

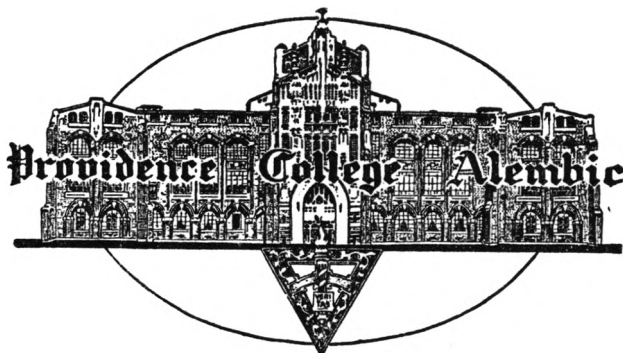
ALEMBIC



NOVEMBER 1960

VOL. XL NO. 1

THE ALEMBIC



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The Search

JACK GALVIN '64

HIS blue jeans were dirt stiff, his T-shirt had lost all connection with the color white, his hands were caked with dried concrete and as he walked into his rented room, he choked back a sob of despair. The dirt, the sweat and the sobs had been part of his frugal life for a long time.

Who was he? What difference did it make if he was dirty? Or if he cried?

His name was Anthony and he was sensitive. He was very sensitive. His sensitivity was his pale unavoidable eyes, his soft mouth and hands. They displayed the inner-most part of him which no one could ever reach without making him carelessly happy or completely crushed.

His lifeless room was a symbol for Anthony of the miserable life he now had the misfortune to lead. He had been in six different towns in the last three months and this room was exactly like the others. It catered to only one type of person and it made Anthony sick to think of where he was.

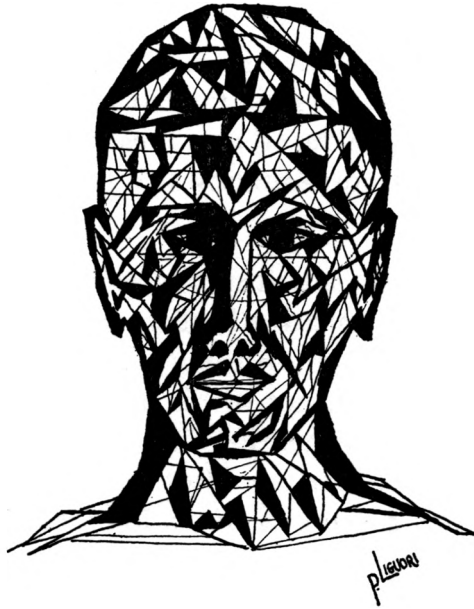
Anthony was searching for something or someone, and he was bound impatiently to go on. The long search for this intangible kept Anthony apart from humanity. He had become aloof, not of his own choice but because he was looking for something that others had apparently found or were not alert to. Just as a man drinks water, Anthony needed a drink of life, a long, hard swallow.

Others had left work and gone to their homes but Anthony just went to his cell, his cell-like room which kept

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others out and kept him away from them. And who would bother him? He had no friends here, no relations and people just didn't care. Anthony realized this as he went on through his young life. The old man who was injured today on the job got a little sympathy and then left to shift for himself. The haggard wretch who wanted to work for practically nothing, just enough to feed his children, was refused a job with a slow sinister shake of a head. And he, although he had enough to live on, was alone. He wanted to be alone, at first, he wanted to find his way by himself letting the experience be the foundation of his future but now as he walked through the hallway of this life, the walls were entirely too high for him to ever climb out.

Anthony looked at the murky walls of his room and wondered why he kept going. Why did he search?



The Search

He literally couldn't sit still. As long as he worked or kept busy he was not tempted to think about the dark cloud which was always in his sky. But as soon as he was alone Anthony became the restless victim of his own answerless questions.

The little things he noticed in life made it just so much more difficult to go on. When he passed a lonely old woman patiently waiting on the windy corner for a bus, Anthony wished that just one of those thousands of passing cars would offer her a ride. When he stood in the awkward silence of the subway he wished he could say something to brighten the forlorn faces until the people got off the subway. When he saw an old drunk wallow down the street, his insides cried out to help the grizzled imbibor but he knew it was none of his business and he couldn't do a thing to help.

And he noticed other more delicate things; he wanted to touch soft skin, kiss moist lips, share a look, a secret, a life. But the barrier was always there. Anthony wanted to stop and talk, just talk to one young, happy, laughing girl and look into her unspoiled eyes but he couldn't. He didn't know any girls; he couldn't jump the barrier into a stranger's life. He couldn't just say hello to a perfect stranger and expect to be answered kindly. This person would have her own society, her own life, her own people to say hello to. What need had she of him? She probably had her own love to share looks and secrets with, and others would say hello and look into her unspoiled eyes many times a day. Maybe he would meet a girl who will say hello to him who is lonely. Maybe she is the one for whom he is searching.

