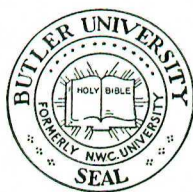


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*Butler University*

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Vol. XXIX

May, 1962 No. 2

## The Coed

Priscilla Thomas

“U<sup>M</sup> . . . could I please borrow another cigarette,” Felicia asked gingerly.

“Oh . . . sure!” remarked the tall girl to her left as she pushed the bright package across the shiny table top.

“I must owe you a pack by now,” Felicia smiled as she spoke, “but day after tomorrow when I get my allowance, you’ll be rich . . . I mean \$16.50 worth!”

“Yea,” answered the tall girl.

“I don’t know what they expect me to exist on . . . \$25.00 every two weeks . . . it’s ridiculous. Some weeks I spend that much on things I run out of like soap and hair spray and fingernail polish.” She ignored the boy to her right as he held forth a shiny object and lit her cigarette.

“Anyway,” she rattled on, “I am just going to call them collect tonight and tell them that I have got to have a little more money!”

“What for now?” asked the tall girl.

“Oh, Jan . . . so I can finish paying you back the \$70.00 I borrowed for my green dress . . . and so I can buy some stuff to go with those three dresses Mother sent out for warm weather . . . they are really darling . . . God knows how she picked them out.”

“When did she send . . .,” Jan started to ask, but Felicia interrupted.

“My parents are so middle class . . . I don’t know how they can be so naive. And I can’t even wear that dress until I get those gold pumps in the French Shoppe window.”

“I loaned you my pale green linen pumps,” Jan remarked casually.

“I know that! But the gold shoes are what the dress needs. You can’t just wear any shoes with *that* dress,” Felicia added.

“On you,” Jan remarked just as casually as before, “any dress with any heels would look good.”

Another girl approached the table. “Well, hello, there,” Felicia mused, “I thought you were dead.”

“No, just busy,” the newcomer laughingly answered.

“Well, you and Jan are always so busy . . . you can’t even talk to me . . . Anyway, did you ask your mother about if I could stay with you Saturday night, so I don’t have one o’clock hours?” she queried.

“Well . . .” the girl’s voice dropped.

“Forget it,” Felicia snapped, letting her eyes turn away. Then she examined the pack of cigarettes.

“Take it,” the tall girl suggested.

“Are you sure you have enough?” Felicia asked.

“Oh, of course,” Jan replied.



"Okay." Felicia paused only a moment. "Jan, can I use your car tomorrow for my hair appointment?"

"What time?" Jan asked.

"At 3:30," she answered.

"Well, I have to be downtown at work at 12:30," Jan warned peacefully.

"I know," Felicia continued, "but I could drive you down and then use the car."

"Okay," Jan said, "I'll see you here at 12:00 tomorrow."

"Okay," Felicia remarked as she turned and pushed herself away from the table. Over her shoulder she spoke in a brittle tone as she picked up her books.

"Please do something quick about Saturday night," she spoke bitterly to the newcomer, who had just sat down. "And call me when you get in later . . . Okay? I don't care where I have to sleep, but I have to get out of this hole this weekend," Felicia called over the din of the room.

## Party Girl

Linda Oklitz

GLANCING across the room crowded with noisy, drinking people, Chris noticed a pale young man sitting alone in a corner. He was extremely thin and his cigarette smoke floating toward the lamp gave his complexion a bluish tinge. He seemed almost unreal. He sat there so quietly taking all in, but not sharing in the group's hilarity.

Chris had never seen him before. Something about this strange young man appealed to her, so she made her way through the boisterous company to the chair where the blue gentleman was calmly reclining.

"You must be new around here?"

The young stranger turned his head toward her.

"Did you know that you've got green eyes! Beautiful! I don't believe I've ever seen eyes that green—why they're the shade of a cool, foamy grasshopper."

"I really don't know whether to thank you or to compliment you on your line," he countered with a sly smile.

"Well, I didn't mean to trespass on your privacy!"

"And who said anything about privacy? I didn't say a word about privacy or trespassing or anything of the kind. Now, let's get down to something important—like what's your name?"

"Chris Thompson. And yours, honey?"

"Joe Burns. I'm a 'would-be' writer. What's your line?"

"Fortune-hunter."

"Beg-your-pardon?"

"Fortune-hunter. In other words, I'm on my own safari, sweetie, with big game in mind. Care to be my guide?"



"What's in it for me?"

"You said you were a writer, didn't you or rather a 'would-be' writer? Well, I supply the material and you write."

"Care for a drink, Chris?"

"Manhattan, lova."

"Hey, George! One Manhattan and one Scotch and Soda, please."

"You say 'please' to a nigger?"

"I learned that you always say please when you ask someone for something."

"How quaint! Oh me, I am getting tired. Been in town long, Joe?"

"Only about six weeks. The Gafneys were the first people I met here. Really fine people, I'd say."

"Well, Pete's O.K. in my book, but that Helen . . ."

"Now, let's don't get into any of this small town gossip. I happen to like Helen."

"You would!"

"Now, what was that supposed to mean?"

"You're male, aren't you? I have yet to see a male who didn't like that cold-fish. She absolutely snows them with that Southern chawm of hers. I wouldn't doubt she'd 'chawm' 'em right into the bedroom if it weren't for her watch-dog husband."

"Sweetheart, you're a typical five-letter woman. I can find lots of those around. Unfortunately, they're not all quite as obvious about it. Good-luck, doll. You'll need it."

With that, the tall, thin stranger lifted his gaunt frame from the overstuffed chair and headed toward the door.

"Well, wonder what's eating him? And I thought he looked likely!"

## Skating

Priscilla Thomas

WITH SPRING better days came. They had bluer skies, and the sun used to shine on trees and drip from the branches when they were still wet. And in the spring, everyone skated. Of course, I skated alone more than with the other children, because I only knew two of them on my block, and besides, I could go faster and do more of what I wanted when I skated alone. Skating was my first love, except that I used to like to bounce a ball . . . thud, thud . . . against a sunny and yet dark red brick chimney. The lot was very narrow there, and that stopped me from making long throws against the side of the house, but I still loved playing with that rubber ball.

But when the afternoons were nice and when the sidewalks were not too wet, I would often skate for an hour or so after school. The sidewalk was long and stretched for three blocks. Parts of it were

pebbly and parts smooth and I could never miss all the cracks, and when I'd hit one, I'd always think—I wonder if it's true; I wonder if Mother's back will break—but of course, it never did and after awhile I learned to forget all about the silly little poem. In fact, I liked jumping on cracks.

Some of the blocks in the sidewalk were hollow and made funny sounds when I jumped on them. Others were solid and I got so used to going along and hearing a regular song that I would feel the beat of it in my bed at night before I would fall asleep—hollow, solid, grind, rurr . . . rurr . . . grind, hollow, solid, bump, hollow, bump, grind, grind, rurr . . . rurr . . . —. I could be anything I wanted to be when I skated . . . a princess, the wife of the President of the United States, an actress, a singer. I made up so many make-believe stories, and some were about pretend people, but most were about me. They were all make-believe.

Mother used to yell a little when I skated, because she thought I wasted so much time doing it. But I made good grades and picked up my underthings, and she couldn't say much. A lot of the time she was gone, and Ophelia, our skinny, pale-brown maid (the only good maid, mother would say, that we ever had), didn't really care what I did as long as I stayed out of the living room with my shoes on and praised her housework and told her how well she had polished the ugly fire irons. And so some days, I would skate for hours and hours and hours.

