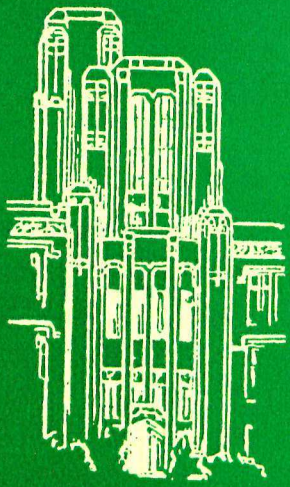

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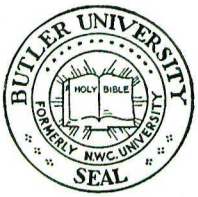

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The Chance

Toni Aberson

THERE were the folks, in the back yard, arguing about the grapevines. Other things might come and go, but they'd always have grapevines. A smile tripped around the corners of Carrie's mouth as she heard the old routine. "Baby the plants. Go on. Waste your time. You're sweating all over and you'll get sick. Does that bother you? No. Go on . . ." Charlie didn't answer. But, for that matter, as far back as Carrie could remember he never had answered, or changed his ways either. During the hard years when they'd lived in the shack he'd had his few sickly plants wrapped around the outside shower and now, in the new back yard, he had healthily sprouting vines everywhere. "The good kind," as he would proudly say, "the thick ones." With quick snips of his fingers Charlie was shaping the plants, urging them to grow. He was around sixty, scrawnily built, with a balding head and awkward hands and feet. He moved slowly, usually stepping on his pants' cuffs, but sure of his work. Carrie knew that if he helped her tonight everything would be all right—but he probably wouldn't.

Her mother crouched on the edge of the beach chair, peeling potatoes onto a newspaper while she chided Charlie about the vines. She was younger and more solid than Charlie, with heaps of coarse, black hair tumbling around her face. Both of them were true Armenians: big noses and shaggy eyebrows and good workers. They'd worked endlessly, repairing houses and doing washings, working toward a home for themselves and their children. Arthur had left before the dream was accomplished but Carrie was there, in the new house, and it was good.

Carrie was twenty, with close-cropped, curling hair and a large nose which usually disappeared in the laugh lines of her face. Her mother always complained because of the many hours she spent in the bathroom, plucking her eyebrows. She crossed the yard now, in her slightly bowlegged swing, with "Hi, Charlie; hi, Mrs. De, how are the gods treating the cabbages?"

"Hello, Carrie. You talk sense to your father about those plants. The mosquitoes bite and he stays out here, this for the vines, that for the vines. He'll stay out here all night with those vines."

Her father slowly looked up to smile and nod his head, and Carrie winked at him. "Now, Mrs. De," she said as she waltzed with the potato pail, "we'll go fix these just right and then lock him out of the kitchen. We'll fix you, Charlie."

"Stop that silly talk, Carrie. College is putting nonsense in your head. Charlie, mind what I said and be ready when your dinner's hot."

There were just three for the evening meal since Arthur was out in Illinois, learning business and hunting a girl, but every night was

an occasion. During the day Charlie fixed roofs, Mrs. Dedarian kept the house shining and grouched at the doctor for making her take it easy, and Carrie sketched still lifes with lavender crayons; but every night there they were, sharing the feeling of family.

Tonight, because of her uneasiness, Carrie jabbered away. "I saw you sneak in the back door, Charlie." And then, "How about a pony tail for you, Mrs. De?" She knew what she was doing. She knew too well she was breaking the unwritten rule that a good meal needed silence. Nothing but the pat "Did I get any mail today?" and "How's your art work, Carrie?" were okay for the dinner table. Yet here she was, talking a mile a minute. Well, go to it. You've gone too far to stop now. All day long you've been hoping to catch them in good moods, planning how you'd settle Charlie with the paper and treat your mother to a Good Humor, play along real cool and natural and then casually mention that talk. That was the way to do it. Now Mother's shooting darts this way and Charlie's scraping his chair on the floor. Oh, nice play. I sure did mess everything up. It could have worked so nicely, darn it. Better start now before Mother explodes. Straighten yourself in the chair, smile around brightly, and pour Charlie some more coffee. Paying attention to Charlie was the quickest way to get around her mother. The now-or-never feeling hit completely, so quickly and a little loudly Carrie said, "I talked to my adviser, Mr. Southerland, today."

"Carrie, must you talk so? Let your father eat."

"We talked about something I thought you might like to know, Mother."

"All right, Carrie, all right."

This was permission to say what was on her mind, but Carrie hesitated. Maybe it would still be best to wait until later. Her mother would object to anything brought up now. Better wait until the dishes are cleared. Everyone will be calmer then. She looked to Charlie for some sign, but his head remained bent over his plate. He'd decide it. The two women could rage for hours, but where Charlie sided, that was the side that won.

"Well, Carrie? What's so important to bother the meal?"

There was no getting around it now. "I just wanted to tell you, Mother. He was awfully nice. He said, Mr. Southerland that is, that he thought I was good enough to get a full scholarship to go somewhere else. I could go to Indiana for my last two years if I wanted to."

"So? We're glad he's pleased with you. It's good for your teachers to like you. Thank him and tell him you're happy here. Girls can't go running around the country, and even boys, like Arthur, shouldn't be away so much. Now let your father eat."

It was as simple as that. Two years had been decided in a few short sentences. Just tell Mr. Southerland that she'd spoken with her family and they'd all decided staying home was best. Oh, he'd frown a little, but he'd concede that she must know best if she was sure.

Then he'd talk a little more about I. U. and color training there, and finish with a smile and "But, of course, we're always glad to keep you here at Brooklyn." I can't let it slip so easy though, she thought. Let's at least try a little more.

"They've got a great art department out at I. U. Just the kind of stuff he says I need. It sure would be great."

Her mother moved very deliberately to the stove for more food for the table and Carrie felt the silence. Charlie still seemed completely intent on his meal.

"It's a great deal, Mother. All my bills will be paid and I'd be studying where they'd really help me. It sure would be nice if I could go."

"Nice? Maybe so. But a good girl like you can't go that far from home. You tell him that tomorrow and say your mother thanks him. It's nice for him to try and help you, but we just can't have it. Now eat your dinner."

"Mr. Southerland and I talked it over for a long time, Mother. I told him I'd explain it to you and we'd talk it over tonight."

"Well, we've talked it over and it's settled. You tell him what I said."

Carrie saw her father look up at her and smile as if to say, "You be a good girl and do what your mother says. This is the best way." She wanted to please him, she wanted to please both of them, but did they know what it meant? Since Arthur had left she'd fooled herself with a "maybe, someday," but this was someday and there seemed to be no maybe about it. It sure would have been nice, though, to have close friends like in high school that you could be with all the time. Dates and gab-fests, you sure could go for that again. It's been a long time since you saw the old gang, and everyone at school is rushing around to catch a subway. No time for chats in that machine shop. I could do it all myself, too, that's the real pay-off. It could be so blasted simple. Always before there'd been the money problem, so what was the sense of mentioning it to the folks? Arthur used the G. I. Bill, but a lot of good that did me. And then too, there'd always be Mother saying, "He is a boy, you are a girl. He is older, you are younger. And anyway, his being out there is a reason for you being here. Home is here. We've all wanted this home and now both our children are going to leave? Oh no, you stay here." So Carrie had shoved the dream away and had her fun by surprising Charlie with pastry and working hard at her art. But now, now she had a real chance to go, and she couldn't bring herself to relinquish it so easily.

"Mother, you know that in those dormitories they keep regular track of the girls. They sign a book to tell where they're going, and they have to be in at a certain time. Each dorm has a house mother and the meals are good and regular. It's all proper, Mother. Lots of girls, good girls like you say, go away to college. I'd room with another girl or two and Arthur could keep tabs on me. We could

easily work it out, Mother."

Carrie saw her mother's face color and her hands clutch for her apron. Mrs. Dedarian looked at Charlie but his head remained lowered. He was looking wearily at his thumbs. The time for Charlie to interfere and guide had passed. Both women felt it; he was merely there.

"Get the fruit from the icebox, Carrie, and shut up this crazy talk. You stay here with Charlie and me. I'm your house mother. And you take art classes in Brooklyn like you want to, or if you're not happy, take some other kind of classes, but you stay here where you belong. Your brother pulled himself away. All right. But it's better now and you stay here. Bring your girl friends here to stay. We've fixed up a nice place now, bring all your friends, all the time. Invite your Mr. Southerland if you want to and he'll see how a good girl lives with her family. But you're not going. There's no sense in that kind of talk, so stop it."

"Please, Mother, let's not start shouting. I just wanted to talk it over with you. Mr. Southerland says—"

"I don't care what Mr. Southerland says, and neither does Charlie. All you do is talk about your Mr. Southerland. Well, now we know what Mr. Southerland says. He doesn't say where to find you a hard-working boy. He doesn't say why Arthur left and why he won't come home. He doesn't say about the doctor and why I'm sick now. He doesn't teach you good things about loving your parents and staying with them. Just keep quiet about Mr. Southerland."

"All right. Then I'll say it. We'll forget about what he says and I'll say it. I want to go. I like the house and I love you. And I'm sorry that Arthur doesn't write. But I want to go. For twenty years we've never had a vacation, never gone anywhere. I've never been anyplace except back and forth on that God-awful subway. Arthur just picked up and left, but I stayed here. I've been here and I've done my share and now I want to go and live my life. I'm tied here, Mama, can't you see? I want to go there. I've always wanted to. And now I have the chance. This is my only chance. Oh please, see my side, Mama, this is my chance to go. I'm—"

"Shut up your mouth! You're my daughter and you're staying here. You think Charlie and I wouldn't want a vacation? You think we've liked working for other people all these years? You think we can't dream too about how it was at home and how we'd like it to be? But it's not. We're here. And we've worked and made something good for you and Arthur, something you couldn't have had in the old country. You think we work for us? Our friends aren't here. We have no friends here. Only us, the family, and Arthur is gone and you want to leave. The doctor makes me soft like a lazy woman and you want to leave and go away. What about Charlie? You stay here with us and thank God for what you have. And tell Mr. Southerland to mind his own business and stop putting crazy ideas into your head. You're a good girl and a good

daughter. Now act it. Going away isn't going to change you. You tell Mr. Southerland that. Tell him you'll be the same girl, only you won't have a home. You're going to act like a daughter, not like a boarder who comes and goes and acts as she pleases."

"Please, Mama, I didn't mean to make you so upset. The doctor—"

"Oh, so now it's the doctor. Why didn't you think of the doctor when you wanted to go live where girls do God knows what? Did you think about staying and caring for your mother's health? Or about helping Charlie? He's getting old too, and needs help. No, you don't think about that. Call up the doctor. Go call the doctor. Tell him you don't think about anyone but yourself. Tell him you don't care."

"Okay, Mama, okay, I've had enough. I'm sorry I ever mentioned it, I'm really sorry. But I had the right—"

"A right? Maybe, but first you have a duty. Now get your father's fruit from the icebox and act decent."

Carrie again became aware of her father's presence. She looked at Charlie across the table. He seemed very relieved, so she smiled at him and got up to get his fruit. Charlie had always said you had to take a vine gently from the ground, little by little, after soaking it with water and waiting for the proper time. The grapes turned sour when the plant was torn from the earth too soon. Maybe it was so.

"Shall we have some soggy oranges or fat apples for dessert, Mrs. Dedarian?" She did see, she really did see, and she was going to try, very hard.

FEBRUARY RAIN

Fall quickly, rain!
fall quickly—
oh, melt the frost
of winter wind,
sweep the air
in a silver rush!

Fall swiftly, rain!
fall swiftly—
and touch my heart
with liquid laughter.

Fall gently, rain,
fall gently—
and when you've gone,
leave quiet pools
of clear reflection.

—SUE WINGER

The Haunted

Jessie H. Cochran

DO YOU remember how long the summer afternoons were when you were a kid? Full of sun and torpor and endlessness, and a drowsiness that was at the same time sort of stimulating. I think of them horizontally, because that's how we usually were, Dan and I, flopped somewhere in the shade, talking, almost always at my house. All the other boys we knew had summer jobs, but I wasn't considered strong enough; I'd had rheumatic fever a couple of years before. I must have been stronger than Dan, though, looking back. He was a skinny kid, not wiry-skinny but frail-skinny, and he kept one shoulder hunched up, defensively, like a boxer about to deliver a right cross, even though he couldn't have hurt a fly with that promised punch. He had the worst skin I've ever seen on anybody and was, of course, sensitive about it. Close as we were all that summer, talking as much as we did, that was the one subject we never discussed. I guess that was the reason Dan liked me; he must have felt I was nice not to say something about his skin like all the other kids did.

