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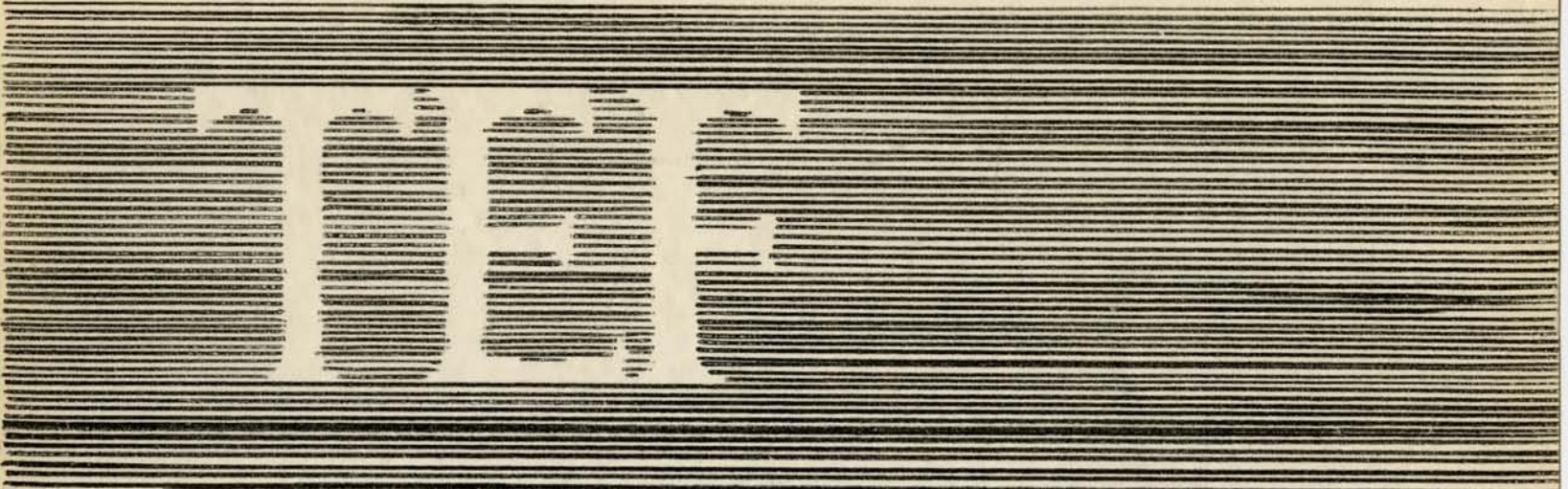
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A DISSERTATION ON PERSEVERANCE

Wishing to be a poet,
I took my pen in hand
And, pondering wondrous things to say,
Sat down upon the sand.

My theme would be of life and death,
Of love and hate and woe;
A grand, impressive theme, ~~thought~~ I,
But the metre wouldn't go.

I rearranged and dum-de-dummed,
I thought and racked my brain;
I changed my lines and changed
My rhymes and did it all again.

But, try as I would, each change
That I changed made only more confusion.
My poem, it seemed, had no sentences,
And dangles dangled in profusion.

How tedious, I thought, how tedious
And hard this being a poet can be;
So I made of my poem a small paper sloop,
And sent her out over the sea.

Janice Brisack

THE NIGHT WAS MADE FOR LOVE

The moonlight bathed the garden that night,
 The stars were twinkling above,
 The scent of lilacs filled the air;
 The night was made for love.

They met that night by the old oak tree,
 And the wind whispered a sigh,
 While moon and stars looked sadly on,
 They kissed and murmured "good-bye."

The moon, the stars, the scent of flowers,
 The gentle coo of a dove,
 They all took part in breaking a heart
 On the night that was made for love.

They harmonized a song of parting--
 For a song was only fitting--
 Then Tom jumped over the backyard fence,
 And Tabby went back to her kitten.

Lynne Lowe

EVOLUTION

From tree to tree
 Went chimpanzee.
 Man viewed, meanwhile,
 With complacent smile.

The monkey smiles,
 Wonders what the fuss.
 "They don't really
 Look at all like us."

Wanda DuBose

THE HERO

The lights were low; the music, soft and dreamy. In a gown of shimmery pink she was dancing in the arms of a handsome stranger. He was tall, so tall that her head barely reached his chest and a cloud of golden blonde hair rested against the blackness of his tuxedo. Hazily she was aware that he was guiding her toward the door of the terrace, and then they were alone and they were no longer dancing. He drew her closer and she could feel his breath on her cheek as his lips drew near hers. She closed her eyes and....

The telephone rang.

Betts blinked her eyes as she tried to accustom herself to the sudden transition from the dark and romantic terrace to the singularly unromantic living room of her home. The telephone jangled insistently, and Betts heard the tap of heels as her mother hurried to answer it.

"Well, Betts, why in the world didn't you answer this phone? You're sitting right here in the same room with it and I have to stop my work to -- Hello...Just a minute. It's for you anyway. Candy."

Instantly Betts was alert. This had to be important. She and Candy had parted not ten minutes ago after walking home from school together, so Candy must have some news. She jumped for the 'phone. At the other end of the line Candy's voice came in a breathless whisper.

"Betts, you'll never guess who's here.!"

"Who?"

"The Handsome Stranger!"

Betts's knees went weak, and she collapsed into a chair. The Handsome Stranger! And she had practically given up on ever meeting him. It had been three weeks since she first saw him, the night her school played Central. It was the first basketball game of the season. The minute she had walked into the gym she had noticed him, and she could do nothing but grab Candy's arm and point.

"Candy, look! He looks just like Rock Boone!"

But she could find no way to meet him. Since he was from another school, none of her friends knew him, even though he was a basketball player, and they were usually known through all the city. But she couldn't forget him. He was so tall! And so handsome! She found herself daydreaming about him at school or when she was supposed to be doing her homework. She didn't know his name, so in her dreams she simply called him the Handsome Stranger.

Candy was chattering on.

"His name is Don Hunt. Jerry met him that night after the ballgame, down in the dressing room."

Well of course! Why hadn't they thought of Jerry! Candy's own brother, and neither of them had ever thought to ask if he knew him! Jerry played basketball, too, so it was quite likely that he might meet any of the other players.

"They're going down to the Boys' Club to shoot some baksets, but if you'll hurry you can get here before they leave."

Oh, this was too good to be true! Betts dropped the phone and raced for the door, yelling, "Mommy, I'm going over to Candy's." The slam of the door drowned out any objection Mrs. Marshall may have had, and Betts was off at a half-trot. The two blocks to Candy's house stretched into two miles, and she thought the heart that had served her well for fifteen long years would surely fail her now. Candy was waiting for her at the door.

He's in the den playing some records. Come on, I'll introduce you to him."

"Wait a minute. Let me straighten my hair."

Betts stopped before a mirror in the hall and ran a comb through the wavy hair that was the envy of every girl in her crowd. She moistened her lips to make them look dewy (beautiful girls in books always had dewy lips!); her cheeks were still rosy from her sprint.

Candy was hopping from one foot to the other in excitement. The two girls so identified themselves with each other that either could be as enthusiastic over the other's plans as she was her own. Betts had seen and wished to conquer, so Candy made it her business to help in every way.