Was it a selfish thing? Was it to satisfy his own pleasures and wants that he hunted?

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The time went by slowly; he watched the unhurried hand unwind another minute and slowly close the last, never again to be used or appreciated. Had he improved himself at all? Was any dawn better than the previous sunset.

Anthony felt the nauseating emptiness of insecurity in the pit of his stomach, approaching each day much the same as a school boy approached an exam unstudied. He was aware of his loneliness, his unhappiness and, most of all, his uncertainty about himself and his future.

He looked around his unsympathetic room and decided to leave it, to go on. Where would he end his uneasy wanderings? Anthony didn't know but on he must go.

Anthony packed his suitcase and left.

Chekhov and the Russian Character

DONALD J. PROCACCINI '61

TO admire the stories of Anton Chekhov is regarded as a sign of sophistication; to dislike him is to announce yourself a philistine. Few story tellers stand higher in critical judgment than Chekhov, yet on first appearance it seems infinitely easier to write like Chekhov than Maupassant or Maugham. For if one tries to relate one of his stories he will discover that there is nothing to tell. His anecdotes stripped of embellishments are often inane and frequently inconsequential.

If a short story is taken to be a representation of some action, entire in itself and with a defined length, then Chekhov leaves much to be desired. But if we think of a short story as a piece of prose dealing with imaginary persons, then few have excelled him. He said, "Why write about a man getting into a submarine and going to the North Pole to reconcile himself to the world, while his beloved at that moment throws herself with a hysterical shriek from the belfry? All this is untrue and does not happen in real life. One must write about the simple things: how Peter Semionovitch married Maria Avonovna. That is all."

In dealing with these "imaginary persons" Chekhov excels in the creation of a myriad of character types—in the realization of their whole outlook upon life; in the presenting of touching moments of love, grief, and even pain; in the analysis of problems of moral conduct; in the consideration of the individual and his environment, and of relations between the social castes in Imperial Russia. Whereas his early work stressed incident, his later effort is

devoted to a greater realization of the mental, spiritual, and emotional life of his subjects.

It is often said that Chekhov does not express opinions in his stories, that he does not even show sympathy with his characters; Chekhov in his *Notebooks* frequently comments on his "objectivity," and his "unconcern." He advised his brother: "Subjectivity is a terrible thing. It is bad in this alone, that it reveals the author's hands and feet." However it is obvious that Chekhov borrows characters to describe and preach about problems, institutions, and people. His characters even deliver lengthy harangues on his favorite topic: the means of uplifting the lower classes. Generally it can be observed that he attempts to convey his criticisms of life by portrayal. "Man will only become better," he wrote in his diary, "When you make him see what he is like."

Even when the manner of his character sketches seems most objective, they will be seen to reveal pronounced enthusiasms and distastes. For in spite of his detached manner, Chekhov so stresses character traits and types as to convey not only generally accepted truths about human nature but his own criticisms of people, his ideals and even bits of a philosophy of life. Chekhov habitually reacts against the cheap, vulgar and banal, against sordidness and avariciousness. He constantly points out clues to inner flaws. He portrays the apostate Jew who scorns daily labor and capitalizes on the generosity of the monks ("Uprooted"); the cheerful constant borrower (Ariadne); the country squire who becomes so vegetable-minded as to turn into a veritable hog, all but the grunt ("Gooseberries"). An important thing to keep in mind, however, is that none of these are condemned, but all are seen as faulty.¹

¹Albright, May. *Short Stories of Chekhov*. p. xi. New York: Book League, 1929.

Chekhov and the Russian Character

Quite as conspicuous as these aversions from certain types is Chekhov's sympathy with the humble, the suffering, and the destitute, his kind understanding and compassion for the ignorant and sinning. The drunken old beggar in "The Dependents," though a burden upon his village, has one shred of human dignity, his charity, which far surpasses that of his grudging benefactors. Again, Father Anastasy in "The Letter" is a degenerate sot, but even he has preserved a humanity of spirit which makes his advice more Christian than that of the respectable priest motivated by jealousy and avarice.

Perhaps the most striking achievement of Chekhov in his character stories is his realization of the whole stream of human types—students, clergy, prostitutes, criminals, merchants, nobility, little children and even animals. He enters into the daydreams of a two-month-old kitten in "Who Was To Blame?"; he shares the thoughts of sheep in "Happiness," and of dogs in "Whitebrow" and "Kastanka;" he tries a first walk outdoors of a little baby in "Grisha," and accompanies a nine year old boy to confession in "In Passion Week."