I didn't even think about anything sometimes when I skated—I simply knew that I loved it. I loved the feel of the sidewalk rolling past underneath me; I loved the feel of balancing weight from left to right and left to right and left to right; I loved the feel of stopping and reaching out my leg without even thinking about it to turn myself into my own sidewalk which ran to the mud-spattered yet clean-looking white front porch. I loved all that. I liked pretending . . . I always had made up stories . . . but on skates everything else passed me and as the houses and the grass skated by me and I stood there hanging between cement tops and sky bottoms, I could make up the best stories!

One day, one of my best friends at school (I was in the sixth grade) told me about a roller-skating rink, and it all seemed like some television program to me. They played music there, she told me, and the girls all went on Friday nights, and if you had a short skirt you wore it and if not you wore what you had and you learned to roller-skate and sometimes the junior high boys came up and skated with you and put their arms around your waist, and it was most fun, and I wanted to go so much.

I laughed myself all the way home that day and I missed all the cracks, and I ran panting into the kitchen and told Mother, and she said "No." Daddy said "No" too, but he told me why . . . something about the fact that people who go to roller-skating rinks are not always nice and that I could certainly not go there with other



sixth grade girls on Friday nights.

I didn't cry, because I had learned long ago that crying was a waste of salt water, and so I just walked out to the garage and took down the dull silver skates from the hook in the wall and sat on the sun-warmed cement driveway that made my bones ache with cold after I stood up, and I put on my skates. Up and down, back and forth, I went, until Mother called me in for dinner. My tears hurt in my chest, but I knew there was no reason for crying.

Daddy loved me very much, though, and he did not forget my question about the skating rink. One morning he woke me up early and told me that I could get up and get dressed if I wanted to have some fun. Daddy had been working on a church building—"roughing it in" he called it—so that the church members could save money and send more to the missionaries sooner. And he said that if I wanted to take my skates and be very good that I could skate inside the church which was not at all finished, and use it for my own rink. I wanted to go, so I dressed and took my skates and put the dusty skate key on its twine around my neck and went with Daddy and Mother in the car several miles away.

When we got to the church, I noticed that from the outside it was very ugly and looked square and gray and that the grass around was beaten down. The sidewalks were lovely, but a little too rippled to make for smooth stops and turn-about. I told my father about the ugly outside of the church, and he told me to be quiet and reverent and that someday, when it was all finished, it would be very beautiful.

Inside, there was just one large space with doors leading in four directions. It must have been as big as the downstairs of our house without walls and there was a cement floor smoother than any sidewalks that I had ever seen and it ran down to a sort of stage at the front. The walls were all cement, and there was cement dust on everything and smells like insulation before it's nailed up and paint before it's brushed on and stale smoke. Daddy opened two windows and then told me to be careful and not hit anything but to have fun. I sat down on a large paint can—the lid was not on tight, because it hissed underneath me—but it was a seat, and I fastened on my skates and then stood up.

It seemed very funny, because I went around and around and I didn't have to go just back and forth and up and down. I could go sideways and back, sideways and forward, sideways and around, to a window, away from a window, and then I would go crashing down the floor into the stage. Daddy would yell at me, but he wasn't really mad, because he knew as well as I did that this was the most beautiful private roller-skating rink in the world.

That building always felt good inside, because it was not hot and not cold and spring would push itself through the windows like a soft blanket. So many spring Saturday mornings I would go there with my Daddy! He and a close friend—I called him "Uncle Dale"



—would work outside, and I would talk to them only to get dimes to take down to the drugstore on the corner and buy ice cream cones. And then I would go back and skate.

I was a housewife—here was my living room along the wall between these two windows, there was the dining room in the middle, the kitchen was on the other side, between the two white paint cans and the short boards without nails, and the bedrooms ran across the front next to the stage and between more stained windows. Or maybe I was a ballerina—behind me was a stage full of young men in costumes of green velvet and gold braiding, and to my left was the Queen of England and Prince Philip. In front were the persons who came to see me, but my parents were high in a box seat crying a little. Music began in my head and I hummed and I danced . . . not very well, of course, for I had never taken lessons, but on roller-skates you can pretend you are dancing anyway with smooth cement underneath and a white ceiling above me.

After a while, they did something to the walls and made them pale green, and added a pale brown altar. And of course, these things meant that I must be more careful. I couldn't bump into the walls and when I skated down the floor, I had to reach my hands far out ahead of my stomach and grab the altar and jump up on my toes before my skates bumped into it. My shoes got scuffed, but I only smiled when Mother would scream at me, for my home-room teacher had told me something about responsibility and why it always went along with privilege, and I thought that it was my responsibility to dodge cans, and boxes, and cement bags, and pale green walls, and altars for the privilege of skating in that very beautiful rink.

Then one Saturday morning, Daddy didn't come into my bedroom, but I heard him moving around, and I slid into the kitchen pulling a dress over my shoulders. When I came through the door, I saw him there with his green trousers and his hat on, and I knew he was going to work at the church, because he never went around in those clothes on other days. I said "Daddy, aren't we going to church today?" And he said, "No . . . dear . . . not today. They are going to put in the flooring today and next week the pews and that means there won't be anyplace to skate. You just won't be able to waste your time there!" Then he laughed and patted me on the behind, and told me to go out and try the sidewalks for a while.

I never cried, because I had learned long ago that crying is a waste of salt water, and so I just went outside and picked up my rubber ball lying by the back door and bounced it—thud, thud,—against the side of the house. Just as I had started making up a beautiful story about me and the home-room teacher (I loved him then), my Daddy came out. He must have heard the thuds, because Mother said it always echoed in the house and sounded like someone was trying to knock it down. Daddy took two steps around the corner and said ". . . that ball—we could use that ball on top of the

steeple—we could paint it, cut it to fit . . .” He looked at it and let his fat fingers run over the blue and red smoothness of it. Then he said “. . . honey, could Daddy use this? I would buy you a new one next week, you know.” And of course, I could never refuse my Daddy anything and so I said “Yea.” And he took the ball and I walked with him out to the pick-up truck and waved good-by.

Then I dragged back to the house and there was nothing to do, because I had no ball to throw against the chimney and roller-skating on the pebbly, cracked, noisy, string sidewalk after my beautiful church-rink was like drinking milk after you had tasted Coca-Cola.

Later, Daddy took me by the church, and my ball on the steeple was beautiful and it did add to the whole church—Daddy said all colonial churches need balls on their steeples. We went there on Sundays for a while, and I used to sit in the auditorium, near where my kitchen had been. Daddy would remind me to be quiet and bow my head and pray and listen to the scripture and the sermon.

And that was not very hard for me to do, because I would day-dream . . . I had nothing against churches, but I could never stop thinking about what a beautiful roller-skating rink that building could have been.

## Three Time Loser

Margaret Hiles

THE SIDEWALK ended at the alley where last night's rain had turned the hard-packed earth into slime. This made walking difficult because I wanted to keep my new shoes shiny. I picked my way along, trying to find something solid to step on. I raised my eyes only long enough to look at the house numbers. Finally, across the street, I saw it. The number was the same as the one on the slip of paper in my pocket. I stopped a minute and stared at the house. It was a small white bungalow, now situated in a sea of mud. Two decaying planks led from the street to the steps. The porch was wooden and high with two cement blocks on each of the four corners holding it up. Around the porch was a narrow board railing. At the side a large square addition gave the house a peculiar shape. I started on, crossed the street, walked up onto the porch, put down my suitcase and pulled at my clothes. From the inside of the house I could hear voices but the minute I knocked they ceased abruptly. I heard steps and the door opened with a squeak. A tall, gaunt man with a bony, sallow-complexioned face stood before me.

“Yes?” Then he saw my suitcase. “If you're selling something, we don't want any.” He began to close the door.