At last Betts was ready. Candy grabbed her hand and dragged her toward the den, and Betts felt her heart pounding so she could hardly breathe. At the door she stopped. There he was. He had his back to the door as he flipped through a stack of records. He was as tall as she remembered. His hair was darker than she had thought, and curlier.

"Don..." Candy's voice rose to a high squeak, and she tried again. "Don, I want you to friend my -- meet my frient Bet --Elizabeth," she corrected in response to a pinch from Betts.

He turned and smiled, the most beautiful, gorgeous smile in the world. Everything except his face had an unreal look to her as she walked -- no, floated -- across the room, stopping in front of him, holding out her hand, and turning on him the gaze of deep violet-blue eyes.

The effect was instantaneous and satisfying. He stared at her as if hypnotized as he acknowledged the introduction.

"I'm very glad to meet you, Elizabeth."

His voice was deep and had a rumble in it that caused a tingle to start somewhere in her tummy and move up her spine. She didn't trust her voice, but she managed a somewhat tremulous smile; then she gathered her wits enough to lower her eyes demurely (a technique she had found to be extremely effective in other cases).

He was still holding her hand in his when a door slammed upstairs, and a clatter on the stairs materialized into the form of Candy's brother, Jerry.

"Ready to shag, Don? Oh, I see you've met my kid sister Candy and her friend Betts."

Two pairs of feminine eyes shot daggers straight at his heart, but he was oblivious to both his faux pas and its effect on the girls.

Suddenly coming to life, Don dropped Betts' hand and blushed. He mumbled his good-byes and backed away without lifting his eyes from the floor. And then he was gone.

"Oh, that Jerry!" sputtered Candy. "You can always count on him to do something stupid."

"Do you think he liked me?"

"Oh, Betts, he just flipped. The way he looked at you! Just like in that movie we saw last week, and he married her."

"Such a beautiful smile...and he's so tall, almost as tall as Rock Boone. Don't you think he looks a little like Rock Boone?"

"Gosh, I think he's handsomer."

"And he has brown eyes..." her voice trailed off dreamily.

Every moment of the meeting was relived and retold until at last Betts jumped up and exclaimed,

"Gosh, I've gotta get home to supper. Meet you at a quarter of eight in the morning."

She was unconscious of the walk home, for she was once again reliving the experience. At the thought of Jerry she frowned, annoyed. Really, he was such an uncouth person; he didn't have any tact. A blush stained her cheeks as she remembered his reaction to her "eye treatment," as she and Candy called it. She had known Jerry ever since she could remember, but as she grew up and became more aware of boys she saw him in a different light. He played basketball, and once she got into high school she discovered to date a football or basketball player was a mark of distinction. So she set her cap for Jerry. She had begun to date early and had perfected her "come-on" technique early, and it was rarely that she was met with indifference. Consequently, she wasn't shy toward Jerry. The first step in the campaign, naturally, was the "eye treatment." And that was the last step. She'd never forgiven him for what he said, that she was gazing at him like a sick calf!

"Well, I'll not spend my time thinking about that boob when I've got Don to think about." She could just see him on their first date. He'd call for her at 8:00, wearing -- oh, anything, something brown, maybe, to match his eyes. Politely he'd help her into the car and then he would get in and smile that wonderful smile and ask where she wanted to go. Not that where they went would matter much; she'd have a good time anywhere as long as she could be with him.

The next few weeks were disappointing ones. She saw Don often; the faithful Candy summoned her every time he came to visit Jerry, and he visited more and more often. But he didn't ask her for a date. Candy said he seldom took his eyes from Betts when she was there, but still he didn't ask her for a date. Her school work suffered as more and more of her time was spent in daydreaming. The things she didn't know about him she filled in for herself. Really, she didn't even know how old he was or what grade he was in. Candy couldn't help her any by asking Jerry, for the two of them were seldom on friendly enough terms for her to approach the matter in casual conversation.

Then one day the phone rang. It rang no differently than usual to indicate that this was a special call, and for once Betts wasn't even thinking about Don. When she heard his voice on the line her voice almost deserted her.

"Betts, this is Don Hunt."

"Y-yes?"

"Look, would you go to a movie with me tomorrow night?"

"Yes." Then as her voice began to work properly again, "I'd love to go."

"About 7:30 then?"

"That will be fine."

All that night and the next day she was in a tizzy. In a flurry of activity she polished shoes, manicured her nails, and shampooed her hair and brushed it until it gleamed. Anxiously she searched her face for blemishes and bathed it in every kind of cream on her mother's dresser when a tiny one was found. At school that day she learned nothing except, from Candy, how flabbergasted Jerry was to hear that Don had asked her for a date. That made her day a success.

As soon as school was out, Betts rushed home to start getting ready. First came a bubble bath, long and luxurious. She stretched out in the tub and gave herself up to the delight of the soft bubbles against her skin. She wondered how Don would look, what he would wear. She hoped it would be something brown to match his eyes. What would they talk about? Would he hold her hand in the movie? Oh! She sat up suddenly. Rock Boone's new movie starts at the Temple tonight! They just had to see it. She leaned back in the tub and watched the bubbles floating in the tub. There was one big one, an especially beautiful bubble shot through with myriad colors. She ran her hand under it and held it up before her eyes. It quivered there for an instant and then it was gone. She stared at the empty spot in her hand and a shiver ran through her.

She splashed her hands to erase the empty spot and climbed out of the tub.

Now, what to wear? The blue dress? Nope, a button's missing. The green one? Too babyish. The red one? Um-m...No, really it's too dressy just for a movie. The yellow one? Nope, there's a rip.

At last she settled on a pink wool dress with long sleeves.

She was ready thirty minutes early. The minutes seemed to drag a-long; each tick of the clock was followed by a longer silence than the previous one. But at last 7:30 came -- then 7:35...7:45. It was almost 8:00 when she heard the doorbell ring. Dimly, from the living room, she could hear his voice, with that deep rumble; and her displeasure melted like snow in the Sahara.

"Betts," called her father from the living room.

"Coming." She grabbed her jacket and hurried away on winged feet. At the door she stopped short. Was that him? Blue jeans?...And a sport shirt so wrinkled it looked as if it had been worn for a week. Suddenly she felt over-dressed and foolish. But he was speaking to her.

"Sorry to be late, Betts. My little brother and his friends were playing basketball out in our yard, and I stopped to give them some pointers." He looked at his shirt ruefully. "I guess I got a little wrinkled."

She managed a smile. "Well, we'd better get started. We'll be back by 11:00, Mommy."

Don jumped to open the door for her, and she stepped out to the porch. There she got her second shock of the evening. There at the curb sat the most dilapidated, rickety, ramshackle, horrible monstrosity of a car she had ever seen!

"Well, what did you expect, stupid, a Cadillac?" she scolded herself. But truthfully, she hadn't expected anything like this. The thing didn't even look safe.

"Sorry I can't open the door for you. It's wired shut."

She gaped at him. "How do you get in, then?"

"Through the window. Come on, I'll give you a push. Step up on the fender."

Before she quite knew what was happening he was pushing her through the window. By the time she seated herself, her cheeks were red with exertion, embarrassment over the injury to her dignity, and anger at the damage to her dress, a long streak of grease. The car rocked precariously as Don got in, and she grabbed wildly for something to hold on to. He bent over the wheel and listened at the sound of the motor turning over. He grunted with satisfaction at the sound, and the car made noisier ejaculations as they clattered off.

After several blocks Betts regained her composure.