Throughout Chekhov's work, there survives a sense of the farcial, the absurd and the grotesque, which appears in small deft touches in the midst of pathetic or even sombre episodes, as when Yokab in "Rothschild's Fiddle" measures his wife when she is taken ill and sets to work on her coffin; or when he notes in a critical moment the buzzing of a fly on a pane, or the meandering of one across a human face as in "An Inquiry." His portrayals of laughable features and mannerisms of his characters, and the odd similes that now and then enliven his descriptions such as "the huge clumsy galoshes only seen on the feet of practical and prudent per-

sons of firm religious convictions" ("Requiem") are painstakingly calculated to illuminate a character.

There will probably always be different opinions as to Chekhov's attitude toward life and human nature. He has been called unfeeling, fatalistic, and even cruel. His conviction that the whole of life is fit material for literature results in some sordid pieces. Many of his stories are grim; still more sound a note of abject dejection and despair. Moreover, in some of the stories the circumstances stand as a fate which baffles and thwarts the character's life. Undoubtedly these few tales are among Chekhov's most depressing.²

Apathy is certainly the last thing of which the reader should accuse him. For as in life certain painful conditions seem destined to go on and the end is not to be seen, so in his stories Chekhov's gospel is one of constant struggle to improve one's self and one's surrounding no matter how bleak the future. But it is, after all, the tender sympathy with which he views his fellow man that entitles Chekhov to a prominent place in fiction.

²Op. cit. p. XV.

What Wishes Can Do

TIM MOYNAHAN '61

I wished the world were like my yard,
I wished that wish so very hard.
With lush, green grass grown everywhere,
Where I was at peace without troubling care.
A place to work and a place to rest,
A place to see with a swelling breast:
Some sturdy, green trees and their cooling shade,
A little plot for my sharpened spade;
Locale of comfort, peace and light,
Where wrong is wrong and right is right.
Just this was my only unfettered dream.
But to do any changing too small I did seem.
Yet with courage I prayed and I worked very hard.
And (You know?) now it's bigger—my little back yard.

someone

t. f. maguire '61

once a friend asked of me
have you ever met anyone
whom you loved
from the first moment

someone who when not with you
seems a mystery
clouded by thought

someone who would
offer you a beer
or a marlboro
and smile

someone who so affected you
that all other matters
seem distant

someone so beautiful
and yet so plain
as to make you forget
your former flame

someone who loves you
though you refuse
to believe it

yes, i answered, many times
and with every one
i take the beer and walk alone

searching endlessly,
refusing to believe

The Portrait

BRIAN SULLIVAN '61

THE early morning sounds of waking rumbled and grated the length of Market Street. Shopkeepers shook sleep from their store windows and stretched themselves into their aprons. The churn and hum of the new day warmed the living wheels of the market and set them turning.

The butcher, red-faced and thoughtful, dreamed beneath his last mouthful of coffee in the Colorful Lunch and then crossed the cobble-stone street to unlock his red-faced butchery. Next door the grocer was choosing between two blushing baskets of fresh tomatoes. The front of his store was already smiling in a sunlight full of melons and plums with fruit flies picnicking among the seedless grapes. The woman who worked in the bakery hurried white-dressed to work and nodded good-morning smiles to the butcher and the grocery man, who winked her their every-morning eye as she passed. It was the first day of the week and it was a beautiful morning with the sun bright and breathing a warm and gentle wind across the sky. The dresses danced and snapped as they dried in the breeze while they hung behind the tailor's shop in the most quiet corner of Market Street.

Here it was that the widow sat alone with her memories. No longer the proud wife of the valley's most successful tailor, she eked out what living she could by selling used clothes. All she had now to console her was the memory of things past and the quiet passing of time in the small yard behind the store. The flowers and the small pear

tree hadn't changed, and there she would sit much the same as they had once spent the evenings when the boy was small.