Dan didn't work because he didn't want to, and nobody cared whether he did or not. His father was an archeologist and was always away on field trips, God knows where, and his mother drank all day long, which left Dan pretty free. Some of his old man's culture must have seeped down through the genes, because he was on a philosophy kick that summer. His schedule ran pretty much like this: stay up until about three in the morning reading, eat something out of the icebox, go to bed and sleep until noon and then come over to my house. Sometimes he'd be pretty excited about what he'd just read, like the time he came bursting in shouting "Cogito, ergo sum!" He thought he had the answer to the Big Question, until he switched to Nietzsche. He switched around a lot (he said it was "healthy eclecticism"), and the week he discovered the Stoics his skin cleared up a little. But then he ran across Epicurus and, munching on a Baby Ruth, told me pontifically that "the beginning and the root of all good is the pleasure of the stomach; even wisdom and culture must be referred to this." That did it, and his face blossomed again in its old accustomed way.

So, lying around bored and hot, with the sudden spasms of exuberance you have when you're fifteen or so, we passed through the hot, smelly, sunny, leafy tunnel of summer. I was glad of Dan's company, and was pretty sure I was the only friend he had. It never occurred to me that he might want to talk to someone else, until the afternoon he came strolling over, with that curious little shuffling gait and his shoulder hunched up, carrying the Want Ad section of the morning paper.

"Look at this," he said, sprawling on the glider and thrusting the

paper at me.

"What?"

"I've marked it, that ad right there. Read it."

It was under "Personals," and it said: "Wanted—a friend interested in great religions lost in the Twentieth Century. Box 423, Tribune."

"So what?" I said. "Probably some nut."

He scratched a pimple, looking thoughtful. "Could lead to something interesting."

"You're damn well right it could, like getting murdered. Anyway I thought you were a Marxist these days. What happened to all your Dialectical Materialism?"

"No longer fashionable," he murmured, in the tone he used when he was teased about his mother being a lush. I suppose he had to have some defense, as I say he couldn't hurt a fly, but it always annoyed me when he was being elegant.

"Okay," I said, "go ahead and wear a white nightgown and sandals and eat nuts and raisins. Or maybe it's something like being saved with rattle snakes. I hear that's plenty fashionable in certain circles."

"Anyway," he said, shrugging as best he could while lying down, "I think I just might answer it."

And he did. At least he had the sense to give his return address as General Delivery at the Post Office so his new found soul-mate wouldn't come around to his house proclaiming The Word before he had been sized up. I wanted to read the letter Dan sent but he wouldn't let me, saying it would be an ethical violation. You never knew what was an ethical violation with him, because of his healthy eclecticism. Actually he was easiest to get along with when he hit on St. Thomas Aquinas and just sat around waiting for revelations.

The week after he mailed his letter he haunted the Post Office, waiting. Nothing happened. I was getting pretty eager to meet Box 423 myself, since, as I say, time hung heavy on our hands. I amused myself telling Dan I saw two small punctures at the base of his throat, and wasn't he feeling weak these days? Stuff like that. By the time another week had passed Dan was laughing too, and started busying himself with Kierkegaard.

Then something funny happened. We were sitting on the side porch as usual, and Dan was discussing his current favorite in the world of thought. Of course I wasn't listening too hard, but I remember that he was saying something about "—by virtue of the absurd." Then he stopped. After a minute or so of silence I looked up at him, expecting him to go on, and I could hardly believe my eyes. Oh, it was Dan sitting there, all right, in his old torn T-shirt and dirty jeans, but something had happened to him. I don't know exactly how to put it. It was like someone else was looking out of Dan's eyes. They were narrowed to slits behind his heavy horned rims, and his mouth was drawn up to one side in a sad smile. All at

once he brought his hand up with the index finger pointing to the sky and said, very softly, "But let us make a virtue of the absurd. There is no truth without paradox, and no virtue so absurd as faith." It was Dan's voice, too, but somehow sand-papered down and refined and most of all old, very old and wise. But the funniest part about it was that it spoke the truth. Just in the few words I was completely convinced, even though I wasn't sure of what. I just knew it was the truth.

As I watched open-mouthed Dan blinked a couple of times, then took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes.

"What did you say?" I asked him.

"About Kierkegaard? Oh, that he says you have faith by virtue of the absurd—"

"No, right after that. What was it?"

He shook his head.

"That's about as far as I've gotten." He heaved himself up off the glider. "I guess I'd better go home for a while. I don't feel so hot."

And with that he ambled down the walk toward his house.

He didn't come over the next day, nor the day after that. On the third day I began to be worried, and bored at being alone, so I walked over to Dan's. After looking through the quiet house I found him lying down up in his bedroom, not reading, just lying there. He looked at me listlessly and then turned his eyes away.

"What's the matter?" I asked, sitting down on the end of the bed.

"Nothing."

I hit his leg.

"Come on, boy, where have you been? Are you sick?"

He was quiet for a minute; he seemed to be thinking this over. Then he said, "I don't know. I don't know whether I'm sick or not."

"What the hell," I said, not knowing what else to say.

He sat up suddenly, putting his face near mine. His eyes were scarey-looking; he looked like a trapped, sick animal.

"Listen, I've got to talk to somebody. I think I'm going crazy. I'm bound to be. There's no other explanation for it." He was trembling.

"Take it easy," I said, moving back. "Tell me about it."

He jumped up off the bed and began rummaging around in some papers on his desk, mumbling to himself.

"Okay," he said, shoving a paper under my nose, "is this my handwriting or not?"

I looked, and it was. I told him so.

"Okay," he said again, running his hand through his hair. "Okay, it's my handwriting. But get this. *I didn't write it.*"

"Who did?" I said, sensibly enough.

"That's just it. I *must* have, but I don't remember doing it. I don't even understand it. Listen. 'The metaphysical explains itself in terms of its own metaphysics, never nominally.' And this: 'The

real cannot be apprehended linguistically, therefore does not exist empirically. The search is futile; we will abandon it.' " Dan looked up at me. "I understand that last, all right, but I don't think it's true. Why would I have written it?"

"In your sleep, maybe?" I suggested.

"Maybe. That's another thing, the weird dream I've been having, always the same thing. You ever dream that you're falling?" I nodded. "Well this is like that, only I hit. I hit the bottom and it's like dying, like I imagine dying would be. Everything doesn't turn black because everything is already black, and I feel this great—loss. A great sense of something lost is the only way I can explain it. And then nothing. When I wake up in the morning it's like swimming up out of a . . . a pit. Every morning it takes longer and longer." He shuddered.

"Look, Dan, you aren't going crazy. You're just having some bad dreams." I wasn't as sure as I sounded. "How long has this been going on?"

"About a week. Maybe longer, I can't remember." He got up off the bed and started walking around the room. "It's the writing that's bothering me. I couldn't have done it, but I did. Sleepwalking is a symptom of epilepsy; I might have that."

What was I to say? The poor guy was going out of his mind over the possibility he might *already* be out of his mind. Certainly his mother or father wouldn't be any help. One thing I knew for sure: he shouldn't be by himself as long as he was feeling like this.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," I said, making him sit down on the bed beside me. "I'll spend the night with you tonight and watch you. If you do anything crazy, then you can go see a doctor. Probably all you need is some vitamins or sleeping pills or something like that. But we'll make sure first. Okay?"

I thought he was going to cry for a minute, but he smiled at me instead.

"Would you? Would you do that?"

I knew my mother would put up a fight, because of Dan's mother and her drinking, but I thought I could talk her into it. She was always saying how sorry she felt for "that poor little boy."

"Sure. You wait right here and I'll be back with my stuff in fifteen minutes." I slapped his shoulder more heartily than I felt and left.

I got around my mother by promising I positively would not take a drink of anything. I don't know why she thought I'd drink any quicker at Dan's house than my own; Dad certainly kept the stuff on hand. Actually, just one look at Dan's mother when she tied one on (which was always) was enough to keep you on the wagon for life, though usually I never saw her. She kept pretty much to her room, and sometimes you could hear the sound of crying through her closed door.

That night Dan and I opened a can of chile con carne, made some

peanut butter sandwiches, warmed up a dish of macaroni and cheese that was in the refrigerator and washed it down with cokes. We felt pretty set up and I had never seen Dan so cheerful; he was almost elated. I figured it was his night so I consented to listen to some of his records (Scriabin, Chavez) and tried not to yawn. Then he got out his Baudelaire and started reading aloud to me from that—an enchanted evening. I was glad when he finally yawned and I said it was time to go to bed.

By the time we climbed into the twin beds his good mood had vanished and he lay on his back, not talking, staring at the ceiling. I tried to get him to talk but he wouldn't, he just shook his head, so I snapped off the light and settled down. I tried to stay awake until I could tell by his breathing that he was asleep but I guess I couldn't, because the next thing I remember was waking up, suddenly. Dan was asleep, all right; I tried to remember where I'd heard breathing that deep before, and then it came back to me. It was when my father, who is a doctor, had let me watch an appendectomy. They had given the patient sodium pentathol and about on the count of nine he had quit counting and started this deep breathing: way in, pause, way out. It kind of scared me, thinking about his dream of falling and death, so I leaned over to his bed and whispered, "Dan. Dan." I didn't want to wake him up all the way, just bring him out of that weird breathing.

It stopped. For what seemed like at least five minutes it didn't start again, at all, and I started to get really scared. The light from the streetlamp shone in dimly and he looked like a corpse. Just as I was about to switch on the light and call my Dad, he spoke.

"So someone came."

It was that voice again. The voice that was his and yet wasn't . . . the old, wise, tired voice. My heart ballooned up in my throat and I couldn't even yell. I couldn't do anything except stay there, staring at Dan's closed eyelids.

"This time I was so certain."

It was Dan talking, all right, or anyway the voice was coming out of him.

"You must understand, I didn't want to harm anyone. I've tried so many different places, and always there is someone who cares. This time I was sure, until you came . . ."

The complete truth of the voice overwhelmed me again, and for some crazy reason I wasn't scared any more. Don't ask me why; you would have to have heard that voice. So I said "Yes, I came. I care."

There was a pause, and then the voice said "Very well."

I never told him about it. I told him he had been okay during the night and to forget about it. He seemed his old self again, and we were very close during our last years in high school. He went east to college and I went to the state university but we wrote to each other often, keeping pretty well in touch. He was coming here to

spend the holidays with me last Christmas, but the car in which he was riding turned over and he was killed instantly, the only one in the car who was even hurt.

So now he'll never know. I don't let myself think too deeply about what happened that night, but every once in a while I remember that tired, sorrowful voice and wonder about it. One thing I know for sure: I'll never answer an ad under "Personals" in the newspaper.

The Song of Love

Keith Shields

HE SAT in the straight-back rocking chair in the front room of the old farmhouse. As he played the harmonica she had found for him in his attic trunk, their tiny baby held her eyes wide in quiet wonder at hearing the new sound.

Sheila held the infant close to her breast and the baby craned her back seeking the origin of the strange waugh-waugh sound. Her small mouth hung open and the clear saliva leaked onto Sheila's print house-dress. Sheila smiled at the baby and then looked at the man who played the harmonica.

And while the man across the room, her husband, blew the sad music floating into the warm air of the farmhouse, and while her baby, the small Teresa, cavorted and cooed at her breast, Sheila let the harmonica suck her in its undertow back through time.

Back through the recent anxious years when she had felt the springtime bloom of her body begin to droop and had married in desperation. Back and past the gay Christmas parties with the girls at the office and the days of clothes by de Marte and hair styles by Pinello. The music washed her ashore finally at her sixteenth summer, the one summer in her life that she had really been in love.