"What movie are we going to see?"

"There's a special feature on at the Paradise that the Coach wants us to see, the Harlem Globetrotters."

Harlem Globetrotters? "Oh, but Rock Boone's new movie starts at the Temple today," she protested.

"I know, but this is the last day for the Globetrotter picture, and I sure do want to see it. You like basketball, don't you?" he asked persuasively.

Yes, she liked basketball, but not movies about it and certainly not in preference to Rock Boone. However, she managed to submit with reasonably good grace. It shouldn't matter if they saw the "Grandson of Dracula" as long as she could be with Don Hunt. Maybe he would hold her hand or put his arm around her; that would make everything all right. She shivered with delight.

The movie was long, long, LONG. And he didn't hold her hand. Or put his arm around her. Or pay any attention to her at all. She may as well have been another boy. He crunched popcorn, boxes of it, tons of it. She lost count of just how many times he went back to the popcorn stand for more. To put it mildly, she was annoyed. She tried to keep up with the movie, but it was dull and the ball moved with such speed it made her dizzy.

She was relieved when it was over at last. Maybe things would get better now and this date would measure up to her hopes after all. Outside the theater Don stopped suddenly and exclaimed,

"Say, there's Bud Franklin. Hey, Bud, c'mere. Bud and I play basketball together. Betts, this is Bud Franklin. Bud, Betts Marshall. Bud, why don't you come with us down to -- Betts, would you like to go by the Sweet Shop for a malt?"

Betts agreed eying the newcomer with interest. He wasn't bad-looking at all -- not as good-looking as Don, of course, but still, variety is the spice of life, they say.

She was disappointed. Don and Bud were quickly immersed in a discussion of the movie. She began to feel sorry for herself. She didn't like to be ignored. The discussion continued through a hamburger, a malt, and a banana split each for the boys. Betts was amazed that Don could eat anything after all that popcorn. They politely tried to include her in

the discussion, but she knew very little about basketball and had nothing worthwhile to contribute to the conversation.

The ride home was better. He drove slowly and after a few minutes of silence he reached out and took her hand.

"Why don't you come to our game with West End Friday night?" he asked.

"I can't that night. Our team is playing too, and I'm a cheerleader, so I have to be there." She liked the strength of his hand.

"Oh, really? I didn't know you were a cheerleader."

She didn't answer. She was thinking that if his hands were so strong, his arms would be stronger.

"Like it?"

"Um-m-m..." Then guiltily, "Like what?"

"Being a cheerleader."

"Oh. Oh, yes." He'd kiss her goodnight, of course. That tingle started again, somewhere in her tummy, and moved up her spine.

"My sister was a cheerleader." Then, as he got no reply, "What grade are you in?"

"Tenth." They'd stop at the steps, or maybe on the porch, and he'd put those strong arms around her. She could almost feel his lips on hers already.

"I'm a junior." That line of conversation seemed to elicit no response, so he moved to another. "You know, you're the first girl I've dated, single date. Always before, a group of us just got together and went somewhere."

That did surprise her. She turned to look at him -- and lurched forward as they came to a sudden stop. Home already!

"Wait until I come around. I'll help you out."

"Oh dear," she thought to herself, "here we go again. I'd forgotten about that door. There's nothing more romantic than crawling out a car window." She was giggling as he set her on her feet.

She tried to walk slowly, to draw the moment out as long as possible. He cleared his throat as if to speak, but subsided. Suddenly she felt shy and she couldn't think of a thing to say. He took her hand and she couldn't stop it from trembling. Of one accord, they stopped at the steps.

There was a silence.

He cleared his throat again. "I'm sure glad you were over at Candy's that day I came home with Jerry."

"So am I."

Silence.

"Do you visit --" his voice was too loud and he lowered it. "Do you visit Candy often?"

"Just about every day." She began to feel impatient. Was he just going to stand there and talk?

Then everything happened at once. She looked up at him to speak and he grabbed her by the shoulders and kissed her, but it landed on the corner of her mouth. Then, he was gone, mumbling a hasty "good-bye" over his shoulder.

She stood there amazed. Was he really gone? Yes, there was the motor, growling and sputtering. She watched the tail lights disappear around the corner. She stared down the street for a long time. Then slowly, dejectedly, she walked into the house. She closed the door and leaned back

against it, staring into the darkness, seeing nothing, looking at nothing. A thrill of pure rage ran through her, and was gone as quickly as it came. A tear welled up in her eye and spilled over. He had been a beautiful dream.

Lynne Lowe

DEAR DIARY

Dear Diary, tonight is The Big Night;
I've got a date with The Man.
What shall I wear? How shall I act?
I must work out some plan.

Should I be a lady, or maybe a vamp?
Or be quite prim-ish and plain-ish?
What pleases him? What does he like?
Should I be Kim-ish or Jayne-ish?

If only I knew which he likes best,
I'd captivate him; but gee,
I'd just make a mess of the whole darn thing!
I guess I'll just be Me.

Lynne Lowe

THE SAILBOAT

Your wings, thrust out in greeting to the wind,
 Ruffle and flap as power courses through
 Their white and shining lengths. Your slender trunk,
 So sturdy, trim, in paths both sure and true
 Sets forth, and darts into a sky where clouds
 Appear as you wing by. From side to side
 You dip, and in a glide of beauteous grace
 You part the race of blue through which you ride.
 Most lovely form, most perfect motion, I,
 On land, must wish to fly away with you:
 My wings -- another mast and sail perhaps;
 My sky -- a different sea of brilliant blue;
 But my joy, like yours, a living, swelling force,
 My sails, like yours, upon the straightest course.

Janice Brisack

MY EXPERIENCE

The sun sank down in its tranquility,
 As night drew nigh upon God's universe.
 But slowly there appeared in God's vast sky
 Galaxies, clusters, and the like -- all stars
 To brighten this tremendous earth for us.
 A round full moon arose above the trees
 Sedately glimmering there up in the silent sky.
 I sat alone and viewed the silent earth,
 And suddenly a peace came over me.
 It seemed as if the stars renewed my faith;
 The quiet night enveloped my despair.
 I sat and viewed the falling, gliding stars,
 And all at once my troubles disappeared;
 My heavy burdens seemed to not be there.
 But morning dawned and troubles came again.

Felda Courtney

FLIGHT: ELUSION

The plane rocked violently as the barometer dropped. This "excursion" was serious enough even before the storm conditions developed.

As the turbulence of the winds began to increase, every support, spar, and rivet in the old ship moaned in lamentation momentarily driving me into cold panic, as my perturbed sensory system searched for a solution to my situation other than that of making my own runway in the wild green below.

I should have been satisfied with my life and the thirty thousand that I made the first time, but I always invested in another shipment and tried again.

"Next time I'll cross the Rio below Rancho Nogal, and with a band of real fighters instead of a few lousy cowards, I'll get all my guns past those damned Mexicans and on the yacht, "Dolly Bee," for Cuba. I'll clear sixty thousand dollars on such a ship," I said to myself.

My stomach turned flips as my craft, the "Gun-Runner," as I called her, pitched around the sky fighting the force and turmoil of the storm.

"Turn back...no, darn it, stick it out! You're half way and safety lies only on this side of the border," my mind confusedly commanded.

As airsickness slowly crept into my system, I vomited on the panel. Perspiration rolled from my forehead as thick as the torrential rains on the windshield.