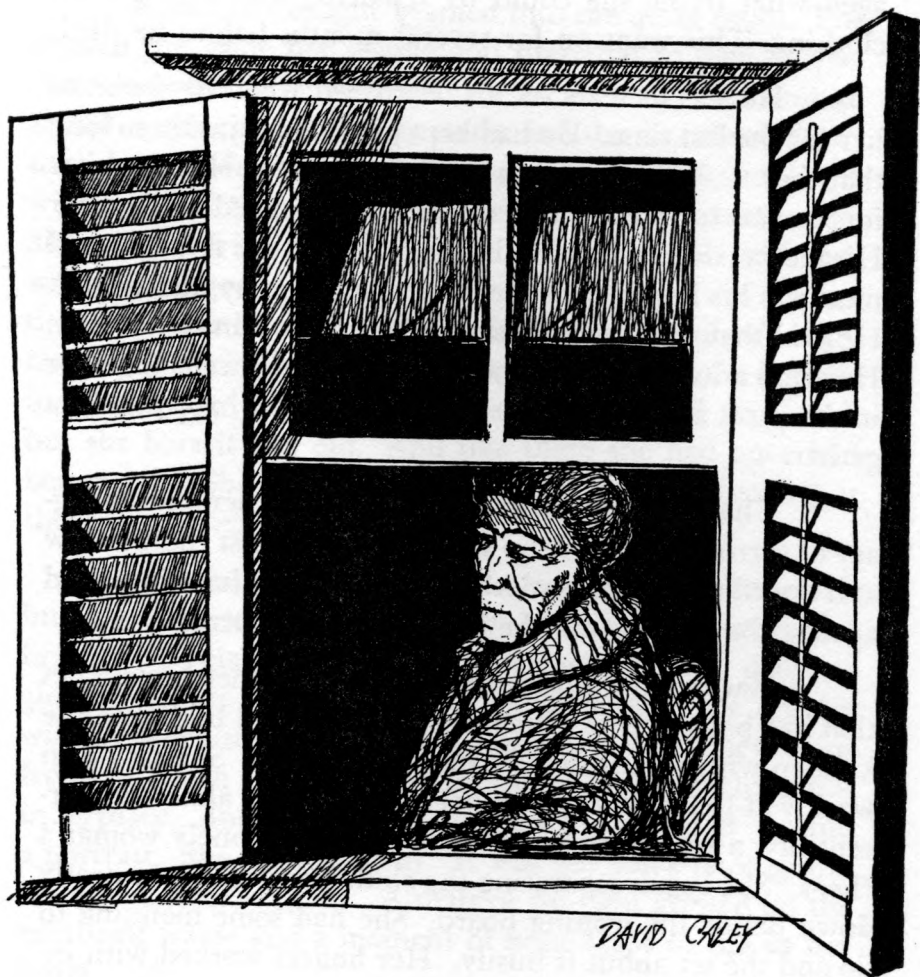
When the boy was still small and the family was together—this was the center of all her memories. She dreamed as she sat at the back window and looked into the quiet yard. She had watched her son through this window. She saw him at play as a child, and she had seen the boy grow tall into young manhood. Her son grew taller than her husband and in many ways they had been different. His father was a quiet man and he loved his trade. As a tailor he had been famous for the fine clothes he fashioned. People were proud to wear what he made, and many of the older gentlemen still wore garments he once cut for them. But the boy had no liking for the tailoring business. He was young and he wanted experience; he wanted to go out into the world and become something more than a quiet tailor who loved his work.

The woman stopped her reverie to notice a dark cloud that had crept beneath the sun. She stared at the dirt that had been caked on the window by many rains. The glass had always been spotless when the family was together. Her man had insisted that the boy work around the house. They argued about that and they argued about many things until one day they said things that hurt them both. They were cold to one another from then on, and, after a few months, the boy left home.

The old woman looked up at a darksome sky. The clouds had totally covered the sun and the back yard looked grim and lonesome in the grey of the coming storm.

Her man aged quickly after the boy left home. He worked on for several years in his shop, his craft remaining

The Portrait



DAVID CALEY

unchanged in its quality, but the man's face wrinkled deep and he moved slowly about his work. He became very sick and had to leave the shop though he complained that he could still sew. While her husband lay sick the woman managed what living she could by repairing and selling used clothing. This went on for several months before he died.

He was in tears on his death bed when he spoke to her for the last time. He had kept his feelings inside so long that they rushed forward in a wind of regret. He asked her forgiveness for what had happened and prayed to God for His mercy. He said many things, but what she remembered most was his longing for the days when the boy was a child. He said that was the only time when their family was one. He cried a long time for the days when they were together in the yard, at the end of day with the family happy and together.

That was over now; he died . . . and her's was a legacy of sorrow. A rain drop splashed big against the window and traced a clear streamlet upon the dust. The rain pelted against the window till the back yard was blurred.

Startled, the old woman hurried to gather her clothes that had been drying. Breathlessly she rushed back into the kitchen with an armful of dampened dresses. She sat down weakly at the table to catch her breath, while almost imperceptibly, a tear streamed quietly upon the lonely woman's cheek. She began separating the clothes and set them neatly down beside the ironing board. She had some mending to do and she set about it busily. Her fingers worked with industry and her face remained intent upon her sewing; yet her heart pulsed it's lament in her veins, and again a tear wailed burning on her cheek. Her thoughts spread across her face in a quiet veil of reverie. With the emptiness of a

The Portrait

mother alone she thought back to the days when her family was one. She pictured them together when the boy was a child, she and her husband relaxing as they would at the end of day in their lovely back yard.

A dart of sunlight beamed into the quiet room. The woman put aside her sewing and prepared to take her accustomed walk. The rain had left the air warm and humid. It had not been a refreshing storm and the day clung sticky to the store fronts on Market Street. The woman passed the windows of the grocery, the bakery, and the butcher's shop. She nodded friendly greetings to the proprietors and they waved back good-naturedly. Her favorite stop was the antique store farther down Market Street, but she didn't mind the extra walking because she enjoyed looking at the chattels in the window. True, they were out of use and neglected, but she herself was old. And like them she had once had better days. She saw a pattern of her own life in looking at these dear symbols of the past.