I was young, so young. And I wore my hair long, to my shoulders, 'cause he liked it that way. Blond, curly-headed Don. What a time we had at White Beach that summer, in the sun, always in the sun. He had a lovely body, and the sand stuck to the muscles of his arms where he had lain. Never could quit talking. All the time he talked and it was relaxing to hear him chat on and on about the waterskiers, or the blubbery old women in their half-ton bathing suits. Something was wrong with everyone. Everyone but me. He was wonderful. Oh, those beach parties! Look at me, look at me everybody! And sidling back and forth across the sand balanced tip-up fashion on his hands like an escaping crab. How he could make us laugh. He could make anyone laugh. Or cry. Like the time he played "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" on his harmonica with only the campfire to light and warm the party. The music was so sad and beautiful . . . Should've said, "Yes, Don." Should've said, "I will be your wife." Should've. Should've. While the firelight had not yet died and the moon was still up. "Yes, Don. Yes, Don."

While everyone sang, "Shine on, shine on, harvest moon . . ." Should've. "I am *not* too young," should've said. "I am old enough to have babies and I will marry you. Here is my sun-tanned hand in holy wedlock." But he just went and never came back. "Maybe when we are older," I said, and he said, "Sure, when we are older." But he never came back, he never . . .

"Never came back," she sobbed aloud and then hugged the small form to her to hide her hot tears against its chubby throat. The music had stopped and presently she heard a voice beside her and felt an arm around her shoulder.

"What's wrong, Sheila? What can I do?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all, Hugh," she said. For Hugh was her husband's name.

She wiped her eyes and brushed her hair back so that his arm fell from her shoulder. He watched her until she handed the baby to him and said, "I'll go get dinner now." She waited until she was in the kitchen before she took that deep breath which one must take after crying.

He rocked the baby and kissed her fingers when she tried to stick them into the cave of his mouth. He sang to his Teresa as he rocked:

> "Swing low, sweet chariot,
> Daddy's come to carry you home . . ."

In the kitchen Sheila looked out at the maddening white barrenness of the snow, and pressed her teeth together until they ached.

The Game of Chess

F. William Backemeyer

The persons of the dialogue: A Student, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, William Wordsworth, Titus Lucretius Carus

STUDENT: Pardon me, Dr. Nietzsche, but if you're not especially busy just now, I would appreciate it if you could enlighten me on a subject that greatly interests me.

Nietzsche: What is it that's bothering you, young man?

Student: Well, sir, I'm quite a newcomer here in Heaven, having died of exhaustion during my junior year in college, but I've been hearing fascinating stories about a great game of chess that was once played between Lucretius and Wordsworth.

Nietzsche: Ah, yes, that was *quite* a game!

Student: Did you witness it personally, sir?

Nietzsche: Yes, I was fortunate enough to be the only spectator at that famous game.

Student: Would you do me the honor of relating the story to me?

Nietzsche: Certainly. I believe I can recall the events in approximately the order in which they occurred, but would you also

like to see the game itself?

Student: I surely would, since I understand that the game was just as interesting as the conversation held over it.

Nietzsche: That's quite true. Come, let us go down to the Heavenly Chess Club, where we can find a chess set. There, also, you can get the actual setting of the game.

Suppose I begin the story at the beginning. I had been tutoring my friend Lucretius in the fine points of the Royal Game for quite some time, and he had become a most excellent player. In fact, he had definitely reached the class of Wordsworth and myself, so I had been eagerly awaiting a chance for them to play each other. One day the chance presented itself.

Ah, here we are at the Club—and here is the very table at which they played!

As I was saying, one day Wordsworth was returning from his usual twilight ramble among the clouds when I interrupted his "bliss of solitude" with, "William, my friend, are you completely submerged in the 'still, sad music of humanity,' or could you be enticed to play a game of chess with my prize pupil here, Lucretius?"

"It would be a pleasure," said Wordsworth. "I have heard that your friend Lucretius has become a first-rate chessplayer, and have looked forward to the time when we might meet."

So I introduced the two, and they immediately sat down to play.[1] Lucretius, drawing the White pieces, opened with the Queen's Pawn: P-Q4. Wordsworth countered with the Indian Defence: 1 . . . . N-KB3; and the game proceeded along normal lines as follows:

2. P-QB4	P-K3	8. N-K5	P-B3
3. N-KB3	P-QN3	9. PxP	BPxP
4. P-KN3	B-N2	10. B-B4	P-QR3!
5. B-N2	B-K2	11. R-B1	P-QN4
6. N-B3	O-O	12. Q-N3	N-B3
7. O-O	P-Q4	13. NxN	. . . .

Now the game had thus far been contested in complete silence, with both players obviously putting everything they had into the struggle. However, when Lucretius took the Knight on his thirteenth move, I commented that the move had been a good one, since Wordsworth's Knight had been headed for the strong outpost QB5. Lucretius nodded, but Wordsworth calmly said, "It was only a ghost—you've wasted two tempi merely to be rid of a ghost."

"We'll see," said Lucretius.

The ice had been broken. From that moment on a steady stream of conversation continued as the game progressed.

"It seems strange, Lucretius, that we've not met before," said Wordsworth. "You've been here in Heaven for quite some time

1. The moves of the game are those of the Immortal Zugzwang Game, Seamisch vs. Nimzovich, Copenhagen, 1923.

now, haven't you?"

"According to *your* measurements, yes," Lucretius answered, "but since I don't believe in after-life, I must simply be having a rather long dream!"

"Surely you're not serious?"

"Oh, by all means," said Lucretius. "You see,

For in very truth
It cannot be we should suppose that linked
With each and every frame there needs must dwell
Nature of mind and reason's potency,
E'en as no tree can in the skies abide,
Nor clouds in ocean's brine, nor in the fields
Can fishes have their home, nor blood reside
In wood, nor sap in stones. Nay, 'tis ordained
And stablished where each thing can have its place
And prosper. So the nature of the mind
Can ne'er apart from blood and sinews keep
Its life."[2]

"But after being here so long a time . . ." said the astonished Wordsworth.

"So long? As far as I'm concerned, it's still a summer night during the plague at Athens. I believe you call it 55 B. C."

"And this is all just a dream to you?"

"Of course.

. . . *images*
It is that in our sleep at times are wont
To trick our minds, when that we seem to view
The form of one whom light of life hath left."[3]

Why is it that people can't understand that all creation: earth, sky, sea, stars, sun, living creatures, *and* the race of men have come into being, and must, by the same token, one day go out of being? They have been born, so they must also die. And why is it that man seems to think himself different from the rest of nature?

Nor in other wise
Is seen our mortal state, save that we fall
A common prey to those same ills as they
Whom nature hath cut off from mortal life."[4]

"These are all very interesting hypotheses," replied Wordsworth, "but what proof can you give me for your statements?"

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2. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things,* V, 122 ff.
3. *Ibid.,* V, 61 ff.
4. *Ibid.,* V, 346 ff.

"Well," said Lucretius, "I don't want to labor my points now, during such a fascinating chess game, but if you're really interested, I'm writing a poem, *De Rerum Natura,* which contains an ample supply of evidence for my beliefs."

"There's an unfinished copy of it in the Heavenly Library," I interjected.

Wordsworth looked at me as if to say, "Fool, you think I haven't read it?" But he only commented quietly that he would have to look it up sometime. He then continued, "Lucretius, what is your conception of how life on the earth began?"

"Ah, a fascinating problem, and one on which I love to contemplate. I am firmly convinced that all life came from the earth itself.

For ne'er could living beings
Have fallen from heaven, nor beasts that roam the earth
Have issued from the briny pools. With right
It followeth then that earth hath won the name
Of Mother, since from earth have all things sprung."[5]

"And just how did this process take place?" asked Wordsworth.

"First, then, the winged tribes and every breed
Of flying fowl did leave their eggs, safe hatched
By springlike warmth, as now, in summer's heat,
Locusts will fain put off their polished shells
In quest of life and living. Then it was
That earth did first give birth to mortal beings.
For all the fields did teem with gentle warmth
And moisture. Hence, where there was at hand
Appropriate place, there grew up wombs, attached
By roots to earth; and when, at time fulfilled,
The tiny creatures' growing age, in flight
From moisture and in search of air, had burst
Their prison, so would nature turn toward each
The pores of earth, and from wide-opened veins
Constrain them to exude a sap most like
To milk, as even now, when she hath borne
A child, each woman's breasts are filled forthwith
With sweet new milk, since thitherward are turned
All the rich humors of her nourishment.
Earth gave these little ones their food, the warmth,
A garment, and the soft thick-tufted grass
A downy bed. But since the world was young,
No bitter cold it roused, nor heat o'er fierce,
Nor winds of violent might. For evenly
Do all things wax and reach their full-grown strength."[6]

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5. *Ibid.,* V, 793 ff.
6. *Ibid.,* V, 805 ff.

"Very interesting! And did all of these new-born creatures survive?" asked Wordsworth.

Lucretius replied,

> ". . . in those far-off days full many a race
> Of living things must needs have perished, nay,
> Nor aught of offspring could beget and thus
> Preserve its kind; for whatsoe'er we see
> To breathe the vital air of heaven, 'tis craft
> Or courage, yea, or fleetness that since first
> Their life began hath guarded and preserved
> Their several breeds."[7]

"Tell me, Lucretius, during your 'prolonged dream,' have you ever taken the opportunity of browsing in the Heavenly Library?"

"Yes, once in a while I rouse myself from my Garden, and, if I don't go to the Chess Club to play with my friend Friedrich, I usually go to the Library. But why do you ask?"

"Have you ever, while there, read any of the works of Charles Darwin?"

"Oh, yes. Great fellow, isn't he?"

"I suppose he is. But would you, Lucretius, consider yourself, as Darwin, a scientist?"

"I should like to think that I was."

"And, as a scientist, haven't you written that all the earth is controlled by natural laws?"

"Absolutely. That is one of my strongest beliefs. In fact, one of the purposes for the writing of my poem has been to

> Set forth the laws whereby all things are framed,
> And how they needs must hold thereto, nor e'er
> Can break the ancient rock-bound laws that rule
> Their being."[8]

"I see," said Wordsworth. "And from your reading of Darwin, would you say that you agreed with his theory of natural selection and the survival of the fittest? From what you have said, I would guess that you do."

"By all means,

> . . . for many a requisite
> We see must be fulfilled in living things
> Ere they avail to propagate their kind
> By generation.[9]

As a matter of fact, I not only agree with Darwin's theory, but I

7. *Ibid.*, V, 854 ff.
8. *Ibid.*, V, 54 ff.
9. *Ibid.*, V, 849 ff.

think it is one of the most dynamic and immensely beautiful ideas I have ever known."

"I believe I share your enthusiasm, Lucretius. In fact, I would agree with Thomson, when he says that

> . . . living creatures with a will to live, with an insurgent self-assertiveness, with a spirit of adventure, with an endeavor after well-being (it is impossible to exaggerate the personal aspect of the facts, even if the words which we use in our ignorance may be too metaphorical) do trade with time and have commerce with circumstance, as genuine agents, sharing in their own evolution. There is abundant room for sympathetic admiration of the tactics of Animate Nature, though the strategy may—and for science must—remain obscure."[10]

I would, however, my dear Lucretius, call your attention to the last sentence I have just quoted. For I believe that I have spied a grave contradiction in your reasoning: How can you, being a scientist believing in the absolute importance of natural laws, support the theory of natural selection, 'depending as it does purely on the laws of *chance?*' "[11]

Lucretius sat staring at the board for some minutes. I don't know whether he was thinking about Wordsworth's question or about the game, but finally he said, "Perhaps you're right, Wordsworth. Perhaps you're right."

Now by this time, the game had progressed to a very exciting stage. Wordsworth had severely cramped the men of Lucretius, and had deftly maneuvered his own forces so that they were poised for a King-side attack. The moves had been as follows:

13.	BxN	17. Q-Q1	P-N5!
14. P-KR3	Q-Q2	18. N-N1	B-QN4
15. K-R2	N-R4	19. R-N1	B-Q3
16. B-Q2	P-B4!	20. P-K4	BPxP!

With his twentieth move, Lucretius had hoped to free his game, but Wordsworth's surprising reply made the situation even more crucial.

"Good gosh, Luke," said I, "he's going to slaughter you if you don't start remembering what your teacher has taught you!"

"I wonder, Friedrich," he replied, smiling at me, "just which one of us has been the teacher, and which the pupil?"

"You have a point there," I said quietly, recalling my philosophical leanings since becoming acquainted with Lucretius.

