

reluctantly. . she might as well get it over with. . .

"Ruth Bradstreet!" said Jean accusingly. "Why didn't you come down with us? I thought you said you weren't going downtown."

"I wasn't," protested Ruth unconvincingly, "but mother thought of something she needed in a hurry, so. . .".

"Well," said Sally, "you certainly weren't hurrying over your drink! Say. . .!" with dawning suspicion. . . "Have you got a crush on Charlie Barnes? Oh. . . I'll bet you have!"

"I have not!" denied Ruth vigorously, but she was blushing uncontrollably.

"You have so! Ruth has a crush on Charlie Barnes! Ruth has a crush on Charlie Barnes!" chanted the two girls in unison.

Ruth turned on her tormenters. "The trouble with you two is that you don't know true love when you see it!" she gasped defiantly. "If you must know, Charlie loves me, but he says I'm too young yet, and that we'll have to wait a while."

The girls were suddenly quiet. A new respect was forming in their eyes. "Really, Ruth?" they chorused. "Oh when did he tell you? How did he say it? Do you meet him secretly? How long have you known?"

But the questions were coming a little too fast even for Ruth to cope with. She gathered a cloak of mystery protectively about her. "I'd rather not talk about it, please," she said in her best enigmatic manner. "The subject is too sacred. And now I'd like to be alone for a while. Do you mind? I'll see you in the morning," and she sauntered down the street nonchalantly. Eventually the truth must out, she realized, but for the present she was the Voice of Experience, for had she not lived? Suffered? Loved?

## It's Golden

Mary C. Funkhouser

I have a sincere regard, an irrepressible attachment, nay, an unbounded affection for all things silent. Neat little "Quiet" signs on hospitals lawns delight me; warnings of "Silence Please" in business offices never fail to impress me; I even love people who go around, (whether for the benefit of colicky babies or rheumatic grandfathers) "shushing" others. They too are worshipers at my shrine, and I bow before them. I can enjoy a good serious-minded ghost because he at least does his haunting quietly, and I respect his native graveyard for the peace and restfulness of its mute community. A secret enterprise that I have long nourished is a Q. T. club for fellow hushmen. Our password would be "shhh," our countersign, the pressure of the index finger vertically against the lips, and we would have marvelous long meetings devoted solely to reverie and contemplation. In short, I have a yearning and ever increasing desire to tell the whole good-humored world courteously and deliberately, "Peace, be still"—to make a master muffler and render its mundane mouth forever mute. Reader, I do not jest. Beneath this superficial surface, deep currents are flowing. I am serious.

This devotion to the hushed is well founded. I attribute it to the fact that the pricelessness of silence has accompanied all happy experiences, all long remembered incidents, all cherished scenes, thoughts, or emotions that I have ever known. Rooms by firelights—books—shadows—color—dreams, all such lovely things are mellowed by this magic master. It selects all great and worthy occasions as its own, predominates over all other influences, envelops the scene, blesses the situation, and deftly shapes the memory

into the most delightful and peaceful perfection.

There is beauty in the variety of this universal patron. We love the calm silence of nature, found at the brink of a reedy pool or in the heart of a winter woods, as we shudder at the hurting mystery of death's hush, or the nervous, tense silence of fear. What a gentle quiet we keep in the presence of new and precious life—tiny babies, budding trees, young helpless animals, and what awe is expressed in the admiring hush that greets the display of great artistry. We revere the sacred silence, incomparable to any other, of an empty church. We know the sanitary silence of a hospital and the systematic silence of a library. One fancies that there are whole drawers full of it here, all carefully indexed and catalogued.

In everyday life, silence is the ever-welcome intervener; a life belt securing itself around situations that are lost and helpless; a blender of daily discords; a mason slicing off the crude, protruding parts of existence; a universal interlocutor, subtle, deft in preserving the mystery, intensifying the drama, and protecting the beauty of the world. It is life's tactful host—interrupting with artful entrance at the perfect moment, and after a gentle adjustment of the situation, leaving the guests to marvel at the discreetness and dexterity of its departure.

### IN SPITE OF WORDS

These words come at least in part  
From out my soul and mind and heart;  
And come at least in part, I fear,  
From my conceit and failure drear.

For what they are, or might have been,  
Had I known less of trivial sin,  
I have no fears—no deep regret  
Of that which may prove fertile yet.

FREDERIC WINTER.

## Poems

### I

#### CONVERSATION PIECE

Perhaps he does.  
What do you think?  
He might, perhaps  
He does; I do not  
know. He does, perhaps.  
You think he might?  
Perhaps; I think perhaps  
he does.

But maybe not;  
I do not know  
but that he would not  
think of it.  
Perhaps; I say I  
do not know.

### II

#### PERSONALITY

I met her long ago:  
Calamity was at her door;  
Her father had a year to live;  
Her mother's heart—tomorrow,  
Or, within a month, would  
Cause her death.

I met her yesterday:  
Her father has a year to live;  
Calamity is at her door;  
Tomorrow, or within a month,  
Her mother's heart will  
Cause her death.

### III

#### CONCENTRATION

I said I thought the day was fair;  
She said that Bill had curly hair.  
I said that beer was here to stay;  
She pondered on Bill's winning way.  
When I discussed the social classes,  
She said she thought he needed glasses.  
But then I said, "Men should be wed,"  
And she said, "Yes. You're right,"  
she said.

—GRACE FERGUSON.