This day she walked a little more slowly than usual, but when she reached the window she was somewhat out of breath. The glass was still wet from the rain. Tiny droplets gleamed in the sun and cast circles of light on the articles within. Rocking chairs, stuffed furniture, old money, coins from the South Sea, rings and antique china, everything was in its place. But there were a few new books added . . . and a portrait. She looked again. It was her son's photograph beneath a freckled glass. A shaft of sunlight glinted on the tarnished frame and a moment of hope leapt to life in her heart.

She bargained with the clerk, and they settled on a price. He thought the frame was worth something, but he had no idea how much the purchase was worth to her. The

man said a young woman had sold him the portrait, telling him she had lost her husband whose picture it was. He had been killed in the war, and she was marrying again.

The old woman's heart fell. She paid the man and, tucking the portrait beneath her coat, she returned home.

She placed the picture upon the mantelpiece in her front room and dusted it dearly twice a day. She would put a small spray of flowers before it every morning. But she felt uneasy with the picture where it was. She tried it in the boy's room and tried keeping it in the kitchen where she worked during the day, but the woman knew that there was something wrong. It was the first time she had felt her son's presence in many years but the boy did not belong in the house. In the house he and his father had always argued. It hurt her to remember those happenings; and the boy's face hurt her now so close to those scenes.

Finally, one morning, she did not place the accustomed spray before the picture, and, dusting it for the last time the old woman took the portrait from where it was and buried it in the yard, because it was only there that her family had been one. It was the back yard that she remembered most, when she thought back to the happy days when the boy was young, and in that quiet place she sits with her memories of the past.

A State of Being

STEVE OEHMSEN '62

A length of time, which to others may seem not long,
A bitter and turbulent night of driving white,
A space on earth, 'tween two dots, insignificant, yet not,
These are the obvious separating us two.

Yet 'neath these evident things, lies more important truth,
That though our souls are apart, an aching actuality,
Through retrospect, a warmth, a love,
A union of spirituality.

EDITOR'S NOTE

As you have most probably learned from the announcement in the *Cowl* and from the various bulletins posted around campus, the *Alembic* is sponsoring a contest for creative writing. This is to be a one hundred dollar contest aimed at the stimulation of latent writing talent among the students.

It is universally accepted that to be able to write and to express one's thoughts in orderly and pleasing fashion is a quality of no small worth. We are certain that there is much more ability *in this direction* at Providence College than is now in evidence. We hope that this added incentive of a money prize will bring out more of the poet in you. *As well it* promises to benefit this magazine by a wider selection of material for future issues.

WRITING CONTEST \$100

BEST PLAY	\$30
BEST ESSAY	\$30
BEST SHORT STORY	\$20
BEST POEM	\$20

A Long-Lost MS

B. DEARBIN '61

Whan that Octobre with his hollow wieners,
With draughts of Bradlyes hath class-in-betwieners
Wel bathed every table in swich licour
Of which vertu bespattered is the floor;
Whan Gaspius eek with his bade breeth
Yea served hath in every syze and sheep
The tendre froshes, and Lincolne Donne
Hath in his seasoun the half mete yronne,
And they with Mytch hath maken melodye,
That stey up all the nyght with open eye
(So priketh hem hir concentracioun) :
Than longen bloke of every nacioun
And poste for to seken strange soundes
Of ferne tymes in Midwestren londes;
And specially from every floores ende
Of Raymond to Stephenlounge they wende
So there The Untouchables for to here,
That coppes and eke woppes they myght cheere.

Sketches

ROBERT OPPEL '61

No matter how you try, whether it be by the use of that age old escape of cutting oops! . . . , I mean absenting oneself from class, or sneakily not signing that course card the first day, you must face at one time or another that devastating coup of academic life—the *quiz*.

These little exams, whether announced as a pleasant surprise just in time to enable you to grab a pencil and some paper, or premeditated as a grudge play on the part of some professor, all do their part to add or detract from one's academic standing.

Somehow they all seem to conform to a general pattern, being unreal, unimaginative, unbalanced and under-the-table. Consequently to compensate for the void created by these tests, I have constructed a quiz of my own, one of merit and weight, the paragon of fairness and objectivity.

Question #1: Has Brown replaced Providence as the potential winner of the coveted Rhode Island State Championship? (Be careful this is sometimes tricky)

Answer: No, because Providence is sometimes better. If you don't believe this call the *Journal* sometime.

Question #2: Which came first, Donnelly Hall or the Bubonic Plague?