He returned his thoughts to the game, and, after some considera-

10. Quoted in Lull, *Organic Evolution,* p. 130.
11. *Ibid.* (italics mine).

tion, captured the sacrificed Knight. The concluding conversation took place during the following moves, Lucretius being constantly on the defensive:

21. QxN	RxP	24. Q-K3	B-Q5
22. Q-N5	QR-KB1	25. QR-K1	....
23. K-R1	R/1-B4		

Finally Lucretius said, "Though I am losing the game, I must admit, Wordsworth, that I am a little bit disappointed in your style of play!"

"I am sorry," replied Wordsworth. "How is it that you are disappointed?"

"Well, I have read some of your poetry, and have been impressed only with the shallow simplicity of it all. You write about nature, but with a syrup of moral sentiment that leaves out the immense forces of fierceness, destruction, and cruelty in nature. As I have said,

> . . . the child, like sailor tossed ashore
> By cruel waves, when nature first hath cast
> Him forth by travail from his mother's womb
> Upon the coasts of light, naked doth lie
> Upon the ground, speechless and stript of all
> His life doth crave, and filleth all the place
> With woeful wailings, as is meet for one
> Whose life must pass through such a flood of ills.[12]

You, on the other hand, seem to prefer to speak of Skylarks and Butterflies and Daffodils! You miss entirely the great variety of nature and its dynamic aliveness, its immensity and grandeur. Why is the scope of your vision so limited?"

"Is it so limited?" answered Wordsworth. "True it is that I would rather write of Daffodils than Earthquakes, but does that mean that there is something wrong with my vision? Or is it *your* vision, my friend, that is lacking? Do you not understand Tennyson, when he says,

> Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower—but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is.[13]

Can you not see in the heart of a rose all the variety, aliveness, and immensity of nature made perfect?

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12. Lucretius, *op. cit.*, V, 221 ff.
13. Tennyson, "Flower in the Crannied Wall."

You must excuse me, Lucretius, for this passionate defence of my poetry. However, I do not understand what all this has to do with the style of my chess-playing."

"Well, you see, Wordsworth, I had expected a style of subtle simplicity from you, which would have been in keeping with your poetic style. Instead, your play has contained those very elements that I find lacking in your poetry: immensity and fierceness! Rather than making delicate, quiet moves, you have been relentless in your aggression. This, then, is the contradiction which I have spied."

"I dare say," replied Wordsworth, "if you really understood my poetry, you could find no contradiction. Perhaps the light will shine a little more brightly when you see the way in which I intend to finish the game."

Lucretius had just played his twenty-fifth move. He sat back in his chair and waited for his opponent to make his reply. Wordsworth thought for a few moments, then raised his hand to touch the most insignificant piece on the board—the King's Rook's Pawn—which was standing passively and defensively in front of his King, and was still on its original square. He pushed the Pawn forward one square (25 . . . . P-R3!!), looked across the table, and whispered, "Zugzwang!"[14]

Lucretius looked at the board in silence for a long while. Then he tipped over his King in Resignation.

Wordsworth said mildly, "Perhaps now you can see what I mean when I say,

> To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."[15]

Magic With a Broadaxe

Edward B. Kennedy

MOST people look at a railroad track and see a warning signal, an elevated roadbed, or perhaps an oncoming train. A few persons are sufficiently concerned to observe the two parallel strips of steel which reach out into the distance and seem to point toward their destination. A few among the few may even marvel at the achievements of men who have been able to complete so vast a project with no visible bumps or dips for as many miles as the eye can reach. But rarely does anyone see the connecting links between

14. Literally: *the compulsion to move.* In chess, a person in Zugzwang can make no move without incurring immediate defeat; yet the rules state that he *must* move.

15. Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood."

the rails. A railroad crosstie seldom extracts a glance from a human being beyond the railroad inspection team.

Although it may be difficult to envision a man who has dedicated his life to crossties, some do exist, and such a man was Levi Bolen. He came to my father's place in the middle 1940's to cut the white oak timber on the slope which rises back of the garden and extends a half-mile or more up to the Clark National Forest Game Reserve. Levi possessed the quiet disposition of a confident man. His equipment included two hewing axes, a crosscut saw, and a pair of shoulders that would have made Paul Bunyan envious.

After the trees had been felled, Levi worked alone. From our front yard we could hear the sharp, metronomic blows of his axe clearly. It seemed that the man would never tire; his endurance was that of a machine. When we approached his outdoor workshop, we could see that his labors were fruitful by viewing the square stack of finished crossties. At the end of each succeeding day he would add forty more sturdy pieces of foundation material to his growing total. Furthermore, by observing the man himself at close range, even a child could see that his reward was not in money alone. He was a skilled craftsman, and he was proud of it.

Even though he worked alone and enjoyed his solitude, he did not object to spectators, if they would stand behind him. He was always careful to explain that this was the safest place, because the large, white chips of wood flew to his left and right, and, if the axe slipped from his hands, it would sail out in front of him. But the spectator soon discovered that this was a special vantage point. He was situated like an umpire watching home plate. He could see the arc of flying steel and the deep crevice in the log which resulted. He could see the same scene re-enacted every three or four seconds and marvel each time the blade bit again into the preceding crevice. In an amazingly short time, he could marvel further at the mathematical woodsman who had squared the oak circle.

Any person who has held a broadaxe in his hands is a witness to the fact that it is a heavy, cumbersome instrument. And any person who has attempted to sink one into an oak log can tell you that the task is not for men who are accustomed to cocktail parties. A crosstie-maker is a skilled craftsman. His skills are not learned in a classroom, but the requirements are comparable to skills which are. It is necessary that he recognize the lay of the grain in every piece of timber he hews. The ten-inch width must be measured with a trained eye to within one fourth of an inch. And it is necessary to maintain the strength of a wrestler and the eye of a "three hundred hitter" to perform magic with a broadaxe.

Jacques

Lucia Walton

HENRY hastily swallowed the last bite of his apple. "Howdy, Jim, you back to catch cold a'ready?" He tossed the core at an overflowing soap carton in the corner.

"Bad a shot as ever, Henry," observed the tanned man who had just entered the store, as the core rolled across the linoleum. "Yeah—I've got to get the place cleaned up before the season starts. Got any blue enamel?"

"Sure, in the back," Henry replied, scratching his thin hairless head. "End of that aisle Mary's in." He nodded at a plump elderly woman busy at picking over oranges.

"Hey, Mary," Jim called, stamping over to her in his heavy snow boots, "you can pick those outta your back yard where I've been."

"Well, Jim Vanderwall!" She turned in pleased surprise. "The resort season starting early this year, is it?" Her voice, low-pitched and definite, contrasted sharply with her placidly rotund appearance.

"No, I got some paintin' to do." He glanced down at her basket. "You gone and got a new husband? That looks like more food than you'll eat in a week."

"Lord, no! My niece is with me."

"Fine, fine! Company's good for you. Bring her over for a game of parcheesi some time."

Mary sighed. "Thanks, Jim, but she doesn't feel like going out much." She picked up another orange, squeezed it gently, and dropped it into the basket.

"Been sick, has she?" His bulbous nose wrinkled in sympathy as he unzipped his red-and-black squared lumberjacket.

"No—well, in a way. Her parents were killed in a wreck right before Christmas, and she can't seem to get over it."

"Too bad, too bad. You oughtta be able to fix her up, though, Mary, the way you cook."

"I hope so," she answered as he went on down the aisle, and wished it were that simple.

The child was thin as a piling. Night after night Mary stared at the ceiling in the dark, trying to think how to help Carol, and waiting to hear the screams that called her to the girl's room almost nightly. Four months had passed, but the nightmares were still there—the wild drive home from a basketball game, the oncoming lights, the shrieks and the crash and her parents' bodies in the gully. Carol never talked about it with anyone. She hardly talked about anything at all. No one had seemed able to help her; finally Mary got on a plane, for the first time in her sixty-six years, and fetched the girl home with her, hoping the isolation of a winter-bound Michigan village would provide the rest Carol needed. So far it hadn't done much good. Now the thaw had started, and Mary was putting

her hopes in the peace of the cool vast lake and sun-beaten beach. The more she thought about that, as she paid for her groceries and walked through the dripping woods, the better it sounded.

There was still a bit of winter left, however, until the cold Michigan spring. Mary went on chattering to silence, playing gin rummy with half a partner, outdoing herself at the stove. Carol never seemed moody or sulky; she never complained of anything, and she was fine help if Mary told her just what to do. During the day, she was so detached that she almost seemed not to be there at all. Often she'd stop in the middle of whatever she was doing, pick up one of the French books she had brought with her, and read for a while as though her life depended on it. This, Mary had learned, apparently relaxed her; and aside from the nightmare it was the only obvious sign of tension the child showed. The nights had become routine. Mary would hear her screaming and go to her; Carol would clutch at her, sobbing wildly as Mary rubbed her back and sang nursery songs in her deep soft voice. After about an hour, the exhausted girl would fall asleep. She never talked, but only shook with great wrenching sobs; and neither of them ever mentioned the episodes afterward.

Snow fell and the thaw ran again in March; finally, near the end of May, Mary decided spring had come. After lunch one day she brought out a thick blanket and told Carol to go to the beach. She didn't ask her if she wanted to go; any need for decision, however minor, sent Carol to desperate translation. The girl took the blanket, put on a sweatshirt, and set off down the road with a vacant face.

The budding woods were still wet with the thaw and the sand was cold as Carol climbed the hill and then the dune; she stopped for a moment on the crest, bracing herself against the steady biting wind the deep gray lake sent, then made her way carefully down to the beach. Spreading the blanket at double thickness, she lay on her stomach to watch the tireless waves, letting the wind pull off her scarf and toss her straight light hair. After a time she pillowed her head on the scarf and began to draw thin fingers through the white cold sand to the rhythm of the waves. Its coolness was somehow comforting; she wriggled it into the shape of her body beneath the blanket and watched the shadowy outline of an ore-boat snail its way across the horizon. The faint sun grew warm between her shoulder-blades, and soon she slept.

After that, Carol walked to the beach every afternoon, to watch the lake and to sleep. One day she was venturing to speak to a gull who had landed a few feet from her when she saw a boy coming down the dune. Not looking up, she watched his steps tensely. He trod the sand expertly, and when he stood beside her she saw that the skin of his feet was tough and smooth, like a rock worn by the backwash. He had no shoes with him and, though the wind was cold, wore only a white t-shirt rent at one shoulder and a pair of washed-out dungarees rolled above the knee. His legs were long,

and taut with long muscles; his shadow was long on the sand, and Carol judged that he was quite tall, much taller than she.

"You come here every day," he said in a quiet voice that sounded as though it were seldom used.

"How did you know?" Carol was surprised that she could speak to him so easily.

"I see your outline in the sand."

The boy sat down beside her, and she looked at his face curiously. It was long, deeply tanned and weathered, covered with faint blond stubble. His nose and ears came to gentle points, and his eyes were blue as hers, but with the farseeing wintry look of an old New England sea captain's eyes.

She gestured toward the bird picking its way down the beach. "He wouldn't talk to me."

"He's shy," said the boy, and began to make a weird clucking-mewing sound. Turning, the gull flew to his shoulder.

Carol watched silently until the boy said, "Go find your supper." The bird flew away, and she said, "Could I learn to do that?"

"I don't think so," he answered. "Not for a long time, anyway." His eyes scanned the water and the sky above it. "You won't come tomorrow, it's going to rain."

The sky looked clear to Carol, but she accepted his statement as she accepted his presence and his familiarity with the gull.

"Have you a name?" asked the boy, leaning back on his rough elbows.

"It's Carol."

"Carol, Carol, Carol." He drew it out slowly. "It sounds like the waves."

"What's yours?" She felt almost rude to be asking.

He smiled. "Whatever you want to call me," he answered easily.

She looked at him thoughtfully for a moment, then said "Jacques. Yes, Jacques. You're like French."

"You haven't had your nap, Carol." He rose, unfolding loosely. "Come back when the rain stops."

"I will," she promised, her eyes following him along the water's edge until he disappeared far away around the pine-covered point.

It rained for two days. Carol played gin rummy with her aunt, saying nothing of the boy. On the third day, when she returned to the beach, Jacques came once more and stayed a little longer.