I was shaking with chills of sickness as I furiously fought the elements. The nauseating stench of the vomit was not helping my struggle with the controls. Nature was lashing with furious mockery as though determined to take me and my "bird" from the sky.

"Cheer up, Mat," I said to myself, "things could be worse." So, I cheered up, and, sure enough, they got worse.

As I glanced across my left wing, I shuddered with horror as my heart skipped beats and hysteria took command of me. How could I have been so damned foolish in my haste to evacuate as to leave my fuel cap on the pump back in Durango, Mexico?

Not three feet behind the open tank were the exhaust ports, cooled by the rain to about 400 degrees centigrade (if I may exaggerate somewhat). All I need is fire, and then my day will be completed...very completed.

I wished now that I hadn't used the 'chute as a storage bag for my thermos bottle.

A dramamine tablet calmed my nerves and removed any trace of airsickness except the "soup" on the panel. My hair grayed as I glanced from the panel to the open fuel tank. I fought harder than ever to keep "Gun-Runner" on an even keel.

After an hour of the hardest work I had ever done in my life, I was, according to my charts, over the landing strip. The storm was past, and I was relaxing my aching arms trying to figure ways to spend my money.

I lowered the flaps and gear and signed with relief as the rubber bit into the asphalt. The little familiar squeal of "touch-down" rubber always sounds nice, but this time it was different; it just sounded...what is the word...colossal. It meant the whole nightmare was over.

The instant I felt I was safe, the whole world blew up; at least, my left wing blew up. I could hear Joe and Glenn blowing the horn on our jeep crash wagon as the plane plunged off the right side of the strip and rolled and rolled, stopping only to be engulfed by angry smoking flames.

I'll never really recover from the burns; however, I don't mind talking about it. If you would like some advice on gunrunning, just drop over to see me...I can't see you, however, I can't see anything...but mistakes.

Edward Matteson

NIGHT OCEAN

Majestic, calm, and dark you lie at night,
A vast and mighty giant stirring gently as you sleep.
The gulls, those screaming comrades of the bright
Aurora, still their wings respectfully and vigil keep
Until the morning, while the boats, by day
The reckless, daring vagabonds of dream fill'd men,
Lie anchored, softly swaying, in your bay.
Poseidon's deep domain is likewise silent once again;
In watery beds of kelp his dolphins doze,
Their playful antics only tempting dreams, as schools of gay
And phosphorescent fish in static pose
Recline on desks of moss and ocean rose. Above, a ray
All silvery, white, and chaste -- Diana's sign--
Descends across your chest in lover's sweet caress. You stir,
And wake the early morning chill sea wind
As phaeton's impatient steeds their blazing ride begin.

Janice Brisack

SKETCHES

The ricksha runner
Trots gaily and shows tourists
The sights of Japan.

Cherry blossoms are
Bits of cloud plucked from the sky
And stitched with fragrance.

As the geisha sings
Hot sake is poured into
Tiny, fragile cups.

A statue with a
Potbelly stares down at those
Who bow before him.

Ugly little worms
Which ate the leaves of trees spin
Silken threads for scarves.

Shoeless waitresses
Serve sukiyaki in small
Bowls on low tables.

Paper lanterns light
The street and the many tiered
Roofs of the buildings.

Temple bells tinkle
And burning incense floats through
The air near the shrines.

Colorful, gay, and
Exotic -- this Japan is
At peace with the world.

Janece Hudson

A BARGAIN

I never meant to hit Sue with that orange. It was just one of those things. A lady had left it on the counter because she'd miscounted her dozen. Pop was out of the store, and for reasons I'll go into later, I had been feeling as if I would like to throw something. So I aimed the orange at the fruit counter and let loose with my pitching arm.

The orange connected with Sue Arnold just as she turned away from the canned goods. It hit her on the head, making her drop a glass jar of pickled peaches from her hand, and there was a loud crash.

"Oh, my goodness!" I exclaimed. "I'm so sorry." And I was sorry, but I was also glad that my orange hit a girl my own age, a schoolmate, and not some old woman who probably would have had heart failure.

Sue didn't happen to have heart failure, neither did she scream. She smiled and said, "You scared me, but I'm not hurt."

I swept up the pickled peaches and the glass. Then, to make up for my mistake, I asked Sue if I could give her a lift home as soon as Pop came back. "Thank you," she said. "That would be nice, Tom."

I was almost surprised to hear her call me by name. The fact is, until she sat down next to me in the delivery truck that afternoon, I'd never really looked twice at Sue. She didn't go with any of the high school gangs, and she was pretty easy to overlook. The main reason I knew her at all was that she did her family's grocery shopping in our store. Pop said Mrs. Arnold was sickly, and that she had been taking care of the house and the two younger kids since she was about eleven. Her dad was a farmer, and he was too poor to own a car. Sue shopped with us because we had delivery service. Once a week I drove the truck out to the Arnold's house with the things that Sue would have come in to buy right after school was out.

I'd always walk right into the kitchen when I got there with the supplies. The door was always open, and Mrs. Arnold would be sitting in a chair, by the window.

"Hello, Tom," she'd say when I came in. "How are you getting along?" She was a peculiar woman, that Mrs. Arnold. Pop said she used to be quite a lady, sort of like my girl friend, Josie Davis -- cute and lively and popular with the boys. But she made me uncomfortable. She seemed to have the idea she could talk to me in any way, usually high school slang, and what she said was usually joking. The only thing was that I couldn't tell when she was joking.

I hardly ever saw Mr. Arnold. He spent most of his time working their farm, with the help of Sue's brother. Sue herself was practically always peeling potatoes or washing dishes when I saw her in the kitchen.

She would go right on with her work and let her mother make the conversation.

On our way to her house, I told Sue, "You know, I don't usually throw oranges at the customers. I'm afraid I was just letting off some steam."

Sue took some knitting out of her shopping bag and laughed. "Sometimes I feel like throwing things too," she said. "I guess everyone does."

We didn't say much after that. I was thinking that I would have preferred to have that orange hit one ex-girl friend, name of Josie Davis. You see, my bad temper that afternoon was the result of a fight with Josie. The upshot of it had been that Josie had flounced out of the school lunchroom announcing her intention to go to the spring dance with another boy. And in want of something more crushing to say, I'd called after her, "Go ahead. You won't see me crying."

I gave a casual glance at what Sue was knitting, and a moment I forgot about Josie. I was looking at a neat sweater, almost finished, and done with cable stitches in a sort of blue-flecked wool. I'm a lover of cabled sweaters and that one really caught my eye.

"Who's the lucky guy you're making that for?" I asked.

"My brother," Sue said. "How do you like it?"

"I love it," I said. "I wish someone would make one just like it for me."

Sue put down her needles and looked at me with a funny expression as the truck pulled up to her house. "Do you really mean that?" she asked.

Sue's cheeks turned pink. "I'll make one for you on a condition." I looked at her, and she looked so pretty, I thought.

"I heard Josie saying in the locker room that she wasn't going to the spring dance with you," Sue said in a low voice. "If you'd take me instead, well --" She couldn't seem to finish her sentence.

I hadn't been taking this at all seriously. Now I was. "You mean, you'll make me a sweater if I take you to the dance?"

"Yes," she said as she looked full at me.