“Sir, I'm—my name is Will Glaze. Warden Bean sent me here. He said—”

The man looked at me. “Yes, I know. I forgot you were coming today. Come in.”

I stepped into a dark room, overcrowded with furniture. At



first I had the impression that everything was grey. My eyes became accustomed to the darkness and I saw maroon drapery at the windows and a maroon and black afghan thrown over the grey mohair davenport. Then I saw a woman standing at the door. She wore a printed housedress which was too tight for her, but otherwise she appeared neat and clean. Her face was puffy and tired but there was still some evidence of prettiness and vitality there.

"This is my wife, Mrs. Minty, and I am Mr. Minty. She didn't particularly want you to come, but I believe that one should always give the sinner another chance."

"Clarence!"

"I see no reason to color the facts for him. He has paid his debt to society and now he has the opportunity to make a clean new start. That's what you want, isn't it?"

"Yes, yes, that's it."

"We shall find plenty for you to do. Of course you will be expected to attend services."

"Services?"

"In my church. Surely the warden told you that much. You will have a room off the kitchen. We have one daughter, Magdalene. She's in church now. Alice, show him the room."

I picked up my suitcase and followed the woman. She had not said anything since Mr. Minty said she didn't want me there. I didn't know what to say either.

We walked through a small kitchen, down two steps and into a room crowded with only a cot and stand.

"I'm sorry. This is the best we have." She fussed with the bed coverlet.

"Madam, it is so much better than what I have had before."

For the first time Mrs. Minty really looked at me, then she left the room quickly.

I sat down on the bed. These were funny people. They didn't even ask me why I had been in prison, but then they probably knew that. I got up and walked to the window to see what was outside. The sound of voices began again in the living room. I realized that they had been arguing.

"I really do not care to discuss it further. Magdalene has a full life now. She should be happy."

"That's not it. She needs more freedom and some friends. Do you know she has never brought one person into this house whom she—"

"She has the whole congregation. She doesn't need others. Really, you have never talked this way to me and I do not like it."

I wished the walls weren't so thin or that they wouldn't talk so loud.

"She needs friends her own age. Not one of the congregation is young. Besides, you insist she come home immediately after school. It's no life for a young girl."



"All right. That is enough. She is your daughter after all, just like you. If you feel so strongly about it, she can stay out as long as she wishes if she does her work here. But she can not bring anyone here. I do not care to meet the friends she will make."

"How long have you been standing there eavesdropping, Magdalene?"

"I wasn't eavesdropping. It is only that I had never heard you speak that way before."

"I suppose you have heard it all. I have tried to bring you up right. Little help I have received from your mother. She wants you to have freedom. All right, but just see that you remember your teachings."

I decided I had heard enough. I was sure the family had forgotten me but felt as if they would not wish this to be heard by an outsider. I left my room, walked through the kitchen and entered the living room.

Mr. Minty saw me immediately. "Mr. Glaze! Magdalene, this is Mr. Glaze."

I turned to Magdalene and was quite surprised at the natural beauty of the girl. She looked . . . well, untouched. She had long taffy-colored hair and blue eyes, but when I looked into her eyes, they appeared more like the glass eyes of a doll than the eyes of a young girl. I noticed that they never changed expression. Her voice was low, almost childlike.

"My father says you are to live with us."

"Yes, that's right."

Mr. Minty interrupted, "He is not to be one of Magdalene's friends, however. Understand that."

Magdalene turned to her father and I finally saw a change come into her eyes. Was it hatred or fear?

The room at the side of the house was in reality Mr. Minty's church. During the next few months I went to many services there and helped in many ways. I noticed that the congregation was, indeed, mostly older people. I liked it when they sang the hymns and called out that they had been saved.

I cleaned the church every Saturday morning, getting down on my hands and knees and scrubbing the floor, dusting the seats and the pulpit and even washing the high small windows whenever they needed it. I had been happy these last months, really for the first time in my life and I seemed to get along well with everyone, even Mr. Minty. Mrs. Minty looked less tense and Magdalene had even talked to me once or twice. She now had a girl friend, Jean, to whom she seemed devoted.

As I was scrubbing the center aisle I happened to glance through the open door to the living room. The light streamed in the windows and onto a table with a bouquet of yellow daffodils in a crystal vase. The light caught the glass and sparkled. Then I heard someone come into the living room and Magdalene walked into the church.

She didn't see me.

"Hello."

She jumped.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to frighten you."

"Mr. Glaze. I thought my mother might be here."

"No, I haven't seen her. I am almost finished. Perhaps I could find her for you."

"Oh, no, it wasn't important."

She seemed somehow troubled and I realized that I had grown fond of this strange girl. I didn't like to see anything bother her.

"Have you seen Jean today?"

She looked sharply at me, "No, why?"

"Oh, I just wondered. When are you going to bring her here?"

"Papa wouldn't like that at all."

"On the contrary. I'm sure he would like to meet your friend."

The outside door opened and closed and presently Mr. Minty came into the church.

"Magdalene, where is your mother?"

"I was looking for her father."

"In here? With Will. I thought I told you once that you were to keep your distance."

"Mr. Minty, she just walked in. I haven't said over ten words to her in the whole time I've been here."

"See that it stays that way. Go see if you can find Mrs. Minty. I want to talk to Magdalene."

I wiped my hands and walked down the aisle but glanced back. Mr. Minty was standing directly in front of Magdalene, who was backed up against the pulpit.

"Your mother says you have a new girl friend. Don't you think you are—"

I closed the door.

All through the long summer I worked hard and in the evenings I usually took a little walk. As I was walking home I remembered the first time I had come down this street. Across the street stood the Minty's house. It now had a narrow cement sidewalk leading to the porch. The next thing I was going to do was make the porch more substantial. It was still propped up on the cement blocks and still had the narrow board railing. Even Mrs. Minty seemed to appreciate my willingness to work around the house.

I started on and I heard someone running behind me. I turned and saw Magdalene. She saw me and let out a gasp. I looked at her and saw that she had lipstick on. She was pretty and her eyes were no longer glass.

"You had better take the lipstick off before your father sees you."

She grabbed at her mouth. "I don't have any on."

"Now look, I'm not blind," I laughed.

"Please, you must promise, you won't tell." She was almost

crying.

"I'll not tell. It's none of my business."

She began looking through her pockets for a handkerchief and I took mine from my own pocket and handed it to her. We walked slowly up onto the porch. She was rubbing furiously at her mouth. "We had better stay here until you do a good job of removing it all,"

"Yes, I guess so." She smiled at me and I realized that it was the very first time I had made her smile.

"You're pretty when you smile."

"And not at other times?"

What was she doing now?

"Yes, all the time but you look—well—almost scared."

She laughed a little loudly and then remembered where she was.

"I'll have him down on us again, won't I?"

"I guess so. Your parents have been wonderful to me."

"Let's not talk of my parents. Let's talk about you, where you grew up and things like that."

I noticed that because Magdalene had been rubbing her lips vigorously, they had become naturally pink. I looked at them for a long time and then decided to do something. I picked up Magdalene's hand and she jerked it back angrily.

"What are you doing?"

"Don't you know?" I asked.

"No, I don't know. Don't you touch me."

"I'm sorry. I thought you wanted—"

"What? For you to paw me—you an ex-con—"

"That's not necessary," I said sharply.

"Now I'm sorry. I should never have said that. Can you forgive me?"

I grinned at her and finally she smiled at me again. She held out her hand and I took it.

"There, you're pretty again, all the time."