Answer: Some say the Hall, but delving into the archives of the *Wrinkled Hat* (as *The Cowl* was formerly called when it was a newspaper edited by the famous Medieval Monk, Cardinal Gildas Gots), I found an amazing story. This aged issue denies that popularly embraced the-

Sketches

ory that Donnelly was built by a cheerie olde guildsmen replete with Kohler fixtures. The imposing structure, erroneously thought to be constructed along Baroque lines to fit into the campus plan, was constructed by rats, whose ancestors still reside within its hallowed walls. The Plague really did come first, but observing that some humans survived, the rats put up this insidious man-trap to ensnare the remainder. The idea was that the building would collapse killing all within (oh, how I prayed during Logic class Sophomore year!). Although to this date the idea has been as successful as the debating team, the rats haven't given up hope. Quote a Medieval Rat Unquote.

Question #3: Is there a sure fire combination squirrel, pigeon, roach, silverfish, bat killer?

Answer: Sodium nitrate is a possible answer, but unfortunately it is also destructive of leeches, skunks, boll weevils, gnats, blow fish, and other desirable creatures that inhabit the dorms. If a selective killer could be secured, the entire basement floor of St. Joseph Hall would be forever grateful. Just last night some unidentified Sophomore was attacked as a diverse repast after all half-oranges, cookie bits, mystery meat skins, milk cartons, and other assorted garbage, wending its way from the immaculate upper floor windows, had been consumed by little animal friends.

Question #4: (Thought question—essay permissible—one sentence) Throughout collegeville there is a recognizable trend toward intellectualism. Recognizable by the affinity of the afflicted for a pipe—erupting stagnant fumes, clenched between irregular teeth (all intellectuals have these, having spent their money for pipes rather than for braces)—vigorously puffed at all propitious times; between, during (heavens!, only the

more daring), and after classes. Another symptom is the unkempt (or in more severe cases, bleached) hair, coupled with leotardic jumpers, and a staggering desire for coffee. Is this encouraging trend rampant at Providence?

Answer: Yes for the pipe, hair, and leotards. No for the coffee. The staggering interest of the Providence student seems not to be in coffee but in another beverage; however, to prevent losing our foothold in the ranks of intellectual superman, arrangements are being made in conjunction with the snack bar (we must go through proper channels) to sell coffee in tinted brown glass bottles.

Question #5: Is the Dean's List really on the level?

Answer: With all the talk about rigging reported in the entertainment field, I immediately became suspicious of the List. If you think about it for a minute in light of the findings of recent investigating committees, the question comes to mind: How can anybody get an average high enough to make the List without being crooked?

I didn't pass any courses last year, so I didn't have any average, and therefore have no axe to grind; but I overheard a low flying pilot trying to talk the other day, and deciphered the following:

"I know some guys dat passed and they ain't on da Dean's Lisp. Just watcha gotta do? A little poyalo maybe? Why ain't any of my friends on da Lisp? Take me prefect for instant, he only took two courses last semester and passed dem boat—why ain't he on it—huh?"

I subtly suggest (you have to be subtle on these touchy matters involving the Administration) that an investigation of the whole crooked situation is in order.

Sketches

Well that's it (in many more ways than you can imagine). If you got one out of five correct you are doing fine; two or more right, you had better call your parents to take you home after sending your penalty fee to me c/o

"It pays to be ignorant (now) fourteen hours a day."
Station WDOM

60 Lovin' rain barrel shoutin' cycles on your dial,
Providence, Rho Dyeland

Please make the balance of all checks over \$30 payable to the Bursar's Office. Thank you.

ROBERT OLD PILL

Note: If you are wondering how Mr. Oppel came to author these sick columns, here is a brief case history:

Last May, having grown tired of living a life of letters with no worldly direction, he submitted himself to the rigorous tortures of vocational guidance and aptitude testing, feeling a need for both. The positive results showed clearly that he was expertly equipped for hiding in lounges, sleeping in bathrooms and washing sinks once a week. He immediately applied for a job with the maintenance department but was promptly turned down because couldn't speak foreign languages. So having had six months of Logic under his belt, he accepted a divine commission from *The Cowl* to author several escape columns for them (how and why he turned to the *Alembic* is still a deep mystery). The result, at any rate, was, on his part, projected psychosis; on his readers' part (learned from the comments of many of his interested fans), nausea . . . Ed.

Fall Tale

THOMAS C. SHERIDAN '62

The moon as my companion,
I walk the young fall
Night.

A breeze, faltering, half fair
And half chill;
Spotted by restless, weary
Slowing sounds of crickets,
Merry pulses of the night.
And off over the hill,
Heavy heart-beat
Of a sleepy city.

I walk the streets,
Rain come and gone hours ago.
Carpets of leaves, sparkling
Under dim street-lamps—
Dusty green, rust brown,
Lost members of over-head
Fragile skeletons,
Thick, soft and moist under foot—
Often overflowing the walk in spots
To patch the streets
In damp, random pieces.

Fall Tale

A third-floor window, triangular,
With a wooden band across,
Solitarily light.
A different kind of student from me.