I am not a very admirable character, and at that minute I wasn't giving a thought to Sue, not even remembering that a second before I'd suddenly found her pretty. I wasn't trying to imagine what it would take for a shy girl to ask a guy to escort her to a dance. I was thinking of the sweater, and by what an easy bargain I was going to be able to get one like it.

"It's a deal," I said. "You have made yourself a fine deal."

She stepped out of the truck and paused beside me while I unloaded the groceries. "My father will be glad," she said. "He worries about me because I don't seem to have a good time the way Mom did when she was in school. I make him feel bad." She looked up at me. "You won't tell anybody about the sweater deal, will you Tom?"

"Of course not," I assured her.

I didn't tell any of the kids who I was taking to the dance. I just acted mysterious when Josie got back on speaking terms with me and tried to get the information. The fact was I couldn't think of any way to explain why I was taking Sue, so it seemed better to avoid the whole subject.

When I called for Sue the night of the dance, her father let me in. He was wearing a neat suit instead of the farm clothes he'd always had on

the few times I'd seen him before. He had what I guess you'd call a gentle type face with a tired look around his eyes. "Come right in," he said. Sue was getting ready I thought.

Then Mrs. Arnold took over. "Greetings, Tom," she said. "Sue will be down in a moment. But I haven't been able to persuade her to wear this!" She held out a spangled bracelet with a big bunch of different colored stones dangling from it. "Sue says she's afraid she'd lose it," Mrs. Arnold said, "and of course that would be too bad. I've had it ever since my first dance. Oh, what an evening that was. You wouldn't think I'd been the belle of the ball, I suppose?" She looked at me in a funny way that reminded of Josie asking a favor.

The bracelet looked pretty gaudy to me and not Sue's style at all. But I just smiled and fingered my flower box uncomfortably.

"Sue's late," Mrs. Arnold continued, "because I had one of my bad headaches this afternoon. All this excitement! I was going to make dinner to help Sue out, but I just had to lie down, and..."

Sue's two younger sisters came tearing into the room at that point. The six-year-old threw herself on her father's lap. "Oh, Daddy, Sue looks beautiful," she cried. "You ought to see her."

Sue came in looking flustered and a little embarrassed. Her cheeks had that pink glow I'd noticed on the afternoon we'd made our date. She was wearing a blue dress made of some soft and shiny material, and her blonde hair was bright and curly.

I can't say I was overwhelmed over by the effect the way a fellow usually is when he sees a girl in a formal for the first time. The surprising thing about the way Sue looked was that it all seemed so natural. You got the impression she'd worn formal gowns all her life, and that it was her everyday look that wasn't real. She had some quality -- I couldn't find a word for it because I'd never seen it in any other girl. Grace? Poise? Maybe, but those are stiff-sounding words, and there wasn't anything stiff about Sue's appearance.

"That's quite a dress," I said, and Sue told me she'd made it herself.

I was nervous when we got to the dance, and Sue went to the powder room to pin on the camellia I'd given her. I felt in a very odd spot. Honor-bound not to tell about the bargain behind our date, I had no other defense against the ribbing I was sure to take from my regular crowd during the intermission.

You see, as I figured, it didn't make any big difference that Sue happened to look good, or even, as I had begun to discover, that she was a real nice girl. The main thing was that she didn't belong. She'd never been to the places where we all hung out. She didn't know how to reply to the standard line of patter. I'd already tried it on her. And even though I sometimes got tired of the same kids and the same old routines, I felt uneasy in this new situation with Sue.

During the first dance, I noticed Josie with Archie Thatcher, who'd dated her for the evening after we'd had out little fuss. By now, of course Josie and I had patched things up, and I can't say I minded too much that she was with him. He's a pal of mine, and he is very popular. This dance tonight didn't mean that he was making any claim to Josie.

She danced well. I somehow hadn't expected that, but it made things easier. We could get absorbed in the beat of the music, and I didn't feel called upon to make any small talk.

During the intermission, I steered us away from the mob in the middle of the floor and got Sue some punch. That wasn't bad either. I still couldn't think of much to say, but Sue talked. She told a couple of funny stories about her sisters and her teen-aged brother, and she said she'd finished the sweater, and it would be blocked by tomorrow. I changed the subject at that point, for I was still having some guilty feeling about the sweater.

The first dance after the intermission, we ended up next to Josie and Archie, and I suggested we exchange dances.

"Sorry we fought, or are you having fun with your dark-horse?" Josie asked me as we started to dance.

"No comment," I replied, but I gave her the smile she was waiting for.

Josie looked over to Sue and Archie after the number and said, "Looks like they're having a big gab session. Why don't we sneak out for a soda?"

"Check," I said. The soda shop was right across the street, and a lot of kids in our crowd would run in there during the dance. Bob, the owner, was a comical man, and you could always count on him for a few laughs. Sue was taken care of for the moment, so I figured, why not?

We had one of Bob's sodas and shot the breeze with him. It was good to be back with Josie, who seemed very much in the pattern of things, after Sue. What I mean is that she didn't make me feel somehow guilty. Everything was familiar like old times.

"Well, bottoms up!" Josie held up her glass with its remaining drop, and I started to click my glass against hers.

I "clicked" a little harder than I meant to. Like the time when I threw the orange at Sue, I guess I underestimated my own strength. Anyway, I managed to knock the glass out of her hand.

"Tom!" Josie screeched. "Oh, heavens!"

The glass had landed on Josie's lap, and a small spot of soda was oozing through her dress.

I handed Josie my handkerchief apologizing all the while. "Will it come out with water?" I asked.

"No!" Josie moaned. "I'll have to go home and change. Get your car, Tom."

What I should have done, of course, was to go back to the dance and ask Archie to take Josie home. At least I should have taken a minute to tell Sue what was up. But I was so rattled about what I'd done that all I could think of was getting Josie home.

By the time I had finished diddling my fingers in the car while Josie changed, and we were finally back at the dance, we'd been missing an hour and a half.

I felt awful. What would Sue have been thinking? Josie dashed off to the powder room while I started to look for Sue. Instead, I bumped into Bix, another pal from the basketball team.

"Where's Sue?" I asked. "Have you seen her? She was with Archie when I..."

"She's still with Archie," Bix told me. "He's taking her home. He figured you'd take care of Josie."

"Boy," I apologized, "do I feel like a heel! I didn't mean to put old Archie on the spot."

Bix looked at me in a odd way. "He wasn't on a spot," he said. "He wanted to take Sue home. And if he hadn't, I would have. The dance I had with her was the best of the evening."

Josie had decided to think that the whole thing was funny, and I wasn't about to explain why I failed to be amused. I said good-night to her in a cold way that would probably mean another fight the next day and drove home in a low mood.

I didn't sleep much that night. My mind was full of a lot of pictures that weren't very nice to look at. I kept seeing Sue, all dressed up in the gown she'd made herself, and her father, who had the kind eyes a person wouldn't want to look into unless he had a clear conscience. And then I kept seeing myself -- a small-time operator in a small-town high school with an eye for a pretty girl and a taste for natty clothes. A guy who would ditch his date and leave her for someone else to take care of.

I hadn't really made up my mind about how to apologize to Sue on the following Monday when she came up to me in the school corridor. I noted with some surprise that she was smiling.

"This is for you, Tom," she said handing me a bundle. I could see from the look of it that it was my sweater.

"You're wrong," I said. "It's not for me. Look, Sue, I wouldn't have blamed you if you hadn't even spoken to me today. You don't think I'm going to let you give this to me now, do you?"