We both laughed. I took her arm abruptly and pulled her toward me. She pulled back, but I jerked her forward again. Again she pulled back but I didn't let go of her. She slapped my face hard with the other hand. It was so unexpected that I dropped her arm. She was off balance and fell backwards. I realized too late that she was going to topple over the board railing of the porch. She realized it too and screamed. I grabbed for her and caught only her dress front which tore away in my hands. I heard the scream and the splintering of the wood and then stood there dumbly looking at the still form on the ground below. She didn't move and her head was at an awkward angle.

The lights in the house came on and Mr. Minty walked out on the porch.

"What's going on?" Then he saw Magdalene.

"You've killed her, you've killed her."

Mrs. Minty ran out on the porch. "Oh no. Look, Clarence,



Magdalene's dress—there in his hands—and his face—”

Some of the neighbors had heard the scream and they had come to see what was wrong.

“She's dead all right. Better call the police.”

“He killed her.” Finally I realized that Magdalene was, indeed, dead and that I was being accused of killing her.

“No, it was an accident.”

But no one wanted to hear what really had happened. The police came and took me with them. As we were leaving, I looked back and the neighbors were taking Mr. and Mrs. Minty into the house.

They told me there was a provision for the state to hire me a lawyer. I didn't want a lawyer, particularly a state one. This time I was innocent and the judge would surely believe me. After all, why should I lie? Sure, I tried to kiss her but that didn't mean I pushed her off the porch. Why should I?

The cell door clanked open and I looked up.

“Mr. Glaze? I'm your lawyer, Bill Miller.” He held out his hand but I didn't take it.

“Look, I know I'm in a jam but when I tell the judge I didn't do it—”

“Do you realize, Mr. Glaze, the jam you are in? You're accused of murder. Now, from what I know of the case already, I believe you should plead guilty and—”

“Guilty? I didn't kill Magdalene. I won't plead guilty. Aren't you even going to listen to my side?”

“Yes, yes, but you see there is a mound of evidence against you and if you plead guilty and—”

“No, I won't do that and furthermore I don't need you.”

“What do you mean you don't need me? I'm your only hope. That's what I don't understand about you punks who think you can lead a pretty girl on—”

“I only tried to kiss her—”

“Kiss her. You with lipstick all over your handkerchief?”

“Find Jean. She'll know that we never—”

“No dice. There never was a Jean. You're it. I don't know why you fellows think you can go out into society and do anything—even murder. Well, this time it's double murder. Don't tell me you didn't know she was pregnant.”

## Family Picture

Mary Johnson

WHEN I grow up, I'm gonna be a witch—just like my Aunt Jenny. She's all the time tellin' us kids what witches're like. Aunt Jenny's got an apartment house and some of her boarders even moved out 'cause they said she was practicin' bein' a witch on them. When Mommy told Daddy, he just laughed and said the only thing wrong with those boarders was they couldn't spell.

Daddy never did believe Aunt Jenny was a witch. But then, he don't believe in Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny or the Tooth Fairy neither. Maybe that's 'cause he never gets no toys or eggs. He ain't got no teeth, so the Tooth Fairy can't help him much there. Well, anyway, Daddy and Aunt Jenny got into a fight last week at Aunt Jenny's birthday dinner. We'd just finished the cake and gone to the front room to get the family picture took. Aunt Jenny was in her rocker with Toby (he's our baby) on her lap. Suzy and Eddie (they're twins) were on one side of Aunt Jenny, I was on the other and Mommy and Daddy were in back. Just as the man was about to take the picture, Daddy said,

"Put that rag doll over on the couch until after the picture is taken, Susan. Where did she ever get a piece of junk like that, Mother?"

"I believe she made it, herself, out of one of your socks, Dear." Then the man told us to smile and he took the picture.

Mommy said, "Jenny, this will be the first picture you've ever had taken, won't it? There is that old oil portrait, but it's so dark."

Then Eddie asked, "How come you never had your picture took, Aunt Jenny?"

Well, course, I told him that witches never show up in a picture cause they're magic and Daddy got mad.

"There she goes again," he bellowed. "Laurie, how many times have I told you that there are no witches?"

"But Aunt Jenny's a witch, Daddy."

"Jenny, I haven't said much about telling the children all this poppycock because I never thought they would take it seriously. It looks like I was wrong. Did you know that Laurie has a whole jar full of finger nail parings? But that's not the worst. Most little boys like Eddie ride hobbyhorses. I've watched him wear out three brooms in the last month. The last straw came yesterday when I was trying to teach Toby to say Daddy. Oh, he said it all right. He spread his fingers out at me and gurgled, 'Abbdycadaddy!' Suzy's the only sensible one left and it's probably just a matter of time until she starts too. I've spoken to them and they won't pay any attention. Now I have had it, Jenny. Either you tell these children that witches are make believe or you'll have to stay away from them."

"How dull the world must be for you, Howard. You only believe what you can see. I will say this: there are things in this world of which people have no conception."

"Well, if that's your answer, get Jenny's coat, Mother, and I'll take her home."

Daddy made Aunt Jenny go home. All I could do was cry. Suzy got her dolly off the couch and Eddie asked her what the dolly's name was today (Suzy's always changin' it).

Suzy said, "Daddy." Then she asked Mommy where the sewin' basket was.

We didn't see Aunt Jenny for a whole week. Daddy was home

sick yesterday and he opened the mail when it came.

"Mother, here's the family photograph." Daddy tore the brown envelope open and he and Mommy looked at the picture.

"Look how my tweed jacket shows up. Best picture I've taken in years."

"But look, Howard. Jenny's not in it; she must have gotten up just before it was snapped."

"Well, for goodness' sake! What did she think we had a family picture taken for? Funny . . . I don't remember her getting up."

"Oh Howard, look at Toby!"

"That's funny; for a minute I thought he was SITTING IN MID AIR! THAT KID ISN'T SITTING ON ANYTHING!"

While Daddy was dialin' Aunt Jenny's number, he kept sayin', "No, no . . . it's not possible. There's no such thing . . . not possible." Daddy said all Aunt Jenny would do was cackle at him.

This mornin' I asked Daddy if he still minded if I was a witch when I grew up. He just said, "Why wait?"

## NEO-PANTHEISM

Somewhere underneath the sod  
A worm is digging dirt to God,  
And all the fishes which now swim  
Are spraying water to praise Him.

The flying birds and buzzing bees  
Add contrast to the standing trees.  
Thus God is in the world so calm,  
. . . But where goes God when drops a bomb!

PRISCILLA THOMAS



## St. Mary Le Port

Cynthia Barron

THE PRIESTS marched across the square with their hands carefully folded, their eyes straight ahead. Their long black robes camouflaged the preciseness of their movements, making it appear that they glided smoothly across the square. They advanced in rows, meticulously arranged in the form of a pyramid. Across from them, as rising high into a sky which reflected its pale gold coloring, appeared the steeple of the church called St. Mary Le Port. It dwarfed the priests below as a child dwarfs his tin soldiers. The priests remained unmoved in the face of the warm greens and blues and the fiery oranges that clustered about them, creating a rainbow of color that bounced from building to building and ended at the door of the steepled church. The priests turned and marched through the arched doorway. Their light, muffled tread seemed to say, "This is the greatest church that ever was or ever will be. Men search all their lives for what it holds, for happiness, for perfection. This is the greatest church that ever was or ever will be," murmured the slippered feet. "This is the greatest church; this is the greatest church." The buildings around them, where they slept and ate, echoed with the words. The gold-plated bell above the entrance rang them out gleefully. The rainbow that ended at the door shimmered and glowed at the words carved above the narrow, pointed entrance. "Men search all their lives for what it holds."