Then, the ever-present warden
Of the night—siren,
Shrill, unbecoming to such peace,
Unwanted.
This passed; another inhabitant,
The heavy bus, dragging its
Hollow carcass to the line's end.

A sudden gust
Takes leaves to the air.
Or else, in easy power
Pushes them mysteriously,
A herd of passive migrants,
Across the dark, deserted street;
Here to rest, perchance,
'Til future night's activity.
And on this gust's light skin
A touch of cold, a vague
Unmentionable chill.
This subtle mixture of
Summer laughs
And fluttering scarfs
Unmistakably tells
Of colder drafts in swift pursuit.

Summary

JOHN OLSEN '61

Without exercise, in fleeting martial beat
I smell a rain drying fire-escape and hear sneakered feet.
I can feel the sun as it played charades
upon the grass and tinted the houses orange
and sapped our serious cares.

In meditation, I recline on summer nights on
the roof, guardian of the silvered rapiers
and from fights eye-witness aloof
and reminiscently congratulate the heros of
the papers

Determined, I prologue my turn with a prayer
for success and send the spaulding over sewers
and my lungs against my chest.
And brave the tearing chrome, nimble before the
rasping rubber as I come in triumph home ignorant
of a mother's shudder.

The mellow blue sheeted night belongs again to me
and I go walking away from them lowly under the
leering neon and meet myself and now even I am
not only mine.

Myopia

JON L. MORIN '62

“Where ignorance is bliss,
'tis folly to be wise.”

Thomas Gray

CECIL DOUGHTNEAU unconsciously played with the letter opener as he tried to decide whether he should take the afternoon off for golf or not. “And if I do go,” he pondered, “I must get an early lunch.”

His chain of thought was broken by his secretary's voice, “A Mr. Kaye to see you sir.”

He looked up from his desk, “Show the gentleman in, please, Miss Sealol.”

“Yes sir. Mr. Doughtneau will see you now—this way please.”

A rather overweight man made his way through the maze of desks that led to the inner office. The first thing that caught his eye was the large desk behind which Cecil Doughtneau was dwarfed. Then, looking around, he saw pictures of the plant at various places along the wall. Once inside, Mr. Kaye walked to a chair obviously meant for interviews, and without being asked sat down.

“Mr. Kaye—let me tell you what a great honor it is to have you in this office. I say, I only know of you what I read in your letter, but it is most interesting. Cigar?”

“No! I do not smoke the cigar now.”

“Fine, fine. Save money that way.” Once again Cecil Doughtneau unconsciously played with the letter opener. “Now I would like to go over some personal information if

I may. Never did catch everything you mentioned in that letter—don't like to read you know. Your full name—?”

“Ni—Nicholas—Kaye.”

“And you are about fifty-four—!”

“Sixty-six!”

“My, my—it *is* easy to be deceived, isn't it? I note, Mr. Kaye that you failed to state your country in this letter; any specific reason?”

“No—none!”

“Well—it doesn't really matter. Where are you staying in the city?”

“Temporarily to the left of Mark Street—Agitate Avenue.”

“Fine, fine,” said Cecil Doughtneau, “now as to your weight—I see that you are rather—*overweight*—but sitting behind a desk requires little physical effort.” He laughed, but Mr. Kaye did not; he wrinkled his face in a vain effort to smile.

Cecil Doughtneau studied the man seated beside him. “How truly wonderful it was,” he mused, “to be able to converse with this man.”

“Now I would like to hear more of your experience in this field, Mr. Kaye; the C. Doughtneau Corn Packing Company is proud of its employees, and we are all overjoyed to have you with us these few months—to learn just how well we Americans do things. Truly wonderful!”

“I have done much with the corn.”

Myopia

“Fine, fine. I see here that you hold quite a respectable position in your company. Tell me, do you do any exporting?”

“We produce corn to send to the other countries in the world. It is the—heart—of our business.”

“Unique, unique! Why couldn’t I have thought of something like that. Are these ‘other countries’ eager to purchase your corn, Mr. Kaye?”

“Many like our corn. Some people in those countries are hungry and the corn is filling. Others—they are bored with their own products; they too buy our corn. But there are still some that do not like it—they say it has worms and is spoiled.”

“Very interesting; however, I fail to understand completely why it is that you have come to America for these few months.”

“Partly to learn—how well you do things here and—because we had some trouble.”

“Trouble?”

“That is true. Our place took care of the corn. But the birds you know how they like the corn. We protected it much for we were afraid some of them would steal our corn and find out how we produced so much of it and how almost all of it *was* filled with worms and spoiled.”

Although somewhat taken back at such a frank acknowledgment, Cecil Doughtneau did not show his anxiety. “Continue, please.”

“One day a strange bird flew over. Black it was. Sneaky! Foul Black bird! High over! Looking over our source of corn. Foul thing!”

