," she thought. "But why? Maybe something is going to happen." She dismissed that thought, but the sensation remained. She scanned her memory for a word, an explanation, for that nameless feeling that held her. Outside a child walked by, swinging a schoolbag and gauging his steps to avoid the cracks that striped the sidewalks.

Her mind came to rest on the memory of that afternoon of several years before and she heard her mother laugh away her disappointment and fear of being forgotten at school. The tightness eased and left only a faint residue that felt like the beginning of a headache. "That must be it," she thought as she supplied a reason for her feeling. "Damn, that makes me mad, though; doesn't he know how much I hate to wait alone?" She missed something and her

(Continued on Page 18)

“hungry child”
i sit here
staring at that poster
The Biafran Children
nameless distortions
foodless bellies
smileless lips.
swollen out of proportion.
arms and legs shrunken
unrecognizable
until hands and feet are noticed.
twelve pairs of ribs jutting out
prove They are human.
from sunken unglowing eyes
They stare back at me
without accusation.
i want to kill
anything with a fat belly
even myself.
the maid throws out left-overs
while pathetic fat-assed America
sits back from the dinner table
and states with a greasy mouth
after a couple of contented belches
“it’s not OUR war
WE can’t involve OURselves.”

is it those Children’s war?
is Vietnam our war?
White Anglo Saxon Potbellies
your Christ must have failed.
maybe He should have
died with a swollen stomach
praying for a fly to eat
and not old enough to hate.



R.Z.



DO YOU LIKE THE RAIN?

It's raining -
I remember when I was a child—
The rain fell
And I squatted beneath my umbrella
Giggling at each drip that hit my nose
Or eyelashes;
I splashed through puddles.
Peering into them, searching for the bottom
And for something I didn't understand.
I ran and laughed,
Water streaming down my face,
My hair hanging in wet ringlets.
I loved the rain.
I cried the day it rained
For our fifth grade picnic.
And once I remember standing at my window,
Peering into the day
Gray and bleak,
Watching the raindrops hit the window,
Collect, and fall slowly,
Then quickly, in a small stream
To the window pane.
And I felt so sad,
But I didn't know why.
In high school
I remember running to the bus;
Waiting at the door until
It was almost there
Then running through the rain,
Angry at the day.
Jane.
She was beautiful.
Always.
But I remember when she
Got caught in the rain on her way to school.
She stood at the bathroom mirror,
Sobbing,
While we girls arranged our wet ringlets.
She went home to fix her hair,
While we girls went on to class.
Jane was never as beautiful to me

Anymore.
Funny.
When you're older,
You sneak out of the house
To walk through the rain
And let your hair hang
In wet ringlets.
You watch small children
Squatting under umbrellas
Giggling as the rain hits their nose
And eyelashes.
And you smile, too,
With a slight hurt in your heart
And a sadness in your smile.
And you busy yourself
About the house
When it rains for your picnic.
What do you do when it rains?
It isn't so important
When your hair isn't "just so."
Rain is different now.
What do you do when it rains?
The splash of cars going by,
The steady drops on the sidewalk;
Do you think?
Remember?
Rain always makes me remember.
I like to sit alone
Or curl up with a book,
Or even do the long-neglected jobs
I never have time for.
What do you do?
Isn't rain funny?
It makes people stop
Sometimes to think
Or maybe just do things
They don't usually do.
Aren't you glad it rains—
Sometimes?

Linda Boltman

SEASONS CHANGE

SUMMER:

AND THE SUN BLISTERED AND BURNT

FALL:

AND THE LEAVES FELL AND SMOTHERED

WINTER:

AND THE SNOWS CAME HEAVY AND DEEP

SPRING:

UNDAUNTED THE SEED BURST FORTH AND BECAME
"A BLADE OF GRASS"

JERRY J. CARTER

(Continued from Page 14)

thoughts sank back with a vague groping into a familiar pattern that had rutted itself in her mind.

"How am I going to bring up the subject?" she began, again. "What should I say?" She rehearsed and rejected beginnings and endings until she grew tired of thinking about it and focused her attention upon her immediate surroundings.

It was still raining—the kind of rain that seemed as though it would never stop. Passing automobiles threw curved sheets of sooty gray water onto the sidewalks, as they slowed and thickened at the intersection where the traffic alternated directions. Package-laden figures hurried by, avoiding the splashes that washed over the curbs. The umbrellas dipped and bobbed along like castoff floating toys. In front of the jeweler's shop, a slight, bent, old man made his way along the street. As he approached a steel lidded manhole, he paused for a moment and walked carefully around it, then continued along his way.

Maria glanced aside as a shape moved toward her. It was her father. She smiled spontaneously as he picked up her suitcase and told her that the car was parked around the corner. He turned up his collar and raised his shoulders against the blowing rain. "You go on ahead and get in while I put this in the trunk," he said. She slid into the front seat and waited in the dimness. There was nothing except the drumming rain on the roof and hood of the car.

"How come you were so late?" she asked after they started on their way.