As each priest entered St. Mary Le Port, his heart pounded, and his blood rushed to his head. Covering the entire left wall of the church was a painting of Christ with His twelve disciples. They were seated around an immense block of granite inside four invisible walls supported by golden beams which suggested the steeple of St. Mary Le Port. Beyond these beams were mountains tinted a silver-blue by the setting sun and gently caressed by a silver-blue lake, which, though fathomless, appeared at first glance shallow. Two rowboats lay becalmed on the lake. The setting sun directed its pale light upon the figure of Christ. In front of Him stood a glass of wine and two pieces of torn bread. The disciples knelt in prayer, their heads pillowed on their hands. Jesus of Nazareth, one hand directed toward Himself, raised the other hand upward to where the arms of God stretched over them all. As Christ pointed His thumb and index finger at God, he seemed also to point with pride at the steeple of St. Mary Le Port, the greatest church that ever was or ever will be.

The priests padded silently out of the church, their annual visit over. They paused briefly to read again the inscription over the doorway. "This is the greatest church that ever was or ever will be. Men search all their lives for what it holds, for happiness, for perfection. This is the greatest church." Their awed eyes avidly fol-

lowed the outlines of rubble and debris heaped beside the door. The exterior walls were scarred by fire, severed by violence, marred by deep cracks. The steeple which Christ raised His hand to when He reached toward God, the steeple where the rainbow ended, sprawled on the hollowed ground. "This is the greatest church that ever was or ever will be. Men search all their lives for what it holds." The priests left the door ajar. St. Mary Le Port was only an empty shell.

## For the Sake of Self

Deborah Staiger

EVER SINCE man first formulated morals by which he felt he was intended to live, he has held selflessness to be a primary characteristic and goal of the worthwhile existence. We are condoned in seeking our own interests toward the end of self-preservation, but all our other efforts are supposed to be directed at helping our fellow man. Fine as this doctrine may sound, I regard it as inherently hypocritical. I find it increasingly disturbing to try to discern anything but self-satisfaction in mankind's seemingly altruistic actions; for men, even in their relations with others, have one basic drive—gratification of their own needs. Admittedly, the person who is centered upon others will find more of a welcome by society than a person who revolves about himself. As Benjamin Franklin said, "He that falls in love with himself will have no rivals." But I am concerned with the cause of generous deeds, not their effect. Herein lies one of life's greatest paradoxes: generous deeds are rooted in selfishness.

Some overt acts of kindness obviously have as their motives personal ego-raising; other benevolent efforts stem from more subtle desires to be accepted by humanity. In viewing the former we may look to the multimillionaire who donates thousands of dollars to an orphanage. This gesture is not only good public relations for him (assisting a helpless child is an infallible way to the public heart) but also a reassurance to his conscience. Such a philanthropist might reason, "Since I have patronized my fellow man so magnanimously, I must be quite a noble person." In contrast we could scrutinize the intentions of an unselfish missionary in Africa who sacrifices and toils so that the natives may lead fuller lives. When the veils of "Christian duty" and kindness to one's brother are brushed aside, a basic personality need shines dully beneath. The missionary's soul thrives on love gleaned from his work; it sustains his mind as food does his body. Such a personality need, which is satisfied by observance of the Golden Rule in humble and benevolent service, is, of course, more desirable than a need which requires the crushing of another's ego to elevate one's own. Yet we all act because of inner drives to preserve not only our bodies but also our morales. Spinoza



wrote in his *Ethics*, "The primary and sole foundations of virtue or of the proper conducts of life is to seek our own profit." Hence any altruistic action—indeed, any action of which I can conceive—has as its basis personal gain.

The compelling problem now becomes the differentiation between admirable and disagreeable manifestations of the soul's inner drive for fulfillment. How can the altruist be better-loved than the egotist if they both are actually self-seeking? The solution to this enigma is inextricably linked with another mystery not designed for man to comprehend: it is linked with the explanation of man's purpose for existing on earth. When we understand what our basic goal in life was meant to be, we will understand what determines the most acceptable personal needs. If, for example, we were created to progress materially, the man who has a drive to explore science or help others do so is at the summit of selfless endeavor.

Only one trait of mankind mars the smooth fabric into which I have woven all of humanity's efforts on earth. In my cold approach to even the most graciously-rendered of services, I have not provided for one man's instinctive, thoughtless risk of his own life to save another's. Here we may advance a theory which sounds a note of hope for the petty, selfish existence we seem to be leading. Perhaps all of mankind is one great Being exhibiting self-interest in its own entirety rather than in its component parts. We may all indeed be a part of the main to which John Donne refers in telling us, "No man is an island entire unto himself."

## A Logical Conclusion—Don't

David Mannweiler

TO THE average medical layman, the three days I spent in bed with a minor ailment several years ago would be nothing. But to me these few days marked a time when I became aware that I was suddenly allergic to the slightest dose of penicillin and had to give up all antibiotic drugs. This discovery seemed especially peculiar to me because until this time I had always taken my penicillin along with the best of the seventh-graders and had been able to hold the drug with no aftereffects. These were not facts that I particularly boasted about, but nevertheless, I did feel a certain sense of belonging in knowing I was accepted as being normal.

Heeding my mother's frantic call to save her from a child staying home from school, the family doctor, a man I trusted medically and hated financially, came to give me the penicillin shot that was intended to get me well as soon as possible. I looked forward to his visit with the same apprehension any twelve-year-old boy would have who knows he is about to be shot with a hypodermic needle in a very tender spot.



When the foul act was finished, the doctor and my mother walked to the door to say goodby. When she returned, her face foretold she had noticed a rather abrupt change in my appearance. Small things—like swollen cheeks that were slowly closing my eyes, swollen ears that were breaking out in hives, and little red spots all over my exposed arms and legs—caught her attention.

The doctor returned immediately to the scene of his crime and announced his belief that my reaction was merely a passing thing and I would soon get over it. For the next few days as I lay in bed and scratched, this bold statement gave me much comfort. To test his theory the doctor gave me a small dose of diluted penicillin several weeks later and immediately I became quite bloated again. He firmly resolved that I was completely allergic to penicillin and should never again take another shot of the drug.

My allergy problem with penicillin was mentioned to a close friend of the family who is a vice-president of the Eli Lilly Drug Company. This self-dubbed angel-of-mercy presented me with a small vial of a new wonder-drug that was supposed to be as effective as penicillin but lacked the aftereffects of the drug. This new serum had been tested all over the country on penicillin-allergic people, and of the thousands of tests only four people had been found who could not take the drug.

A small injection of this drug found me to be number five.

It was at this point that I swore off all antibiotics. My idea that all penicillin shots would result in the same reaction was now endorsed by several doctors and the results of several experiments. They carried their warnings so far that I am now afraid to take even aspirin for fear of being branded a major scientific observation case and placed in a glass bottle for all to observe.

The Lilly executive attempted to point out the advantages of my condition such as the almost certain medical discharge from the Army because of the lack of activities a bloated soldier can perform, the many occasions my condition will lend itself to stopping a friend from launching into details on his latest operation, and the idea that it marks me a medical wonder. The idea of being recognized in my own lifetime, even as a medical wonder, has some merit, I suppose, but this too is of little consolation when I remember those awful three days when I first discovered the nature of my condition.

## Are All Times the Same?

Paula Williams

RALPH WALDO EMERSON'S forceful statement, "This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it," can be substantiated by numerous examples drawn from history. Beginning with a conspicuous instance, the great 200-year Pax Romana, or Roman Peace, comes to mind. For centuries before the ascension of Octavian as the first emperor of all Rome, fighting and bickering existed both internally and externally throughout the republic. At the same time that uprisings of the oppressed plebians were causing unrest and fear among the Italians, unwelcome Roman colonists on the edges of the republic were being slaughtered by their foreign neighbors. There were consuls and even general-dictators before Octavian's time who had their chance to end the strife. Yet peace never came until he, Octavian, took control. Why?