The sun grew hot as summer strengthened; Carol took to wearing her green bathing suit, but Jacques always appeared in his t-shirt and dungarees, even when they swam. He taught her a great deal about the lake, taught her to appreciate its moods, and how to tell the kinds of fish that lived in it and boats that sailed it, and what weather the varied cloud formations betokened. They never talked of themselves, but always of the lake. In the blazing heat they took long swims, straight out into the sparkling blue coldness and back; they walked up and down the beach while he told her of the lake;

and, if ambitious summer-people happened onto their stretch of sand, they flung themselves down on it and pretended to sleep.

Like all people who live near a large body of water, Aunt Mary believed in the lake's powers implicitly, and gave it full credit for the gradual change coming over her niece. That Carol grew plump and more alert, that the nightmares came at increasingly longer intervals was due entirely to the lake and the wind and the sun sinking into her bones and her blood, infusing their vast cradling peace into her soul. Occasionally Aunt Mary walked to the beach with Carol; on those days Jacques failed to come, and the grateful aunt watched her niece build castles in the sand and jump the waves with pleased relief. And, though she sometimes thought that Carol should fix herself up and go to parties over at the Inn, she contented herself, as she told people at the town, with "letting the lake take its time."

One afternoon in August, at the peak of the heat, Mary felt unable to go to the store. It was with misgivings that she asked Carol to do her errands, but the girl agreed almost readily. She went to her room and came down half an hour later with her sun-whitened hair bound back, her lips reddened, and a leaf-printed white dress billowing about her long browned legs. The old lady gave her directions sharply and blew her nose when Carol had left the house.

Instead of taking the path to the main road, Carol hurried through the woods, took off her sandals to climb the dune, and ran down to the beach. The lake was still, the sun unrelenting. Jacques came out of the water as she ran toward it.

"I'm going to the store," she called.

He looked at her sadly.

"You don't like me this way." She felt an unaccountable hurt.

"You're beautiful," he replied in a strange sorrowful voice. He had never complimented her before; in the long months he had never complimented anything about her but her name. She hadn't expected it, hadn't missed it; nor had she ever thought it strange that, in the course of the long lazy days they had passed in perfect accord, he had never so much as brushed her hand with his as they walked.

"I must go," she said. "I'll be back."

Walking away and up the burning dune, she felt his eyes on her. At the crest she turned to wave.

"Goodbye, beautiful Carol," he called, and left her to watch him diving through the whitecaps.

Nearing the main road, she longed for a moment to run back to Jacques. He and Aunt Mary were the only persons she had spoken with for months; she was afraid, but somehow she knew it would be all right. Jacques' eyes had told her so, and she knew him to be a source of truth as great as the lake. She began to sing softly as she walked — "Frère Jacques, frère Jacques, Dormez-vous, dormez-vous?" She passed a ramshackle house on whose porch three grubby children were playing, and found herself waving to them.

The cool dim mustiness of the cluttered grocery store made her

blink as she entered. A thin bald man took an apple out of his mouth and gazed at her happily from behind the old-fashioned cash register.

"You're new here," he observed. "Summer?"

"You must be Henry." She smiled tentatively, then thoroughly. "I'm Mrs. Ter Haar's niece."

"Well, I'll be—thought you were a frail little thing! Say, Mary's not sick, is she?"

"No, thank you," Carol answered, choosing a basket. "She just didn't feel up to the heat." She was concentrating, fighting, but she felt that she would win.

When she returned to the counter to check out her purchases, Henry was talking with a summer-looking person.

"So it was you bought the Holmes place," he was saying. "Nobody's been there in five years—they never came back after their boy died, and everybody wondered if they'd ever put it on the market."

"Vanderwall told me about the boy." The summer-person, cigared and overflowing a Hawaiian shirt, nodded sadly.

"Awful shame," said Henry. "Never saw a finer boy—always helpin' somebody. Died that way. A neighbor's boat got loose and drifted down the channel in a storm—Jim—that was his name—saw it goin' out and swam after it. Went down just before he caught it, they said."

The plump man kept on nodding. "Too bad, too bad. It's a fine house. Well, I'll be seeing you, Henry."

"Fine boy, Jim Holmes," Henry muttered as he rang up Carol's groceries. "Bout the age you are now. Smart as a whip, and always helpin' people."

She walked home slowly, tired from the effort of contact with Henry and thinking hard. After putting the groceries away, she changed to her bathing suit, unbound her hair, wiped off her lipstick, and ran to the lake. It was clear and blue, frothing at the edges with tiny whitecaps; the wind was growing new and fresh, the sun heavy-hot as happens in Michigan's mid-August. Carol flopped down on her striped towel to scan the endless water. For an hour or more she seemed to search it, her accustomed eyes unflinching as the sun lowered itself opposite. Distant voices jabbed at her consciousness; a pair of sunburnt, flabby summer-ladies were walking toward her. They appeared surprised as she sat up and turned toward them; gathering herself to speak, she was suddenly aware of quiet tears sliding down her face.

* * * * *

Peter, the Rock

Lana Ruegamer

WHO IS the bright young Defender of Democracy with Liberty and Justice for All, Saviour of the National Government from Communism and All the Other Isms, and Maintenance Man for the American Way of Life from my generation in whom we place such complacent hope for the future of this country?

His name is, let us say, Peter (the Rock upon which we build our Heritage) Smith or Smythe or Schmidt or Smithson or Smithsky or Smithberg or Smithchev or Smithiardi or Smithean or Smithsan or Smithipides or Smithosa or Smithereen. He is the bright young American we all know and love; he "comes on" like a one-man revue with snappy phrases, gay opinionations, gregarious grins, and all manner of highly amusing repartee. He is the bright young individual with talent enough to do nearly anything he "sets his mind to." He is America's Hope. In his chaste charcoal flannels and his button-down collars, he will be America's politician, scientist, professor or business magnate. He will also be America's fighting man, a fact he faces with grim pessimism. "I can see it all now," he mutters. "You work four years for a degree, spending all that money, and bingo . . . beep-beep . . . the Russians drop the World's Fair in atomic bombs on us, and it's the end of the world."

And so, he sees it all now, brooding picturesquely behind a can of Budweiser beer and a well-packed pipe. If one extends a small invitation, one is also treated to dissertations from him on other important topics such as . . . eyebrow pencil (How Much a Girl Should Wear) . . . bridge (Which System Is the Winning One) . . . nuclear weapons' testing ("What-the-hell? They're gonna blow up the whole world anyway.") . . . literature ("Say, I read *Penrod* when I was a kid. You'd like it—it has lots of big words in it.") . . . art (upon being exposed to a sample of highly abstract contemporary art, "Well, I suppose they're on the inside, and we're just outside looking in." Note the sarcastic tone of voice and the snobbish, universal "we.") . . . making a living ("Science is where the money is these days.") . . . religion ("I don't like to discuss it; it's a touchy subject. That's just something every man has to figure out for himself.") He has it "all figured out." He is, after all, the bright young American we all know and love. He is the hope for the future. He likes bridge, beer, Bach, and broads, in that order. "A deck of cards, a case of 'Bud,' and those beside me singing in the wilderness." In many ways our bright young man is a closed door, a clod; his mind is hostile to Big Words, Modern Art, Religion, Politics, Literature, and Philosophy. What does one discuss with this fellow? Bridge, beer, Bach, and broads. That indicates a fairly shallow individual no matter how you evaluate it.

"But . . .," one protests, "this is America's bright young man

we are discussing. Surely your Peter is not the right example. What about his occupation, his profession? We were discussing the potential statesmen, businessmen, scientists—the thinking men of this country. Surely your young man does not fit into any of these categories."

But I am discussing the right young man. Our Peter is a future scientist, a theoretical physicist, he thinks. Peter's calibre of intelligence definitely places him in that "likely young man" spot. And, when occasionally we are confronted with a flash of his inner brilliance, his intellectual potential, and his marvelous sensitivity which is as yet undulled by oppression and negligence, we begin to have some realization of the paradoxes in this young man's personality and character. He is a veritable bundle of contradictions. He will reveal his mind and its capabilities reluctantly and rarely, preferring to assume the popular guise of the inverted snob, the anti-intellectual. He will ridicule tenderness, an abstract idea, profundity. And yet he roars like a wounded lion when, for fear of his ridicule, a confidence is withheld. In all seriousness he will submit that he is no clod and will become quite indignant that his sensitivity has been questioned. The same incongruity exists in his attitudes toward life's work. He expresses a dynamic interest in mathematics and physics, yet maintains that he is in his field for "the money." He is uncertain as to his goals; therefore he accomplishes little in the way of independent, intellectual activity. One finds in his dreams conflicting half-formed plans which illustrate the immaturity of his aims; he plans to roam around Europe for a year at the same time he plans to go on to graduate school. Meanwhile, he saves money for neither and remains indefinite about both. He is the "poor fish" (pronounced "feesh") and the big "greenbean" to which he is always referring. In a sense, he is the poorest fish of them all because he is wasting his own time and the country's most valuable commodity: the capable mind.

Peter is a bright young man much like the other bright young men we all know and love; he is one of a group who should be nearly prepared to assume the responsibilities of running a country but who are preparing to meet the demands of manhood with the half-formed ideals of boyhood.

The Last Hour

Anita Glaze

THE CLOCK on the bare, scrubbed wall of the waiting room read six o'clock. One hour to go, he thought—only one small hour until that door would open and Commander Millis would give him, Cadet Larry Allan Williams, his final instructions and best wishes. The wear of the past month gave evidence in his tensely drawn face, haggard expression, clouded blue eyes, and the bones jutting sharply out of his tall, lean frame.

Pacing nervously across the floor in agitated movements, Larry felt dizzy from the whirlpool of thoughts eddying in confusion in his mind. It seemed an eternity since that fateful day he signed the agreement with the United States Air Force volunteering to be sent as the first human being into orbit in outer space. Oh, God! Why did he do it? Cringing from the painful memory of his decision, he remembered the wedding which never became a reality. June . . . dear, wonderful June. How will she feel when she hears of this? The months slipped away, and he was again in the drugstore on the night that he found her. Driven by one of his frequent restless moods, he had taken leave from the base to spend the night in town. From the moment he saw the slim, dark-haired girl with the sparkling eyes, Larry had known she was for him.

Coming sharply back to reality with the realization that he might have been happily married instead of going through this living hell—this agony of waiting, Larry stopped short. Indeed, why had there been no wedding? Plaguing and tormenting him that day before the wedding had been the old doubts and fears. Memories of the past haunted him and seemed constantly to threaten his happiness. Pictured again in his tortured mind were his family and home which he had left, vowing never again to return. In his father's opinion he was an irresponsible fool, a weakling, and a coward. Unable to meet the demanding expectations of his family, he had escaped his tangled problems intending to start a new life elsewhere. But as a cadet it was the same story all over again—unfit material for officer's training, irresponsible behavior, and ruinous lack of self-discipline. With all this in mind that night before the wedding, he decided in a rare flash of self-analysis—why ruin two lives instead of one? So June waited in vain.

Suddenly too weary to stand, Larry flung himself into the chair. How horribly simple it had been after that! The next morning he applied for a special mission; he must never see June again—he must run, he must escape, he must run again and again. As fate would have it, the office had been waiting weeks for just such an opportunity. Finished and waiting only for its passenger was the Air Force's first attempt at a missile equipped to send man into orbit around the earth. Frowning, Larry tried to remember the ensuing weeks of preparation, but it all seemed a bad dream, a hazy existence in a world of fantasy.

Starting violently when the door opened, Larry wiped the cold sweat from his hands as Lt. Commander Dickson came into the room. "Aren't you early?" he questioned nervously.

"I just wanted to wish you luck myself, Cadet Williams, before the Commander gives you his final instructions and best wishes," Dickson reassured him. "You know, I have always dreamed of being a great adventurer like Columbus or Admiral Byrd, and I am proud to have the honor of knowing you. Whether this fails or succeeds, your contribution to science will go down in history. Good

luck and may God go with you." After firmly shaking Larry's hand, the young officer left, shutting the door on a silent room.

Choking an insane urge to laugh, Larry marveled at the irony that he, the cowardly heel, was being thought of as a hero. Suddenly his heart lurched as he realized the full significance of his perilous position. In five appallingly short minutes he would be embarking on the unknown. Stark terror swept through his entire body at the menace now confronting him. The ticking of the clock beat like a thundering drum in his head. Of one thing only was he aware—his nerves were screaming out in agony to run, run, run! And his legs obeyed. Forcing the window open with all his strength, he dropped to the ground and ran blindly for his life.