"Huh? Well, I got a telephone call at the office and couldn't get away as early as I had planned."

Maria looked closely at her father, suddenly noticing a strangeness about him. He seemed older, grayer, and smaller than she had remembered him. He switched on the radio as they waited at the stoplight. "Do you

remember that song, Maria?" he said after awhile.

"Yes," she replied quietly. She recognized the beginning of an old, familiar routine that had begun after her mother's death, two years earlier. It seemed that he began every conversation with: "Do you remember?" "You've got to stop thinking about all that!" she wanted to say. She started to bite a thumbnail, but pulled on a strand of hair instead.

"Well? How's school?" he asked.

"Dad . . .?" she began.

"Yes? What's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing, really. School is just fine. I'm just tired, I guess." She looked at her father again, at the man, the person, who sat next to her. For some reason, it was much different than she had expected. "He can't possibly tell me anything that I don't already know or haven't heard before," she thought. "And it isn't a bit easier to take here than at school. So. Nothing has changed."

The night had been cool and still around Ted and Maria as they sat on the grass in front of the library, listening to the hoarse crickets around them. The sky was flat and black above the trees, perforated at random by a few stars. He lighted her cigarette and told her that he thought it would be better if they stopped seeing one another. "It's not going to work out," he told her. "We're just too far apart, too different. You're taking both of us much too seriously."

"All right," she said, afraid to say anything more. He had walked her back to the dormitory, where she sat in silence, allowing his words to take on meaning. Then she planned. She would leave school and go away to some big city to work for awhile after the semester's end. But before that, she wanted to go home and that became something she looked forward to more and more.

Now, as she looked at her father, she knew all of that was

foolish and impractical. Of course she was going to return to school. There was no reason not to.

They had reached the edge of town when the car began to slow unexpectedly. Maria looked up and saw the flashing light at the railroad crossing, as the metallic ding-ding-ding of the warning bell reached them. They stopped to wait for the train. "It passes unbearably slowly, when you look at first one end and then the other," she thought. "But the long black string of cars moves so rapidly, you can scarcely read the names, if you watch each car pass over the gray cement of the pavement." For awhile it seemed as if the car and the highway were moving instead of the train.

In a cornfield nearby, the pale stalks stood stooped and twisted toward the silver puddles that lay between the rows and in ditches. Overhead a few black-bird scribbled against the low gray clouds. The rain had stopped and she noticed that they were waiting under a grove of trees that still held most of its dead leaves in a canopy of twigs and branches over the road. Her father had turned off the windshield wipers; she hadn't even noticed the squeaking of rubber on glass until it had stopped.

The long dark train pulled its caboose across the pavement and the traffic began to move again. "I didn't know they even used these tracks anymore," she said.

"Oh, every once in a while one passes through here. But you've been gone several months now. Maybe you haven't had a chance to notice."

She found herself gazing comfortably at the white spots of light on the shiny darkness of her shoe tops. She straightened her skirt beneath her and sat a little straighter. She leaned toward the dash board to locate the lighter, pushed it in and said in a clear voice, "You won't mind if I smoke, will you?"

Eleanor Aiken



Whistling Trees

The wind whistled through the barren trees,
and dark clouds covered the moon,
Quietly she sat there, huddling close
to the cold concrete bridge.
The bridge provided no warmth,
no shelter;
But still it was the place
where they had always met.
She piled leaves about herself
for a little bit of softness,
Because she knew he would be awhile.
Sitting there she hummed and thought back
to the early days of their love.
She thought also of "the day"
when he had gone to war.
Surely, that had been the saddest day of her life.
But why think about that now?
He was coming home to her—this very night.
They would be happy forever.
In the distance she heard a dog bark;
Then, the night was again quiet.
It began to snow lightly,
but she did not care.
He would be there soon;
she would be in his arms and all would be warm.
Was that a twig that snapped?
Yes! He was coming, coming to her,
coming to make her happy.
Never, never more would they part.
"Are you ready?"
"Yes, I am ready."
The wind whistled through the trees,
but that was all.

Pam McKinney

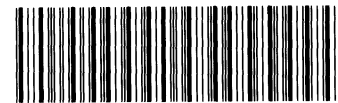
POSTSCRIPT

The coffin gleamed in the sun
For the last time;
The widow wept alone;
The preacher droned and driveled
Until the children spotted the truth
And grew restless;
The old ladies didn't miss a thing—
Not a hat, a hairdo, or a prayer;
The old men were embarrassed for the dead, weary;
His sons were anxious for the will;
His daughters took it well;
His sister looked more gray;
His brothers wondered who . . . was next;
And up above a robin redbreast sang
While below the earthworms waited in twisting pinkish coils;
White clouds sailed past to other worlds.
But only flapped his canopy;
A pallbearer's foot dislodged a clump of sod
Into the gaping hole with a hollow thud;
The old oaks sighed nearby and tried to resist
As I; but I—I cried to see it all,
And all the while
The undertaker smiled.

Thomas W. Rea



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