As Emerson would explain were he here to do so, Octavian knew what to do with the time. And indeed he did! He wisely ended the rivalry of his generals knowing that such rivalry had caused much of the turmoil that the republic had felt. He stationed his legions in the trouble spots of the new empire rather than trusting to luck that he could send them to their stations in time if they were needed. Both of these moves brought him closer to his goal of ending the external conflicts. In solving Rome's internal strife, he lightened the burden of taxes, replaced unfaithful administrators who exploited the people with more honest, hand-picked men, and built marvelous public works so that his subjects had such luxuries as baths, centralized heating systems, even piped-in water. The result? Probably the longest span of time in Western history ever to elapse without seeing a major war.

And further upholding Emerson's thesis, some centuries later, during medieval times, Dante, the Italian poet, appeared. Born into an era so devoid of artistic or literary culture as to be termed the "dark ages," the author produced work worthy of the standards of the Renaissance. *The Divine Comedy* had it been on a par with the other scant writings to come out of that era would today be just another pitiful reminder that the literary art had once been lost for several hundred years. Instead, Dante conquered the times and produced a piece of literature that is even now read to be enjoyed, not to be laughed at as a clumsy bit of medieval myth as its contemporaries often are. Dante must be placed in the rank with Octavian when it comes to having made the most out of his time.

Leaving the world of the past for a while, the world of the present looms before us, almost defying us to search for modern counterparts of Octavian and Dante. For although it is simple enough to look back in history and form opinions as to who made good use of



his time and who did not, it is difficult to stand back far enough to clearly perceive the present's full dimensions. What seems wisdom today may prove folly tomorrow; what appears evil now may look innocent later by the same token. With this possibility in mind, the only man currently shaping the times seems to be Khrushchev, the Communist Party's esteemed first secretary and premier of the USSR. Khrushchev is the man who is calling the plays while the rest of the world steps forward or back according to the way he chooses to call them. Like Octavian, Khrushchev wants an empire, a Communist empire that claims all the known world as well as colonies in space, just as Rome ruled colonies about the Mediterranean in addition to her well-entrenched Romanized lands. Of all the world's leaders, only the Soviet premier is taking an active part in the game of wide-scale conquest. Through the tools of fear and bluff, he hopes to cow the world's peoples into accepting the axiom, Better Red than dead. Whether his work will look wise or foolish, evil or innocent to future generations, only time will tell. Many contemporaries of Octavian hated him immensely, yet he is respected as a wise and able ruler today. Of course, today's peoples are not suffering from the direct effects of any of Octavian's innovations; tomorrow's peoples may be suffering from radiation sickness and strontium 90 malfunctions due to Khrushchev's.

Despite what one says for or against the personal qualities of the group of men throughout history who have made use of the time in which they lived, they have left their mark, in many cases a great mark, on the world and its peoples. Yet despite my general agreement with Emerson's statement and my proofs to back it up, I cannot help but question one point in his remark: the "we" in "This time, like all times, is a good one, if *we* but know what to do with it," is currently ambiguous. At one time, I suppose, "we" could have meant each man as an individual knowing what to do with his own time. Surely the time when that connotation was effective is long since past, and it may have been obsolete since the earliest tribal days. Persons are always worked upon by outside forces. Men are assaulted by other men; tribes are challenged by other tribes; and countries are attacked by other countries. That is the way of the world. To assert that an individual can take control of his environment and make times good is ridiculous. If and only if outside forces do not appear to beat him down from his aspirations or if he has the strength behind him to defeat the outside forces, may he conquer his time. Octavian had to contend with the hostile nations around his empire and made his Roman Peace through his army's strength; Dante fought those who devoutly held that classical Latin was the only tongue in which to write. He argued long and loud for the use of the vernacular and wrote *The Divine Comedy* in his native Tuscany; Khrushchev is today being opposed from all sides as he goes about his work. Evidently the Man Thinking has no easy job, even after he has figured out what to do with his time.



As the world matures, then, the "we" must include ever-widening areas of people. Nations cannot do what they think is right without consulting other nations or preparing for the suicide a full-scale war will bring in the modern world. Perhaps in the not-so-distant future, the "we" will take in the whole solar system, and one world will need to appraise its strength in terms of that offered by other planets before it attempts any policy change that will make better use of time. The "we" is ambiguous, yet it presents an example of a good ambiguity. A fine quotation must have enduring qualities, a narrow term must be capable of broadening with time. Emerson made such an allowance by using the flexible pronoun "we," illustrating the same resiliency the framers of the American Constitution built into that document—the ability to be reappraised with time. Emerson knew what he was saying, and he said it for eternity.

## Thoughts on a Cold Winter's Evening

Jerry L. Childers

I am sitting at my desk, and, although I try to focus my thoughts on my work, I find that I am mentally wandering to other times and to other places far from the book beneath my reading lamp and the writing paper and pen before me. I'm always an oppressed soul halfway between the last day of Indian summer and the first day of spring. I lose all interest in my studies, and I long to take myself away to a distant place, far from the snow, the cold, and the winter. Of all the seasons of the year, I know the winter to be the most dreary and interminable length of time.

I can remember experiencing this same chained and tormented feeling long ago in my childhood. I would look from my bedroom window out on the dirty, melting slush in the streets and would watch the voluminous black clouds of smoke as they arose from the chimneys and deposited their soot over the world below, and I would wish that the earth were warm and clean again. The tree outside my window was cold and naked with its shoulders heaped with a dingy layer of ice and snow. I was sure that the tree was in pain, and I knew that the tiny seedlings in the window-box beneath my sill were as anxiously awaiting the warmth and the freedom of spring as I.

After the long torment of those days, I would soon rid myself of my shoes and delight in the warmth of the moist earth beneath my bare feet. It was always difficult for my mother to know where I might be in those days as I would wander, barefoot and free, away to the nearest haven of trees and stretch of meadow that I could find. Even today, I go for such sojourns in the country whenever I can. Most people, caught up in the machinery of modern living, have forgotten what simple joys they knew as children. I believe the purest and most rewarding pleasures I have ever known were

those I had as a child away on a solitary walk. Only when I am able to go and wander through some spring wood, do I sense being a part of life and know that I am the same person of so long ago.

In my garden, beneath the miserly trapping of February, I have a memento I brought back from one of my excursions as a youth. One of my first discoveries was a wild flower called jack-in-the-pulpit. I found this pastor of the moist woodlands ministering to a congregation of Dutchman's breeches and blushing spring beauties deep in the shaded depths of a wood I still remember well today. Although he has never failed to greet me each spring, I have felt a sense of guilt because I have taken him from his home. He still preaches and stands as straight as ever in his pulpit, but there is no congregation to listen to the words I cannot hear.

I have learned that one cannot bring the beauty of the spring and the wild countryside into one's backyard, as I had attempted to do, but that one must leave off the cares of the world and steal down a solitary forest path in order to know the true beauty of nature. Often, I would lie down in the warm timothy grass and listen to the honeybees go about their gathering among the yellow blossoms of a wild forsythia and watch them cast pale saffron-colored petals adrift in the morning air to leave dusty trails of pollen on my face. The heavy air, laden with the perfume from the massed blossoms of the wild cherry and rosebud trees above my head, would lull me into a quiet dream, interrupted only by the occasional chattering of meadowlarks busily weaving a nest in the tall grass nearby. It is surprising the great store of discovery and adventure that can be known to small boys in such places. I can only feel sorry for those who did not early discover the delights of such times and places, and I can only hope that my thoughts will bring others to experience the impatient awaiting of spring that I do, as I gaze through my window on this cold and bleak winter's evening.