On seeing a man run from behind a building in the restricted area, a nearby guard cried out a sharp command. "Halt, or I'll shoot!" Run, run, Larry hysterically wept. A shot rang out, shattering the stillness of the morning. And the guard looked down in surprised wonder at Cadet Williams, fallen with his face in the dust—a bullet in his back.

How Long?

Ann Takayoshi

"OLD GLORY," a band beating out the "Stars and Stripes Forever," our blood tingling up and down our spines when a column of young American soldiers march by in dress uniform—these symbols of our freedom are oftentimes the only things which are capable of reminding us that we are a nation of free people; however, momentary remembering and momentary awareness are of little value. We are so close to our freedoms that we take them for granted. We have them, we need them, but we are steadily forgetting how to keep them. We are so close to them that we cannot see the forest for the trees. We see the separate and revered "Bills of Right" as tall, straight, proud pines in a forest; but we cannot see the knotted and twisted trunks of the surrounding and infringing opposers of freedom. We see the pines of Freedom from Discrimination, Freedom of Speech, and Freedom of Religion, but we cannot see the forests of Prejudice, Slander, and Godlessness.

We remember 1620 as the year of the Pilgrims' arrival, and we learn by heart the words of the Preamble to the Constitution, and we can give a vague statement, which would include the word freedom, as to why the Pilgrims came to America or as to why the colonists rebelled; but we have forgotten the most important part—the fighting that the colonist and pilgrim had to do first of all to obtain his freedom, and second of all to keep his freedom. We have forgotten that freedom was a hard-won privilege, because our generation has not had to fight for it. It has been given to us, and as in all cases where presents are given instead of earned through personal sweat, the value depreciates a great deal as time passes. We place

our gifts in the place of honor on our closet shelves and once more drag out the tennis racket we paid for by cutting the front and back lawn.

Our freedoms are gifts, but to keep them from deteriorating through disuse, we must take them from their honored places in history books and make them, once more, an alive and vital part of our lives, not just a segment stuck away in mothballs until the next July 4.

We must take our Freedom of Religion from its safety deposit box and use it to dispel the bigotry between religious groups. We must use our religious freedom by going to the church of our choice, not as a social duty, but as an obligation to self and country; for God and God's teachings will keep our morals in order, thereby keeping our country strong; will keep our faith strong, thereby making our country stronger; and will keep us humble, thereby making our country wiser. Let us use the freedom fought for by the Pilgrims.

We must take our Freedom of Speech from its box and invest it in our right to argue in order to find truth, in our right to dispel gossip with fact, and in our right to abolish prejudice with spoken knowledge. When we do this, we are investing our securities wisely, and our dividends of freedom will multiply in strength. We must use all our freedoms, and we must be aware that freedom is a privilege. If we continue to lean upon the supports of freedom built by our forefathers, instead of building new supports and reinforcing the old ones, how long can we remain free? How long?

Critics Don't See All

Maryann Koontz

A GREAT DEAL has been written in recent years, purporting to detect a significant deterioration in the domestic relations of our modern family. The home has literally been pulled from its foundations, not only in public speeches and essays, but in the pulpit as well. The younger generation seems almost unanimously to be portrayed as the real ruler of the domicile, while any adult who happens to be attached at the time is very casually placed in his proper niche, usually far in the background.

Such a picture can only be obtained when the observer has been limited to one very narrow point of view. A friend of ours from the prairie lands of Illinois once remarked while viewing a colorful, wooded valley in Brown County, just as the leaves were beginning to glow in their autumn hues, that the scene presented itself to him only as a frightful waste of land and space on which not a single bushel of potatoes could be grown. Because children have been encouraged to express themselves and draw a few conclusions of their own, they have all been classified as forward, disrespectful, and untrained beings, who are on the verge of taking charge of the entire domestic program. It would seem that such participation in family affairs is nothing more than an extension of our plan of education,

and that we admittedly are reaching a far greater percentage of our population with higher education with each passing generation. Participation in family discussions is an inevitable result of the better schools and better teachers of today.

But the most inspiring type of family circle is to be found in the home where religion plays an important part. According to statistics, this class of family is rapidly on the increase; yet the critics seem not to have had the opportunity of visiting it at all. An entirely different atmosphere can be sensed while in the presence of such a family, regardless of whether it be needy and frugal, or situated in well-to-do and comfortable circumstances. In such a home, all problems are resolved not so much for expediency and self-satisfaction, but from a standpoint of moral correctness; and in discussions of this nature, all members of a family are on an equal basis. Religious training is so simple, and yet so saturating in its effects, that all members of a family circle express themselves more or less from the same platform, regardless of age or formal training.

From a religious standpoint, all problems and all pleasures seem at once to have an easier solution. When selfishness and personal satisfactions are ruled out, other angles of a problem seem easily to fall into their place. Sickness and care of the aged are handled with confidence when there is an abiding faith; the everyday rush of business and subsistence is best solved through the application of religious principles; church work and benevolent duties become pleasant deeds; vacations and family outings become not only enjoyable experiences but character builders as well.

It seems unfortunate that so many critics of present-day homelife and child training fail to differentiate between the secular and the religious home. They hear a few noisy family discussions, since it is always the loudest voices that carry the farthest, and from these disturbances they gather impressions which are set down as typical and universal. Meanwhile, these thousands of other groups are quietly minding their own affairs, and living a life of love and peace. "Still water runs deep" holds as true among family circles as it does among individuals. As a result, the analyses handed to us by the experts are wrong in many cases, and their corrective suggestions are not always applied in the right direction. Many family problems solve themselves, and many family discussions fail to reach the argumentative stage simply because a sufficient amount of splendid religious teachings have been applied throughout the development of the family.

Don't Build Too High

Carol Cook

"FOR the world is filled with beauty," an old hymn goes. Even after the downfall of the Garden of Eden, man has marveled and speculated over the exquisite beauty of the earth. Today, the progress of the modern civilization has enhanced, rather than

destroyed, its loveliness. In the past man has always worshipped the gods of nature; the modern generation gives its devotion to a new deity—the god of science. Nature remains comparatively constant; there have been few changes in her aspects since the beginning of man's history. Modern science is advancing; vast progress is witnessed during a single lifetime. The human body, always admired as a divine work of art, becomes exquisite through the combined efforts of modern medicine, dietetics, and dentistry. The advance of the rocket age opens the doors to the ancient wonder of a timeless space. A new science, psychology, affords a glimpse into the deep, mystical waters of the mind's channels. Our advanced civilization has created an intricate network of thriving, pulsating metropolises which are great works of living art.

Yet in this esthetic world of today it is an easy matter to slip from the precarious cliff of realism into the interminable space of that which is beyond the material world. A walk through a green and quiet woods is sufficient to stimulate the imagination into activity. The pursuit of science itself produces thought which is unscientific. The analysis of literature and man's mind often arouses questions on man's soul or nature which are inexplicable by physiology or psychology. In studying the universe or the creation of the earth, the dividing line between the real and the ethereal is so thin that it is at times imperceptible. When, in daily life, these intangible values do arise, man must separate himself from the multitude to speculate upon them. For that purpose, man has devised a mental tower in which to confine his inner self—commonly called an ivory tower.

Even man does not have the complete power of communication. He is unable to express many of his emotions, feelings, and ideas to his fellow man. An idea is an individual creation. Since there is no direct communication between the minds of men, it is difficult to develop an idea simultaneously except by coincidence. Oft times the presence of one person will interrupt the channel of thought. Many great achievements then are accomplished in solitude. While man is primarily a gregarious creature, a life spent completely within the confinement of the multitude is an unfruitful life, not only in the creation of ideas and accomplishments, but in the reduced fulfillment of a personal life. Completeness of soul and personality are achieved only after extensive search and development of the inner self. Some emotions and thoughts are of too precious and personal a nature to be shared. These are rightfully stored in the ivory tower for jealous contemplation. The ivory tower is desirable both for personal development and for worldly achievement, whether an individual ascends it to obtain a clearer view of the world, to reason out a social problem, or to produce a work of fine art.

Yet if theories or ideas are not practiced and improved by others, they are as fruitless as though they were never conceived. While the birth of an idea is an individual thing, the molding and finishing

must be completed by many workers. Complete solitude is therefore dangerous. A life spent in solitude is like a life spent in an empty chamber. Without the wholesome nutrients of a healthy social life, the individual is left to speculate upon those things which were never intended for man's perception. In his futile search for the inaccessible knowledge, he constructs his tower until it is of such great height that it can neither be ascended by another, nor is it possible to descend again into life. He is, quite literally, left hanging in the clouds to view life as it passes by under his lofty perch.

It is this unique combination of gregariousness and the desire for solitude which sets man apart from other animals. In his solitude he creates; in his gregariousness he finishes. So, although the construction of an ivory tower is vital to mankind, it must be carefully constructed so that he is not placed too far above a down-to-earth life.

To Be Thankful

Skip Elson

HE WAS NOT only afraid, he was mad. His ancestral line was a proud, cocky one. It was not his fault that he was in this mess, but he was not about to give up without trying. His thoughts ran through his brain in a wild, disorganized manner. Calming himself, he decided that this was no time to panic—time was too short. Time was precious to him and could not be wasted. He carefully inspected the high wire fence that encircled the area, and wondered why they had tied him to the stake. They were certainly taking no chances. He suddenly remembered that today would be Thanksgiving Day. This thought was so funny he almost laughed, but he restrained himself by remembering where he was and what was about to happen. But there was one thing for which he could be thankful—that of being last. All the others had been taken away and had not returned, and probably could not return. On the other hand, being the last brought him that horrible torture of waiting. If there was anything for which he should be thankful, it was the little bit of hope he still had.

He worked enthusiastically at the tightly-tied ropes that bound him. Maybe these devils would show him mercy? But this was silly; they never had and they never would. The odds of getting out of the compound were against him, but it was his only chance of saving himself. To accomplish this he first had to free himself of the ropes that held him to the stake. He wondered if his proud ancestors could have figured a way out, but this also was foolish. They had been free. They had faced death, but they had faced it while free to fight for life. They would rather die than be captured and live in pens like this. No, they had never been confronted with a problem so great as his. But someone had been weak. He had never known this freedom; he had been born a prisoner. Somebody in that proud line had failed him. These thoughts frustrated him so

that he struggled more desperately with the ropes. Only the ropes stood in the way! Only the ropes! The ropes! There might be a hole in the fence which he might squeeze through, if he could rid himself of these ropes. He struggled wildly as his anxieties overcame him. His strength dwindled rapidly and he neared a state of exhaustion. The thumping of his heart was loud against his chest, and he gulped short, difficult breaths of the cold November air as his strength vanished.

When they came for him he was still exhausted. He still gasped for air and his body twitched involuntarily. There was little sense to resist, nor was there any energy with which he could resist. Though unable to move, many questions ran through his mind. Why me? Why should he, still so young, die for someone else's pleasure or whim? He did not even notice the rough way they handled him as they dragged him from the sturdy, high wire fence that imprisoned him. There must be some way out. But fear of what was to happen blotted all thoughts from his mind. He could feel the hard pounding of his heart throughout his body, and he trembled even more violently from his fear now. They threw him on an old log that had deep gashes in it, and was spotted with red stains. His head rested on the log only momentarily, when he caught a glimpse of the sharp blade of the ax—then he feared no more. He died the same way many of his brothers die each year, and ended up the same way—as Thanksgiving dinner. It is no wonder turkeys seldom find anything to be thankful for on Thanksgiving Day.

"Prefixitis" is Spreading

Betty Geise

JACQUES BARZUN has some very interesting ideas on the use of the English language in this modern age. Of all the ideas introduced in his essay "English as She's Not Taught," the most interesting, and I think by far the truest, is blaming the highly educated people for disrupting the English language. I agree one-hundred per cent with Barzun in his analysis of today's new "technical" trend in speaking. It is not the people who have had no college training that distort the English language. These people express themselves in plain, simple English that anyone can understand. The people who really distort our language are the college-bred: the laymen, the businessmen, or the men in the technical fields. Besides mixing up our standard commonly-used words, they add many new words with no regard to whether they can be understood or used properly. Barzun gives vivid concrete examples of these new additions, but he fails to elaborate on common words that are used daily and given a number of meanings by adding a prefix.