Sue looked serious, but somehow less shy and awkward than usual. "You took me to the dance," she said, "and this is just my part of the bargain."

"Okay," I blurted. "It was a bargain. And what did I do? I ran out on you -- left you for someone else to take home. I'm not entitled to anything but a slap in the face -- if you were the kind of girl to give it to me."

Sue pressed the package firmly into my hand. "No," she said, "I'm grateful. I had a good time after you left. You see -- I was embarrassed with you. In a way, I was paying you to take me to the dance, and I didn't like that. But Arch and the others I danced with after the intermission --" she paused, and her cheeks had that soft flush that changed Sue into someone special. "They asked me to dance again," she went on, "and not because they had to. Tom! I even had to refuse some offers to dance because I'd already accepted someone else! Can you imagine how that made me feel?"

I stared at her, and I was not seeing plain Sue Arnold who came into Pon's store with a grocery list every Thursday. I was looking at a pretty girl with more character than I could begin to appreciate. "Sue," I said, "I'll take the sweater. But we have to make another bargain first. You have got to agree to go to the senior play with me next week, and let me take you out other times too. You have to let me show you that I'm not the kind of guy you must think I am now."

"I'm sorry," Sue replied, "Archie is taking me to the senior play. But I'll admit something to you, Tom. Before the other night, I didn't have a high opinion of you. I did want to go to the dance -- partly to please Dad and partly for myself -- but if I'd liked you a lot, I couldn't have suggested the kind of bargain that I did. I guess I figured with you that it was all right."

I swallowed. "Why did you figure that, Sue?"

"Well, I was pretty sure that you wouldn't do anything that didn't seem to be in your own interest. I could count on you not to decide to ...to take pity on me"

That just about flattened me, and I guess I showed it because Sue quickly added, "Now I think I may have been wrong. I've been wrong about lots of things, Tom. For instance, I always thought a girl had to talk ...well, the way my mother does if she wanted to be asked out, or else be little and cute like Josie. But what I learned at the dance is that most people want you to be yourself."

"And with the rest it doesn't matter -- is that it, Sue?" I was glumly classifying myself with the rest.

"I guess that's it," she said. "Still...I'm being myself with you now, Tom, if that means anything."

The bell rang for the next class, and Sue gathered her books to leave. "I'll see you," she said, "and thanks, Tom. I mean that."

I watched her go, still holding the sweater she'd made for me. Then I walked slowly to my locker and laid it on the shelf. I don't mind saying that I was pretty mixed up, but one thing at least was clear. Even if that sweater was a perfect fit, I was going to have to grow some before I'd ever feel comfortable in it.

Sandra Christie Lea

PROM

The Junior Prom will be tonight.
I really must start to prepare.
I'll wash my hair and brush it bright;
Then I'll decide what to wear.

Will it be the blue dress, or the pink?
That's a problem I must debate,
But I don't have very long to think;
I'm sure the music starts at eight.

'Most all the girls will have a date,
But I suppose I'll go alone.
I must go now; I can't be late,
For I'm to be their chaperone.

Alice Fenton

THE QUEST

See you that brown wanderer westwardly winding,
His pale, scorched, blue eyes gazing into the sun?
He is eagerly seeking, but, so far, not finding
That for which since his childhood this quest was begun.

He follows a rainbow of sunset's rich colors;
Self-promised a treasure to reach by and by:
To that bright horizon his footsteps now hasten
Where it seems the green earth must unite with the sky.

Thus ever to westward, then westward turns eastward --
Eastward is homeward and homeward is best.
At last he returns to the home of his childhood:
In a worn, weathered cottage finds welcome and rest.

I, save for strong home-ties so happily binding,
Might, myself, have thus followed the course of the sun.
Across mountains steep, oceans wide, rivers winding,
Still searching in vain when life's cycle is run.

I, too, felt the lure of the roads that meandered
On through the green valleys, around the far hills:
My spirit preceded as he crossed deep rivers,
Understood his bright glows of expectancy's thrills.

I now, through this wanderer, know that the treasures
Our hearts ever yearn for -- the end of the quest --
Is at the beginning: A home and some loved ones,
A life filled with service, a night-time for rest.

Mrs. Martin Rucker

DECADENCE

I paused a moment in the open door
 And looked toward the gravestones on the hill.
 I lingered there, not wanting to go in,
 I knew the empty house was dark and chill.

I saw the flower beds beside the porch,
 Robbed of all color but the dun of brick
 That had fallen from the crumbling chimney
 Where slender ivy vines had once grown thick.

The garden's rows o'ergrown with weeds now dead,
 With now and then a withered, upturned root.
 The tumbling orchard wall keeps only one
 Old tree still clinging to its shriveled fruit.

Once children played beneath the dead oak tree,
 Its broad arms had been sheltered from the rain.
 The wooden swing that hung from the lowest branch
 Is gone, except a bit of rusty chain.

To the hill with its fresh, new mound of earth
 I turned again, and then I went inside --
 Though death had come, I went on,
 Just then, it was unimportant why.

Alice Fenton

STORM

Darkness tints the land as night draws near,
 And blue and purple shadows lurk about.
 The heavy air foretells a summer storm;
 A sudden wind roars in to break the calm,
 And all at once the sky is torn apart
 By silver streaks that pierce the rim of black.
 A tree is etched against the brilliant light,
 And is struck down by lightning's jagged sword.
 The thunder rolls and rumbles overhead,
 Then all is still; a moment's hush prevails.
 Now sparkling sheets of water pelt the ground,
 The waiting's over, the the rain is here.

Alice Fenton

ADOLESCENCE

I watched you standing there
So hopeful, young, so tender
In the sunlight;
And it was too much.
I had to break away
And race into the surf,
And jump the waves, and splash.
I laughed aloud.
When I came back, I walked
Beside you up the beach.
Janice Brisack

ANTICIPATION

pinkish velvet
blossoms on a young
peach tree
and busy, buzzing
bees make it
a promising spring.
Sandra Whitaker

FULFILLMENT

the golden-reddish
fruit weighting down
healthy branches
causes rejoicing
at harvest tide.
Sandra Whitaker

BLAST OFF!

"Give me your attention in the area. Attention, please." The barking sound filtered through loudspeakers strung around the field. "In exactly fifteen minutes the Manned Missile, "Pluto," will blast off. All visitors and Armed Forces personnel will now clear the area."

There was a buzzing sound, and then the speakers were silent.

There was a hurried retreat of spectators and men dressed in blue. Only three people remained near the shiny, steel-gray giant.

The giant came to life as the men entered it, turning switches, mashing buttons amongst a maze of other instruments. Hurriedly one settled himself in a heavily padded seat. Belts were fastened by practiced hands.

How many times had they done this thing? Fasten security belts, adjust pressure, activate the thermo-generators, then stand-by. But this time it was the real thing. Months of practice, every move, every adjustment done over and over, but this time it all seemed strangely new.

A lump formed in the throat of Jackson. Was this really the easy way out? At least the "chair" would have been quicker. But the professor said there was a chance.

"Jackson, good luck. You're going to need it. Now, if you should happen to forget your instructions as to what to do when you come out of the shock, your directions will be right over your head; so, there shouldn't be much reason for anything going wrong." The larger man spoke, and then he looked over his shoulder to the short pudgy man in the white coat and said, "Doctor King, do you have any last minute instructions for Jackson?"