## The Indifference of the Universe

Mike Schwartz

WHATEVER the nature of the universe, ordered or chaotic, teleological or mechanistic, whatever its nature, described in either philosophic jargon or lay terms, this basic fact concerning it seems manifest: the universe, in itself, is dreadfully indifferent. This indifference is so dreadful because of man's egotistical nature. Even adverse "spirits" or forces are much more reassuring than an indifferent universe because they at least recognize man's existence, *the only fact which he knows for certain*, as significant. Stephen Crane in his short story, "The Open Boat," illustrates this essential fear of insignificance. In this story a gull, which can be regarded as a symbol of nature, flitted about the four men in the boat, almost landing on the head of one of them. These



men, who were beginning to lose hope of surviving their experience in the boat, did not regard the bird as amusing; rather, "the bird struck their minds at this time as being somehow gruesome and ominous." It did so because the men realized that nature, represented by the bird, was totally unconcerned about their fate.

Everyone, ultimately, must face this indifference. But most men do so only briefly, quickly shrinking back to insulate themselves from nature by one of a variety of defenses. Today in our culture, the most prevalent defense against the reality of life is the elevation of the acquisition of wealth to virtually absolute importance. Thus elevated, many people devote almost all their energy to this acquisition and hence ignore any "reality" beyond it. Another defense which is very easily adopted today is that of "scientism." This particular defense is so easily adopted because modern science has accumulated such a large body of knowledge that no one person can assimilate it. Consequently, a small mind can become infatuated with man's erudition to the virtual exclusion of the nagging presence of reality. Closely related to this defense is the ego-elevating defense of rationalism. Bertrand Russell provides a good example of a rationalist. Although Lord Russell acknowledged the problem of reality, he passed it off as insoluble. He was able to do this because he had become so infatuated with his own vaunted rationalism that reality ceased to be a vital issue to him. All in all, there is an astounding variety of "causes" and ideals which one can elevate to the position of an absolute. But perhaps one defense warrants closer examination than the others; that particular defense is religion. It is not clear to one who has never known it whether religious experience is valid or not; what is clear is that most people's "faith" is merely a defense against life. An excellent contrast between religion which is patently a defense and "true" religion can be found in Ole Rølvaag's novel, *Giants in the Earth*. In the novel Beret, a sensitive, guilt-ridden woman, is placed in the power of the completely indifferent prairie; she reacts by beginning to withdraw into insanity. But before she has advanced to an irreparable condition, she embraces religion. Yet after she does so, her personality is not altered in the respects which indicate a truly religious person. Instead of being humble, she becomes self-righteous; instead of being awed by God, she is only comforted by Him. The effective foil to Beret and her shallow religion is afforded by the minister. In him one finds the qualities of humility and awe of God; but in the minister, who fervently believes in God, one also finds a seeming contradiction for ". . . *In him* faith was lacking; of that he was painfully aware." This, I submit, is only a seeming contradiction, for it illustrates the nature of that type of religion which does not separate a person from life. I submit that a sincerely religious person never fully attains his goal of perfect faith; that his faith is always in the process "of becoming"; that he must continuously strive to keep his imperfect faith, which constantly eludes him; that his religion does not insulate him from



the awful indifference of his environment. But whether or not it is done with this sincerely religious outlook, the confronting of reality and all its implications is the necessary prerequisite to seeking a meaningful existence. The problem of finding meaning in existence once one has confronted it is another matter to be dealt with if one survives the confrontation.

## Sensation of a Dream

Michael Lamm

**A**ROUND and around and around, down into a swirling black funnel. Movement was my devilish world. I never stopped once, but descended deeper and deeper, spinning faster and faster down a spiralling tube that had no bottom or top. When I closed my eyes, I was pinned mercilessly against the small raft I was on, feeling with my body the powerful spinning. With my eyes open, I saw nothing but endless walls of nauseating water, sliding me farther and farther downward. A queasy lightness gripped my stomach, and I vomited fire. Flames spewed out as I erupted, and in a twinkling of an eye the water vanished.

From the unshaven derelict on the soggy raft, I entered the body of a great bird. Circling about a misty mountaintop, I caught glimpses of the land far below. It stretched out under me for miles and miles. Black forests in clumps, lush green patchwork for pastures, and grey, massive stone mountains came into view as I glided high above the world. A cold, strong wind blew from the north and held me suspended on my massive wings. Turning sharply, I dived with blinding speed down the mountainside. The wind whistled around me as I cut the air with my folded wings. Rocks and shrubbery blurred past as I headed faster and faster down into the valley. A small cloud was ahead of me. For an instant everything was white and smelling of morning dew as I cut through the white billows. The lush valley flashed into view. At two thousand feet I spread my wings to slow my speed. The valley floor sprawled below me in verdant plains and jagged rocks. A deep, blue lake twinkled in the morning sunlight. I realized with a start of fear that I was not slowing down, but going even faster! With all my strength I forced my heavy, cumbersome wings into action. Slowly, slowly I started to flap, but my wings were too heavy. I strained and groaned to pull my own weight to level flight, but I only screamed more swiftly toward the valley floor. With a violent force of mind, I urged my huge body up as I came within a few feet of the sharp rocks below. My talons were scraped by the stones as I glided with effort over the ground, still attempting to rise. But it was no use. I was defeated, pinned to the earth. Held by some frustrating force to the ground, every muscle in my great body strained to lift me into the air. I sped over the rocky terrain barely able to move my wings.

Finally the effort became too great, and I exploded out of the bird's body into a giant of a man, half the size of the earth.

In violent anger, I rent the world in half with my terrible hands. The whole earth groaned in agony as I dug my hands into the soft turf. Standing on the exploding halves of the earth, I used the planets to climb to the roof of the heavens. With my bony fingernails, I ripped a hole in the blue, satin roof. I pulled myself up through the hole, and found myself, giant that I was, squatting under an ant. I was frustrated beyond belief. I bellowed in rage, and everything turned grey.

Slowly I opened my eyes and found I was home again, in my own body. A sweet, spring breeze blew through the open window, and covers kept me snug and warm as I contemplated the alarm clock. I felt extremely rested. I rolled out of bed and meandered into the bathroom.

## After a Poem By T. S. Eliot

Phyllis Gorfain

**H**E WAS still a child when he came to college wearing the cross his parents had given him. They believed with a blind acceptance that the cross symbolized faith in salvation, in the ultimate exaltation of man. He was a child, but able to see. He was a child and did not fully perceive, but at least he could see: the cross to him, therefore, was not the symbol of faith and exaltation, but only of hope.

He had thought much as a child before he had entered college and had discovered he could not believe in the cross as his parents did. He found he could only hope in the silver cross which shone reflecting a light beyond itself; thus, the cross became for him a symbol of his hope to understand the Love, Truth, and Beauty he knew were beyond himself. He knew that these absolutes were beyond himself but he had hope, for he had been taught the greatness of Man.

So it was that a child who hoped to understand the Absolute came to college wearing a cross of hope. Soon he discovered that Love, Truth, and Beauty were even farther beyond him than he had thought previously. He saw that the absolutes were of a high knowledge and understanding which seemed attainable by only the wise. But he had not forgotten his lessons of Man's ability and greatness. Although the child knew that Love, Truth, and Beauty were there beyond him, he touched his cross hoping in the power of his mind. He was so filled with hope in Man that just the search for wisdom became his religion. The glory of the search for knowledge was still based on a conviction of the ultimate absolutes. The child was so hopeful in the search, so satisfied in just the process without a hope



of actual achievement, he even began to deify Man searching for the absolutes. How beautiful was Man, and how his cross shone!