Of all the distortions in the English language, the one that disgusts me the most is the habit of adding a prefix to good words to make them sound distinguished or technical. A good example of the

prefix craze, and I think it is a craze, is the use of the prefix *anti*. This little prefix is tacked on to innumerable words, and the person who uses this little ditty is looked upon as being very enlightened on his subject or else very ignorant of it. You have probably come in contact with both types of these people, but I think the latter of the two is the most interesting. A good example of the latter: the person attempting to sound informed is the college fellow who once told me he was an anti-basketball player. I presume he meant he was an ex-basketball player, but to this day I am not certain.

Another little item which is just as over-worked and misused as *anti* is the prefix *pro*. I understand that when a person uses the prefix *pro* in front of another word (usually a noun), he is in favor of that subject, such as, a pro-Republican, a pro-unionist, or a pro-Methodist. In my opinion it is much easier to understand and say, I am a Methodist, rather than, I am pro-Methodist. In fact one day I became so irked with a fellow who was writing a term paper on labor organization, I was actually so impolite as to let him know of my disgust. He boldly told me that he was a "pro-laborite," so I said, "That's fine! I hope it isn't catching." Because of my cutting remark he became aware of his constant use of these meaningless words, and he was unable to carry on any further conversation since he had been robbed of his technical terms.

One horrible monster in our language is the prefix *ex*. I am not sure that I understand what this means at all. Even as early as the fourteenth century, people were "ex-communicated" from the church. I gather that this meant they were forbidden to associate with any of the other members of the church, and vice versa. Today *ex* has been added to scores of words. For example, the popular word husband has unfortunately become the victim of *ex*. Instead of saying "He is my former husband," women now say "He is my ex-husband." Even our text books are marked with this "prefixitis." In one chapter of my history text, information was given about the barbarians who became civilized. After these barbarians had maintained a complex society and achieved civilization, the text referred to them as ex-barbarians. The use of *ex* seemed to turn the clock backward on these people, who in actuality made a great achievement.

Because of the use of these various prefixes, I am not sure whether I can state my position on anything. I have become so confused, that I do not know whether I am a pre-graduate or a pro-graduate. I am not sure whether I am an anti-high school student or an ex-high school student. I do hope that people will cease to be lazy about their speech. Instead of tacking on these little prefixes to save them from saying too many words, I hope they will begin to use all the words in their vocabularies. It does not take too much extra breath to use a few more words, and the listener gets a much better mental picture of what the speaker is trying to say.

The Blast

Jack Payne

I WAS AN eye witness to an atomic blast. My experience on that infamous day at Yucca Flats, Nevada, has been etched in my memory, perhaps because I was one of a select group of mortals to be so close to a weapon so powerful and awesome that it ended a World War, and, even today, acts as a major deterrent to another major world conflict.

The Marines in my unit, Test Unit No. 1, had been indoctrinated and rehearsed for this eventful day. We had received many hours of instruction and, no doubt, a great deal of this preparation was directed at dispelling the fears and apprehensions our "guinea-pig" group was to face. We were told of the shock wave, a force so violent that it would shake the ground like a strong earthquake. Much emphasis was placed on the tremendous brilliance of the initial light from the bomb blast, a light so intense that to look at it with the naked eye might result in permanent blindness. The effects of radiation on the body left me limp. Radiation, it was explained, could enter the body, and over a period of years, like the process of erosion, wear away various organs within the body. Its effect could also be seen in any future generations that might be produced. Radiation could so deform a baby that it might resemble some creature from another planet, or some prehistoric monster. Not one small effect of the bomb eluded our instruction.

I must admit that after a period of time, all this talk of blindness, shock waves and radiation left me with a dismal, pensive outlook of the eventful day.

March 14, 1955, came all too quickly. The weather was chilly. The gray dawn over us was like a huge blanket. Suddenly, the rays of the sun spread over the hills surrounding Yucca Flats. As we sat huddled in our foxholes, many of us wondered what the next few minutes would hold for us. It seemed as if each minute were an hour long. Somewhere in the distance, a resonant voice came over the loudspeaker: five, four, three, two, one, then suddenly—the blast! The ground beneath us rumbled and shook; I glanced quickly upward to see what had happened to the massive steel tower which had housed the bomb in its vast framework. Only a few minutes before, it had stood proud and erect on the sands of the desert; now it was a twisted, tangled mass of steel, not even a third as high as it had been before the bomb was detonated.

The destruction caused by the blast was unbelievable; the devastation exceeded my wildest imagination. Everywhere I looked I saw the same desolate picture, with debris scattered around the bleak desert. The various objects that had been placed in the test area were gone or twisted so badly that it was hard to recall what that particular object had been before the blast. The tanks that had been

placed in the area had been thrown into the air as if they were toys. The model houses were in shambles, their roof tops scattered over the entire region. Glass and other debris was thick in the heavy dust created by the tremendous blast.

Although deadly, the gases from the bomb caused the most beautiful sight I have ever seen in my life. The sky was aglow with every imaginable color: purple, orange, red, yellow, blue, green, and many other shades of these colors. The multi-colored sky reminded me of an abstract mural, alive with color, yet strangely distorted.

As I look back on that beautiful yet frightful day in 1955, I am filled with a humble appreciation of our modern scientists. They have created a paradoxical type of weapon that is at the same time a temptation and a deterrent to war.

The Supreme Value of Knowledge

Frances Farnam

"THE supreme value of knowledge lies, not in the thrill which its discovery gives to the small band of experts, nor even in its practical usefulness, but in the enlargement and ennoblement of the human mind in general of which it is the cause." This statement, made by W. T. Stace in his essay, "The Snobbishness of the Learned," reveals a certain truth now becoming evident in the rapidly advancing world of today, a truth in which I firmly believe.

Knowledge in itself is familiarity gained by actual experience; hence, knowledge is the practical skill or perception of truth. The knowledge, for example, of the complicated process of trial and error in experimentation which resulted in the development of penicillin as a vaccine, is the primary value of a person's awareness of the substance. It is clearly evident that the scientists who perfected the highly beneficial antibiotic received a great deal of personal satisfaction from the knowledge that they had contributed immeasurably to the advancement of civilization. But is this thrill and satisfaction the end of, or is it the means for gaining the supreme evaluation of knowledge? So often, in our absorption in mastering the means, we lose track of the end which was our goal at the start.

The practical usefulness of penicillin, as an antibiotic drug which is a powerful bacterial destroyer of streptococci and meningococci, is definitely an indisputable benefit to the world in general. Its power for destruction of those bacteria which seek to incapacitate and ruin millions of persons each year is of utmost importance in science today.

Yet the researcher's and scientist's thrill and personal satisfaction, and the practical usefulness as a means of destruction of detrimental bacteria do not constitute the paramount measure of knowledge. Knowledge is valuable to man when his knowledge is applied to the comprehension of modern technology, his realization of the economic and social impact on society as a whole, and in strengthening his hu-

manistic values, both mental and physical, so that he will be able to cope with psychological, sociological, medical, and cultural changes which occur within his realm of existence.

This, then, is the supreme value of the knowledge which a learned man must obtain, comprehend, and put together in attaining good objectives in life.

Adjusting or Progressing?

Susan Blish

IT SEEMS to me that the present American educational system is turning out a highly "adjusted" aggregation of babbling babies. There is no real competitive stimulation for the superior student, only programs for helping the poor, sub-average student find his place in life. This is all fine and dandy and humane and all that, but meanwhile, as our nation grows steadily into a hodgepodge of well-adjusted ignoramuses, what becomes of our potential power—the above-average student? Becoming bored with the "adjustment" program, and finding nothing to stimulate his imagination, he is likely to drop out of school and spend the rest of his life piddling around in some mediocre job. Who is it that suffers? Why our nation does, of course!

From my own experience in high school, I know that this "adjustment" program is *the* thing! The constant drive was to create a program which would not be too highly competitive for the sub-average student. All of our honor rolls were discontinued, thus exterminating the stimulus for academic achievement. There was no need to work hard; no one knew it anyway! What was the reason for this? Merely to protect the poor student from developing an inferiority complex seemed to be the predominant reason.

To me, high school should be the place where an individual is stimulated in enough fields to the extent that he becomes intensely interested in developing his special talents—which everyone has. I strongly believe in segregating education according to intelligence. Separate the geniuses from the average and below-average intellects. This plan has many beneficial aspects. First, the genius will be stimulated by the challenge of his fellow genius students and will be more apt to develop his own ideas fully. Secondly, the average student will also be in a class where his ideas will readily be accepted by the rest of the group. If mixed, these two groups tend to act as forces against each other. By this I mean that the average student becomes afraid to express his ideas in the presence of a far superior intellect, and the genius, likewise, refrains from developing his ideas in hopes that he might be accepted as a "regular guy." But this segregational idea can't be had in America. "Why, didn't you know? That's undemocratic," say today's educators, who are influenced by the demanding will of the common, ignorant populace. No, we can't do that; only the Russians can do that!

What happens next? The babied high school student comes to college, dragging his apron strings behind him. He has never had the occasion to mature. There had always been someone there to tell him what to do, how to do it, and to smooth over the hurts if it went wrong. What possibilities are there for the college professors? Do they dare acquaint these happily "adjusted" students with the real facts of life, or must they continue this asinine "adjustment" program?

At any rate, our educational system needs a shot of something to get its wheels rolling again. With our present system, our only hope is that the Russians are laughing themselves to death as we "adjust" and they progress!

The Locket

Linda Heidelman

HE HAD been at Kenmore almost a year now. How he had looked forward to coming! He could remember how he had lain awake at night picturing every wonderful phase of college life and becoming more and more excited as his first day drew nearer. He had walked through these same gates less than a year ago, and he had looked up at them filled with joy and excitement. Now he hated them. The heavy twisted iron which had once seemed so majestic and full of opportunity now seemed to stand as huge black misshapen masses.

Craig glanced back with a shudder at the monsters, then turned in the shadows toward York Hall. He hurried to his room and quickly shut the door behind him. Sitting down at his desk, he opened his organic chemistry book. He began to read determinedly. The subject was not his favorite, nor his easiest, but he had to do well on the next test. He knew that medical schools accept only the best students.

As the clock ticked off the minutes, Craig's mind began to wander. He was tired, and he rose and stretched his tall, thin body, then sank onto the edge of his bed. He pushed an unruly lock of blond hair back from his forehead, and rubbed his pale, tired blue eyes. The day had been very long. He had been in class most of the day, and then he had worked six hours in the local hardware store. On his way back to the dorm, he had stopped to help Dave Cartwright with his trigonometry. Dave was a nice kid, and he was having quite a bit of trouble, so Craig spent as much time as he could trying to help him.

Craig lay back on the bed. He reached into his pocket and withdrew a small gold key chain. From it dangled a tiny gold locket. It was scratched and worn from many years of wear, but on the inside the picture was fresh and clear. Craig's mother had had it taken only a few months before her death two years ago. The face in the picture was tired and drawn, and the thin lips were pulled apart in a

weak smile. The eyes, dull and pale, were the clearest sign of the last few hard years of her life. She had worked endlessly trying to care for her son. She had lain awake in the night, listening for footsteps at the door. She never knew when they would come, or to whom they would belong. Often it was her husband, who would come in in a drunken rage. How many times she had thrown herself in front of him in an effort to keep him from harming their son. Occasionally other footsteps would be heard at the door, and she would find police officers searching for her husband. Years of this waiting and suffering had left their mark, which was quite evident in the picture. But when Craig looked at the locket, he did not really see the face in the picture; he heard only her soft, reassuring voice and imagined her protective arms so gently around him. To Craig, his mother had been love, tenderness, and security. Now, when he was tired or troubled, he would find himself taking her locket and searching for that same security.

He now rubbed the thin golden heart between his pale, sensitive fingers. His fatigue had passed, and his body lay relaxed and motionless; but his mind was spinning with a myriad of thoughts. He found himself listening for the other boys. It was after midnight, and they should be coming in before long. He could not picture them individually; to him they were all alike, as if they had been cast out of a common mold. They all had the same loud, senseless laugh, the same vulgar mouth, and the same worthless ideas. They would all come in joking and laughing, and if Craig got near enough he knew he would be able to catch the sickening odor of liquor. They would burst into his room, and never give him a moment of peace.