It became apparent that a sensitive subject had been touched upon in asking this question, for Mr. Kaye was getting redder, talked in spurts, and waved both arms furiously. "Black foul thing! I shot it! Shot it dead! Foul thing fell. I shot it. I wanted it to show to my people and to the world. I had shot a foul beast trying to steal our method of producing corn.

"Then a cat trying to steal that dead beast from me. I dashed its head to the ground! Foul cat trying to steal it from me! And I caught it!"

"Mr. Kaye, Mr. Kaye—please try to control yourself; you still haven't told me *why* you came to my company."

"Why—? I am a boss, but some of my friends did not think I did enough by shooting that foul bird. Some of them told me I should go to the woods that it came from and shoot all those birds. I did not wish to do this. It would scare the friendly birds away.

"That foul bird I shot. But if I went to another place to shoot the other black birds, then many people would no longer buy my corn."

"I see. So they forced you to—go away."

"That is almost true. I was to leave the place for good. But then others agreed that maybe I had the right idea. So I have taken the time off to rest. I will go back to manage my place; in the meantime I want to stay with the corn."

"Interesting, Mr. Kaye, interesting. I gather, then, that you will return as unquestioned head of your corn producing firm. They have—to be somewhat humorous—given you a vote of confidence."

Mr. Kaye had a faraway look, but he said nothing. "Do you think the people of the world will still accept your

Myopia

corn," Cecil Doughtneau continued, "or do you think they will have found out that it is, as you say, 'filled with worms and spoiled?'"

"The corn many are still ready to buy. The noise I made in shooting that foul black bird will make many sure I am right; and those many hungry people will gladly buy it."

"—Yes—I'm—sure they will. Well, Mr. Kaye, Let me welcome you to the C. Doughtneau Corn Packing Company. I'm quite certain that your short stay with us will be most enjoyable."

"I am sure!"

"Fine. Fine. I shall expect to see you Monday morning, then." They shook hands, "Until then, Mr. Kaye, *Pax*."

The overweight man started to turn, but suddenly looked back, "What was that at the end?"

"*Pax*—it's a little Latin expression I make use of now and then."

"Mr. Doughtneau, a favor I ask of you—do not say anything in Latin. In it there is something that bothers me."

Mr. Kaye turned once again, and as he left, Cecil Doughtneau could not fail to notice him as he waddled between the desks. "Goodbye, Mr. Kaye." Then his eyes moved to his secretary, and he noticed her expression of complete consternation. He thought to himself: Somehow I feel that if I don't watch that man—he's likely to wind up *my* boss;—ah well, he'll be gone in a few months.

So Cecil Doughtneau closed his office door and returned to the desk. "Quite good of me to give him a position," he beamed, "quite good." Then he called his wife to tell her that he would be home for lunch early.

the run for the roses

t. f. maguire '61

race horsing autos tear
away from starting gate
traffic lights and jockey

for positions while disregard
ing the glaring white dividers
rounding the far turn at

breakneck speeds and
hitting the straightaway
the purposeful riders

spurred their charges
into the home stretch
and crossed the

red-lighted finish line
to the horrified delight
of non-paying customers

who suddenly became
witnesses after the crash
and hopeless screams of

agony had subsided and
the prices had been posted . . .
two . . . dead on arrival
. . . and they got their roses . . .

Life of a Legend:

The Story of an Epic Writer

JOHN OLSEN '61

*He was separated from land and sea
held in abeyance and still set free
from daily trial and turbulent events
as he sat writing these most historic
monuments.*

At the times he paused when he could not decide just
what was thought when his heroes died,
He would leave the room and pass the port
walking in the sun, seeing the boys at sport.
Entering the market and abused by friendly arms
he would call for drink and sit under the palms
and ask of battle, storms and people's lore
from his friends who knew he beached on every shore.

Now he was reserved and reticent but the others
remembered his subtle feint as he side-stepped spear
and won with sword glory, honor and a valueless hoard.
He had tasted all seas and met all foes, had suffered the
disease and felt the throes of defeat and the bite of
chain, chilled to the breath of death and return of pain.

After ten years of war in the field, he loved the land
and enjoyed the yielding of much food and the promise of
sons from the woman he wifed and the life he won.
Also, to the land he surrendered the woman of the many
nights he remembered.

The Alembic

She had equal qualities of wench and wife and so he savoured
this captured life.

His son stood close and tilled for years only to leave and
to shed red tears, and to die apart from the mourning of kin
but proudly imitating him.

He left his home with his wasted woman, dead from a
cold evil

in her limbs, and ignored the ritual of making man's sun
consume the deceased and allow her liberty, but buried
her praying to an intangible deity.

As wind and wave tossed and pounded the earth soon to
be rent

asunder, he saw the sea meet with sky devoid of man's in-
genuity

to try, he saw the beginning as it began carved by that still
vague

and only one.

He had a hint as good men will of what and who man was
subject to

and inspired one time, puzzled the next

He plodded on with the momentous text