He was still a child, however, and able only to see but not to perceive. His satisfaction in simply searching told him that the inability of Man to attain complete understanding was of no consequence as long as Man could, in his wonderful ability, just attempt to know the reality beyond. Man was so great that by simply trying to know himself he could approach the knowledge of reality. Then one day the child, trying to know himself through studies, learned the inevitable lesson that Man cannot perceive reality at all, especially within himself. He learned that all of man's perception is an effect of his culture, his experience, his heredity, his needs, his emotions. The child saw that Man's perception is so subjective, so individual, so relative to one unique set of causes, that no universal values, no absolutes, no reality could be perceived by man within himself. The child suddenly knew the futility of his hope in Man's great ability. In that moment when the child perceived the futility of man, he became a man. In that moment when he perceived the futility of man, he lost his cross.

The man without a cross had lost his hope in a Man with a glorious ability to seek reality. But the man, although he had no cross, still had an intuitive hope that reality existed beyond the insignificance of man. Hoping intuitively in a reality transcending himself, he wanted to make that unconscious hope into a conscious hope. He began to search for material with which to make another cross of conscious hope. He could only use material which would shine reflecting light beyond itself.

He hoped he could make his cross with Science. Science, he thought, would offer a revelation of reality. But Science cannot be elevated to scientism, the revelation of an absolute reality, because it is based on an assumption of cause and effect, of determinism. The man saw that scientism reduced to nothing but relativism which itself was determined by the relative and valueless perception of the scientist. Science offered no material to reflect light beyond itself, for it reduced to nothing but man.

"Here we go 'round the prickly pear,"

The man turned to Marxism and dialectical materialism only to rediscover philosophies of relativism. The man saw in them only the insignificance of relative man without absolute value. The man looked elsewhere.

"The prickly pear,"

Psychology with its psychoanalytic theory of an unconscious identification with absolutes, a belief in reality only as an ego-involvement, could not offer him substance for a cross.



"The prickly pear,"

The man found no hope of an otherness in Existentialism with its only value as life itself.

"Here we go 'round the prickly pear,"

The man searched, intuitively hoping to find a religion which transcended man. He looked at Faith, the absolute as a God, a divine otherness. But the idea of a divine otherness does not transcend man, for man can only understand a divine otherness in terms of psychoanalytic ego-involvement. In faith the man could not find a philosophy transcending relative and devaluated man.

"At five o'clock in the morning."

The man, dizzied by his futile searching, finally thought that no reality as an absolute existed beyond man. He faced for a second the complete insignificance of man.

"This is the way the world ends,  
This is the way the world ends,"

His intuitive hope had shrivelled into an overwhelming sense of futility. The man saw nothing beyond himself except the nihilistic abyss.

"This is the way the world ends,  
Not with a bang but a whimper."

## The Day Civilization Died

Russell L. Durbin

"THE ONLY thing we have to fear is fear itself."—F. D. Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933.

Fear was a tangible thing, oozing from the pores of thousands of surging, wild-eyed people. Like a giant boa constrictor, it writhed through the city streets, holding the people in its deathly grip. It was a whip that lashed people into a screaming, howling mob.

They ran. They ran in every direction, not really knowing where they were going—somewhere—anywhere away from what had once been the heart of a thriving mid-west metropolis. It was a veritable stampede, a great tidal wave of humanity sweeping through the streets, smashing everything in its path. A searing holocaust behind them drove them on with unseeing eyes, minds frozen with the horror they had just witnessed.

A mother stumbled and fell, and no one paused to help her get up. The human tide covered her and swept on. Her children, caught in the flow of the crowd, had to fight for themselves—a los-

ing battle for crying ten- and twelve-year olds. Ribs were crushed, toes smashed, people suffocated in the crush of the crowd. Cars roared through the streets only to smash into other cars, and no one stopped to see if anyone was hurt. A person fought to maintain balance, raking faces with fingernails, kicking, shoving and pushing.

The mouths of the people were open, but there were no distinguishing cries. One tumultuous sound pounded against the eardrums, pulsating with the combined voices of men, women and children screaming agonizingly with fear. It was a wild thing that rose and fell like a mighty siren, seeking to warn a nation.

A fat, overdressed, bejeweled woman with fear showing through her mask of make-up burst from a store and threw herself into the streaming mob, using her heavily loaded purse as a lethal weapon, smashing and battering her way through the crowd. A burly man in his shirt sleeves was literally climbing over the still-living bodies of people in his unseeing haste to escape. They were like a mass of ants, fanning out from their destroyed anthill, looking for shelter and seeking to escape. But unlike ants they were unorganized. There was no rule but mob rule. The glossy pelt of sophistication had been stripped away, leaving the raw animal instincts exposed.

Less than an hour ago, they were normal Americans, going about their everyday business and activities, buying and selling, giving and taking, loving and hating. But the attack had changed all that. It changed the situation so rapidly that they were unable to comprehend what they saw. One moment their city was bustling through the noon hour in orderly confusion, and the next moment, the center of the city disappeared and in its place—a mushrooming cloud and roaring flames hundreds of feet high.

They were not prepared for such a devastating attack. They had known Civil Defense as words, nothing more. There was no discipline; there was no shelter. There was no one to tell them what to do.

Two Army officers and a small band of soldiers armed with machine guns attempted to establish martial law. They set up a barricade and warned the people to halt. But the warning went unheeded, probably unheard, as the mob surged against the barrier and swarmed over the soldiers, massacring them. The frenzied horde poured out of the city and into the country. They ravaged the countryside like locusts, destroying everything in their path. They burned, looted, smashed, trampled and killed. They kept going with nothing but time able to stem the tide.

Now they were gone. An old farmhouse stood dark and silent, a grim specter surveying the destruction. Nothing moved, save for a fluttering candy wrapper skipping across the barnyard in the face of a lonely breeze. No sound was heard except the forlorn flapping of a pair of levis dangling from a clothesline. Darkness enveloped the ravaged land and the day ended—the day that civilization died. History had a new chapter.

## THE WEB

The whispering silences in the dark crevices of the mind  
 Await the sweet strains of sounded thought,  
 Where lingering and shadowed dreams can find  
 The silken threads of love, bound to and wrought  
 With the realities of forced subservience, until  
 The black spider of the mind—desire—  
 Begins its slow and tedious spinning of the awe-instilling  
 Web, which encompasses the mind of man and sparks the fire  
 Of one magnetic love and thought.

And as the weary traveler seeks in vain for love among men  
 He need but search the secret passages of his own mind  
 To find the growing web of love, which is spun to  
 Teach man that he is not Man without man.

—MICHAEL LAMM

## WALKING, REMEMBERING

A stream, clear and sparkling,  
 Velvet moss,  
 Lavender flowers,  
 Fragrant air, yellow sun,  
 A man, walking, remembering.

An ocean, blue and rolling,  
 Sandy beaches,  
 Colorful shells,  
 Salty air, golden sun,  
 A man, walking, remembering.

A river, green and reflecting,  
 Rocky banks,  
 Scarlet leaves,  
 Crisp air, amber sun,  
 A man, walking, remembering.

A lake, white and frozen,  
 Snow shore,  
 Dead trees,  
 Grey gloom, ivory sun,  
 A man, walking, remembering.

A stream, an ocean, a river, a lake,  
 A man, remembered.

—SUELLEN MUNN