Craig did not have long to wait. The other boys came in, their laughs vividly reminding him of his father. Tonight was just like any other. The boys had their same laughs, jokes, tales of wild girls and petty thefts, and plans for the next day's exams with wholesale cheating. They thoughtlessly teased Craig about his studying and his work. "Why wear yourself out studying?" they asked. They had the most complete system of cheating on the East Coast. They felt that it was ridiculous to work. They let their "old men" foot the bills. After all, it was their fathers' ideas that the boys should go to college. They pushed Craig to join them and have some fun. They told him that he was a fool, and if he had any sense at all he would join them tomorrow night. He mumbled a hollow "I doubt it" as they left the room. One of the boys put a stolen copy of the next day's chemistry test on the desk and sauntered out. Craig went to the desk, picked up the test, crushed it into a small ball, and tossed it into the wastebasket. All of this was done quite automatically, as it had been for the past year.

Resuming his seat at the desk, Craig once again tried to focus his attention on his chemistry. However, within a few minutes the page faded beneath his eyes. First one thought and then another

would creep from the shadows of his mind into momentary consciousness, then sink back into oblivion. He saw first the weak, gentle smile of his mother, then heard the jolly laughs of the dorm boys. Occasionally the horrible thought of failing the exam would descend upon him. With his head aching and mind exhausted, he tumbled into bed and set his alarm for two hours later. Perhaps a little nap would help.

Sleep would not come. He tried to review in his mind the chemical equations which might be covered on the test. He could remember nothing. He began to think of the time which he had spent helping Dave Cartwright. Why had he wasted the time? Dave would probably fail most of his courses anyway. If he had only studied! Craig lay in a miserable semi-conscious state for nearly an hour. He weakly examined one idea again and again. Suddenly he rose and made his way to the wastebasket. He searched among the contents until his fingers closed about the examination papers. He straightened the crumpled papers and began to read. Searching blindly in his text for the answers, he quickly noted them in the margin of the test. Then he began to memorize mechanically.

Craig walked into the classroom the next morning in somewhat of a daze. He took his seat and waited for the instructor to pass out the examination papers. When he received his, he leafed through it quickly. He had a sickening fear that it would not be the same one. It was, and he began to write. He had answered nearly all of the questions when a terrible feeling of guilt seized him. A wave of nausea passed over him, and he began to feel dizzy. His mother's face appeared before him, and he could feel the locket in his pocket burning into his skin. He gathered up his papers, placed them on the instructor's desk, and hurried blindly from the room. When he reached the outside, the fresh air seemed to clear his head. As he walked along, the locket was like a heavy weight in his pocket. He took it out, looked at it, and then quickly replaced it as he began to feel guilt surge over him once more.

That evening Craig wandered about his room restlessly. When the boys passed by on their way out, they asked him to join them as they usually did. He started to refuse, and then he hesitated. Perhaps it would do him some good to get out for a while. He reached for his coat and snapped out the light. He started down the hall when something made him stop. He went back to his room, reached into his pocket, and placed the tiny gold heart on his dresser. Turning quickly, he hurried to join the others.

It was late when Craig went to bed that night. As he thought back over the evening, he felt as if he had been a mere observer. Someone else had looked like him, dressed like him, and used his name. It couldn't have been Craig! It couldn't have been! But it was. What was he doing; what was happening to him? As he lay in the dark, he could see the locket shining faintly on the dresser where it caught a ray of moonlight from the window. He turned over

quickly and buried his face in the pillow. He slept fitfully.

Several weeks passed very slowly. Craig had shut himself in his room in an attempt to force himself to study. He would succeed for a while, but when he heard the boys leave, he would think of those few hours of complete freedom which he had felt when he had joined them before. He had experienced feelings of guilt, but at times he began to feel that it might be worth it. As a result, he had gone with them again several times. He was beginning to enjoy himself. He would come back to his room, laughing and whistling, and be completely content until he saw the locket. It seemed to cry out to him, "Don't, Craig! Be good; don't be like your father!" Craig began to leave it behind more often. He again accepted a stolen examination paper. Perhaps it would be easier this time. And it was.

The other boys in the dorm no longer disgusted Craig. He began to listen to what they said, and he began to think. He never went to see Dave Cartwright any more. He would quickly turn his head when he saw Dave on the campus. After all, you couldn't waste all of your time on other guys. You had to look out for yourself. Let Dave look for some other fool to mother him. He had more important things to do.

Craig tried to get back into his old routine, but he couldn't. He would force himself to think of his mother; he would hold her locket in his hand for hours at a time. He was miserable; waves of shame engulfed him. Just when he felt that he would climb out of this sea of wrongdoing, he would find himself slipping back, deeper and deeper. Perhaps he was simply no good, just like his father. But his mother had had so much faith in him. He couldn't let her down. He couldn't!

Late one night he lay alone in his room. Perhaps the boys were right, he thought. The world was changing. With all the talk of atomic missiles and hydrogen bombs, who knew how long this earth would even be here? Life was too short to wear yourself out. When you are young, it is time to have fun. Why should he spend hours studying when a few minutes with the "system" would have the same effect? If he were careful, no one would know. You had to look out for yourself these days. People weren't going to do it for you. Goodness and honesty didn't always pay the best dividends. Things just weren't like that any more. But what about his mother? She said he was a good boy, and wasn't he? He had tried to live up to what she wanted, and wasn't that a good sign? Craig struggled. His head throbbed and his flesh burned. The hot, heavy air seemed to surround him and hold him prisoner in his bed. He got up and dressed. Perhaps a walk would make him feel better. He went to his dresser, fumbled in a drawer, withdrew the locket, and hurried out.

Kenmore's campus was deserted. He walked through the hated iron gate and along the street. The main section of town was brightly

lighted. The neon signs extended their glowing brilliance in a vain attempt to attract some notice from the night. It was a false sense of activity, however, for the shops were empty inside. How like some people they were! Bright and inviting on the outside, but with nothing to offer within. As he wandered along, his exhausted mind feebly moved back and forth between two ideas. He felt that he had reached the fork in the road which he had been approaching for the past year. Now the need for his own sanity had forced him to choose a definite direction. He took a deep breath, straightened his thin shoulders, and proceeded to the edge of town.

The river ran as a huge black snake through the night. Craig walked onto the bridge and stared down into the murky depths of the waters. He felt the night close about him, and he became conscious only of his own plight and the silent waters below. He slowly reached into his coat and withdrew the locket. One deft move—that would be all it would take. He would be free. There was a gentle splash in the water, and the ripples faded slowly and sadly into the night.

The "Indispensable Opposition" on the Campus

David Kiefer

IN "THE INDISPENSABLE OPPOSITION," author Walter Lippman claims that effective opposition is necessary to increase the wisdom of a wise person, as well as to increase the power of a powerful country. On the college campus, opposition is also indispensable in developing intelligent and trained graduates.

College students receive opposition from four different sources. The most apparent opposition is provided by their instructors. If the students do not achieve proficiency in the subject being taught, the instructor opposes the student's educational progress by assigning him a failing grade. Parents can be a strong opposing force if they demand that a certain level of success be maintained to qualify for continued financial support or for special gifts. Friends and fellow students are potentially strong opposition. Those friends who have been successful in college frequently show disgust for poor academic performance, which induces a greater effort on the part of the floundering student to do well. The opposition derived from friendship can also work in reverse if a particular group of friends is made up of students who scorn those achieving above-average grades. Finally, there are campus rivals who present the only situation of pure opposition. The rival attempts to gather for himself whatever honors are at stake, and by doing so stimulates the competing student's desire to excel.

When a student has these opposing forces to contend with, the expected result is increased effort and higher achievement. Actu-

ally, this opposition, which is every bit as indispensable to the college student as it is to the world leaders, only seems to be partially effective. There are students who completely ignore the opposition provided by instructors, family, friends, and rivals. They drift along at whatever slow pace appeals to them, completely uninspired by the challenges they face. The opposition is there in sufficient force to provide excellent learning conditions, but too many students lack the initiative and self-respect to improve their own standing by battling the opposition.

The number of students who vacate their college classrooms before they have received a diploma is over fifty per cent of the number who entered college as freshmen. This is cause for some alarm, because the number of these students gives some idea of the number who ignore the indispensable opposition. Without leaders who recognize the importance of opposition, the continued existence of our democracy is questionable.

Superiority or Snobbery?

Anne Hatfield

As a general rule, schools in Europe differ greatly from those of the United States in method and curriculum. Having spent most of my life abroad, I attended English-speaking schools of international character, each requiring acclimatization to environment and curriculum, and most of all to teachers. One of our English teachers was a tall, straight-backed young Scotsman, graduated B.A., M.A. with first honors from Cambridge. He wasted no time in making our imbecility apparent; everybody cringed when Mr. T. grew the slightest bit irritated. Throughout the upperclasses his reputation was notorious. It was reported, and we later experienced its truth, that he assigned sonnets, Spenserian stanzas, blank verse, ballads, term papers, and scores of other "nasty" things to be written by his poor "illiterate" students.

Mr. Ian Goodwin MacDonald Taylor was armed with a dry British wit that was usually sarcastic, often cynical, and sometimes caustic; and he made ample use of it. His colleagues (other teachers) were all too aware of his superiority. "All one has to do is walk through any section of Rome, Florence, Assisi, or Siena with Mr. Taylor, and he'll tell you who lived and died in every house for the asking," one teacher was heard to remark. This may be a slight exaggeration; however, his students were also aware of his superiority over the rest of the faculty. He loved Italy, Mozart, food, good company, good conversation, good books, good music, and himself. He had studied voice and had a pleasant baritone, more powerful in the classroom than on stage. Despite nine or ten years in Italy, he was still British in speech and manners, except when he was with good Italian friends. He had a flair for pleasing dignitaries, and a talent for getting himself invited to dinner.

He frequently came to class unprepared, but still managed to keep us awake. We enjoyed him; together we struggled through Chaucer (and before examination time many of us spoke, or attempted to speak, nothing but the English of that period, as far as the glossary provided words), Shakespeare, Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth and others, and sought to write intelligible essays "avoiding the use of 'nice,' 'etc.,' and other ready-made expressions."

To him 'intellectual' conversation came naturally, and yet we understood him perfectly. He scoffed and mocked our pitiful nescience, and again and again repeated: "the only thing you can do as a beginning, is to read, read, read." It depended upon us as individuals to decide what is genuinely valuable in life. All he could do was teach, he said: "It's entirely up to you." And we would feel extremely small. His natural display of knowledge and frequent digression served to stimulate and motivate us. He often emphasized that the average man on the street did poor justice to the vast vocabulary of the English language, employing only a few hundred words. Expression of the individual is of the utmost importance, and if he considers what he has to say as being worth saying, he will endeavor to do so in the clearest possible manner. "Be l-u-c-i-d," he would articulate. He favored Simplicity and Transparency, and as much Fluidity and Variety as we could possibly coax from ourselves without destroying meaning or being superfluous. Working, for the most part, through his humor, he sent more of us than he probably estimated, scampering to libraries, concerts, museums, lectures; and we were usually grateful. Mr. T. was our George Lyman Kittredge; he taught us to think for ourselves, perhaps not brilliantly, but one must admit it is an achievement.

Was Mr. Taylor a snob? Our faculty was comprised of all sorts of curious people, and I would venture to say that nearly everyone was a snob in some particular. Taylor was definitely superior, an intellectual stagnating among his inferiors. His manner was often affected, possibly because of an unconscious sense of insecurity. His erudition extended to small details; we discovered ourselves learning many things for their own sake, and gradually learning to discriminate and select. It gives one a somewhat good feeling to know that he has concluded something through his own selection, discrimination and thought, even if he never is entirely satisfied with himself. Many of us were satisfied, but some of us had quickly observed that self-satisfaction was a sign of deterioration into mediocrity, which was the very thing we were attempting to combat.

As time progressed, Mr. T. became kinder. Everyone respected and esteemed him, and we found him actually a compassionate and understanding person. A bachelor, he was asked once in class when he was going to marry, and he answered, "Like Elizabeth I of England, I find I must retain the balance of power, in this case, between the eleventh and twelfth grade girls."