The Professor hesitated, and then he spoke, "Jackson, whether or not you're guilty, I don't know. But, I do know this...you're doing a mighty brave thing, and if you make it, your country will be mighty proud of you...and if you don't make it, well, you'll be none the worse and at least your kids can have a good memory of their old man. Good luck, Jackson, and...and God bless you." The Professor turned quickly and hurriedly scampered down a ladder.

A nod was given by the larger man, and then, he, too, was gone.

"In exactly five minutes the Manned Missile will blast off. We will now test equipment." Jackson's ears rang. That crazy volume was up too high...too late to adjust it now.

Jackson lay still for a moment then tried to change his position. "These straps are too tight. Three days like this? It ain't gonna be easy to take."

"Five minutes. That's not much time." Thoughts raced through his mind.

"Wonder what it's like to be dead. Can't be much worse than living. What a rotten life. Ain't never done nothing right...maybe this will change things for me...yeah, it'll change all right, it'll kill me."

"Four minutes."

"Okay already. Four minutes, two hundred and sixty seconds. Ain't very long. I wonder why they picked a lug like me to make this historic flight. Must have checked my high school record. I gotta admit that I was pretty smart in arithmetic. Teacher said I was just a little below average. That was my best grade.

"First man to fly to the moon. That sounds pretty good. Jackson, world's first space traveller. Bet they'll put me right next to Old Stonewall Jackson in the Encyclopædia Britannica. Stonewall Jackson...then Stonehead Jackson. Pete'll be proud of his old man yet. I can see him now...telling his pals...See that spot on the moon? That's my Pa!

"Guess it's kind of an honor. Got my name in all the papers, picture took, had the best dinner I ever ate in my life. Guess it was probably as good as they serve in the 'Death House.' Always a good meal before they kill you. Me, I got a good meal, and I'm still kicking. Guess I outsmarted old Mr. Fate this time. Instead of going to the chair, I'm making a name for meself.

"I reckon life ain't as bad as I thought it was. It ain't half bad having folks respect you like this. Yeah, I'm kind of enjoying this."

"Jackson, this is Father Brown. Do you have any words that I can tell your loved ones?" The sound awoke Jackson from his daydreams.

"Hi, Father. Naw, I'll tell them when I get back. Everything's gonna be just fine. Ya know, Father, for the first time in my life I'm enjoying myself. The Professor said there's a good chance I'll make the trip, and I think everything's gonna be okay...I'll be back with a picture post card for everyone. You know, Father, this is the first really decent thing I've done in my life, and for once I can hold my head up... I'll be able to look the world in the face when I get back...Yeah, suddenly things don't seem so bad."

"Jackson...didn't they tell you?"

"Tell me what, Father? What do you mean?" Jackson's tone lowered.

"Jackson, I don't know how to say this. Your changes are very good. You'll most likely get there, but, uh...you can't come back. You see, Jackson, the missile can carry only fuel enough to carry you one way. You have sufficient supplies to carry you for a year or so; so, maybe it won't be so awful bad."

There was silence.

"Jackson. Do you hear me? Jackson, say something!"

Again there was silence, and then the voice boomed over the loud-speaker, "Prepare to blast off. Ten...nine...eight...seven...six..."

"No...Father, get me off of this thing...I don't want to die...I want to be with my boy...I've got something to live for. I can't die now... No...Father..."

"One...Zero...BLAST OFF!!!!"

Bill Rambo

NOSTALGIA

I like to think about the days gone by
 When cares were alien things, yet life was full;
 My joys were many: a glimpse of fragile violets
 "Mid dead leaves; the tangy taste of dewberries
 Barely red; the chill of spring-damp earth
 Against bare feet, winter-tender; songs
 Of birds to welcome spring (my heart sang too);
 At dusk the scent of honeysuckle, summer's
 Poignant fragrance; lying on the grass
 And gazing at the stars; playing house
 In a shady pine-grove, sheltered from the heat
 Of summer's sun; the pungent smell of smoke
 From burning leaves when autumn dressed herself
 For one last fling; crisp air that slowly chilled
 And brought Jack Frost to nip my nose and toes.
 In moments of nostalgic reminiscence
 I years for childhood's simple, joyous heart,
 And long for days that crept along so slowly,
 (Ah, crept along at the pace of a fleet gazelle)
 When cares were alien things and life was full.
 Lynne Lowe

VIEW

Seeing the sea,
 Feeling the view;
 The green of the lee,
 And the sky's pure hue.
 Feeling the breeze,
 Seeing the world;
 The sea-gulls' ease,
 And the planet's whirl.
 The rumble, the tumble, the pitching roar;
 The breaking, the raking of the sky's floor
 By the sea flood, the world's life blood,
 Makes a shattering, tattering flood
 Of emotion leap, and sweep with Devil's flames
 The world, and encompass worldly aims.
 Carl F. Dyes

DREAM

I dreamed a dream of days of old,
 Of shining armor and knights so bold
 That they would cross the deepest river
 To rescue a damsel and deliver
 Her from the dragon's heat.

The banners waved, and the steeds went prancing.
 With the jugglers juggling and the jesters dancing,
 The men would joust and rough and tumble,
 Then afterward would bow and humble
 At midday's feet.

But I do remember through my dreams,
 They had no T.V.'s or washing machines.
 Though I dreamed the dream of Camelot,
 I know I'm happier with what I've got --
 And drab old Pete.

Janece Hudson

O! TREE

O! Tree, who lifts your branches high
 To reach for sunlight in the sky,
 You show to all the world around
 The truths of nature that abound.

I care not of the heights you reach,
 Nor of the wonders that you teach.
 Only your beauty I see,
 And all your fullness as a tree.

Jerry Sechrist

THROUGH THE DOOR

The prison clock loudly struck the hour. Eight...nine...ten...eleven, and then Karan heard nothing but the distressing moans that her comrades made in their restless sleep. She listened closely for the click of the matron's heels coming toward her cell. Every night for three long months she had waited for the matron to make her eleven o'clock visit. The deafening rumble of thunder drowned out all of the usual night noises she experienced. Thinking of the time, Karan struggled to keep her eyes dry. Without warning, the lights blinked and faded out leaving Karan in complete darkness. The door at the end of the cell block opened, and Karan watched the oversized matron come toward her cell carrying a flashlight.

"You heard the clock, Karan. Do you want a preacher or anything, now?" the matron asked.

"Nothing," Karan answered. "What's wrong with the lights?"

"The power is off. It'll be fixed in a few minutes," the matron said.

"Would you let me borrow your flashlight? I'm afraid of the dark," Karan said.

The matron handed the light to her and disappeared into the darkness. Karan felt a twitch of gratitude toward the matron. She shined the dim light around the gloomy walls of her cell, and she wished that the light would not make ghostly, oversized shadows. The roaring rumble of thunder, the gloomy shadows, and the dreadful restlessness of her sister inmates' sleep frightened her. Her mind was preyed upon by the dread of death and the thoughts of eternal darkness with the force that a cat exerts pounding upon an innocent bird.

She tried to resist the fear by pretending that she was not in this ugly place. As she had often done in her youth, she pretended that she was living in a sawmill cottage with a husband and two bright children. Going around her small cell as a mother does looking after her children at night, she suddenly stopped and forgot her pretense. She realized that pretense was not any good when she looked at the small snapshot of a tall, slender man in slacks and a sport shirt. She viewed the picture dimly through her tear filled eyes. The night of the high school senior prom came flooding unwantedly into her mind. This night was like it. It had the same element of pretense, the same kind of fear, but there was something worse about this night. Bob would not let her pretend that she was not here just as the kids at the prom would not let her pretend that her cheap dress resembled the stuff that dreams are made from. The same mocking laughter was frozen on his face. Oh, how she hated that laugh, and she hated him.

The lights blinked causing alarm to spread all over her body making her skin goose-flesh. She wanted the lights to come on, but she did not want the electricity on. Every time she allowed herself to think of her fate at the end of the hour, she became a creature insane with fear.

Words that she had heard the preacher say every night for the last three months spun around in her mind. "Repent or go to Hell." Karan refused to believe that there was a Hell, yet she could not fully convince herself deep down in the depth of her mind. Nothing but darkness after death, and she was afraid of the darkness. She tried without success to forget the thought, but the condemning words of the preacher continued to play in her mind as though it were a record player, and the words were on a record.

The picture of Bob laughed at her, and when she could stand no more, she cried aloud, "Stop it!"

The sound of her own voice scared her into silence. No, she could not lose control of her mind. In vain she tried to convince herself that there was nothing to fear after death. Laying the flashlight on her bunk, she walked over to the bars of the door and gazed into the darkness of the cell block. Eagerly she seized upon the wild possibility that the power would not come on until after twelve o'clock, and then, they might have to set a new time for her execution, or even better, they might be forced to free her. Hope fed by her vivid imagination began to grow in her mind.

Looking at the picture of Bob, she smiled. The alarming words of the preacher became funny to her. She realized that darkness was her friend and light her enemy. The weak batteries in the flashlight died out, but Karan only laughed. She could no longer see Bob, but she could feel fear growing in his laugh. A loud clap of thunder gave her a feeling of security.

It was the same kind of feeling that she had felt when she first met Bob. An excitement came over her when she thought that Bob could get no revenge on her as he had promised. She knew that he did not know that Fate was on her side.

Hope continued to grow in her mind making her relive the happy times in her life. She remembered that night two years ago when she had first met Bob. A feeling of love replaced the hate in her heart, and she again felt the clean smile that he gave her the first time that he handed her his hat, and she thought of the decent way that he talked to her, a hatcheck girl. The thunder became the music of rumbling drums, and the darkness became the dance floor crowded with familiar and yet nameless faces. Later that night all of her warriness of men caused by her mother's mistake vanished, and she allowed Bob to take her home. The sounds of her sleeping comrades became the cheerful noises of early morning in the city which made the background perfect on that first time.

In the weeks that followed, many wonderful things happened to her causing her to experience a happiness that she never knew existed. Karan waited impatiently for Bob to come every night. She shared her dreams with him, and she made him a part of them. Happily she again experienced the warmth she felt when he would smile as she talked of a cottage in a small sawmill town. Her happiness was again marred when she remembered that Bob would not talk about his job or his life.

The striking of the clock spoiled her memories. A slight feeling of terror chilled her, and she shook all over. Her imagination finally recaptured hope for her, and she walked over to her bunk and lay down.

Stretching her arm, she picked up the picture beside Bob's picture. Tears warmed her eye lashes, and she recalled the morning that she had told Bob that they must get married right away, and he had laughed that snobish laugh. At first, she again experienced the disbelief of that morning, but the reality of her mother's story was too vivid for that falsehood to stay with her very long. Pride again denied her the right to accept her plight.

As suddenly as they had gone out, the lights came back on with the brightness of a blinding flood light it seemed to Karan. The really dim lights killed her hope as Bob had killed her dream. Once again the thunder, the moans of other prisoners, and death excited fear in her. She trembled as a mouse caught in a trap waiting for her executioner to discover his catch. Bob's mocking smile no longer had fear in it, and she knew that he knew he would get his revenge. The condemning word of the jury -- GUILTY, the sentence of the duty bound judge, the dying words of Bob, and the first cry of a baby chased each other through her thoughts. She wanted to stop the confusion, but it was impossible. Only hope could stop it, and for her there was no hope. From somewhere in the back of her mind came the words "Repent or go to Hell." The confusion stopped leaving only the sing-song of repent.

The door at the end of the room opened, and Karan watched the matron and the two guards walk toward her cell.

She walked through the door escorted by the two guards. For an instant, she stopped and turned and watched the door close behind her.

Sandra Whitaker

HOKKUS IN CYNICISM

Fame is the mirage
That leads many a weary
Talent to ruin.

Automation is
The god of fearful, dull minds
In sterile bodies.

Janice Brisack

FLOWERS

Daisies are bantam
Eggs seasoned with drops of dew
And fried in sunlight.

Bluebells are angels'
Tears touched with their perfume and
Tinted by the sky.

Tulips are little
Dutch cups filled with sunshine from
The land of windmills.

Chrysanthemums are
Fluffs of fleecy clouds tinted
With autumn's paint box.

Barbara Bailey

THE BEACH

The beach without its summer people makes
One think of lonely, weary, aged men.
The noise of bathers is as silenced as
The youth and friends of these old men.
The gray and white sea gulls are all that stay
To welcome summer stragglers. Memories,
The gulls of aged men, remain as their
One source of pleasure. Noise and crowds will bring
The beach to life next summer as the faith
Of aged men will give them youth again.

Sandra Whitaker

OCTOBER FIRES

The fire leaps up in graceful silhouette,
A lustrous glow to brighten daylight's end.
Its flame burns high, subduing fallen leaves,
Consuming them, destroying color, form.
A crown of smoke rests briefly on its head --
Then slowly leaves the torch to meet its fate.
A moment's glory, quickly spent and gone,
For Death has come to still the ardent bloom.

Alice Fenton

D E A T H ?

Mathematics is the platform upon which mankind stands awaiting the politically tightened noose of physics. Mathematics is an art, culture, or philosophy in itself, and it is considered by some scholars to be the science which has contributed most heavily to the advancement of civilization, and at the same time, it has undoubtedly prepared and paved the road to ultimate extinction of its star pupil.

The passing of life from a planet shall be, as far as the inhabitants of that planet are concerned, unreportable, and as a result of this regrettable fact, imagination becomes the essential ingredient of a narration concerning the demise of the planet.

Conjure, in your mind, a picture of set dimensions and containing absolutely nothing. This is as it will be after all has passed, for without perception, creation has no meaning. A king's subject is how crown, for without a subject, the crown has no significance.

It is fitting that we should contemplate our absence before it occurs, since we will not be able to do so afterwards. The empty void which will envelop this space after our emotion-inspired, politically-manipulated death will bear no trace of the happiness, philosophy, sorrow, or joy which preceded and was replaced by this nearly perfect vacuum. Our physical life will not help or hinder the passing of time.

But what of the supernatural effects, impressions, or activations? This people of diverse races, creeds, fraternities, and aspirations had belief, but was it well founded? Will a just and righteous God forgive a man so crude and base as to place the blame of death upon His doorstep? Does death deserve the noble raiment with which man has adorned it? If it does, is death then the lofty aim of this, our life of frightened worship?

Byron Lynn Beiard

THE TREE

The old tree had stood for many years, its huge trunk carved by lovers, its branches a haven for birds. Countless people had sought shelter under its branches, and tonight the old tree would again protect someone from the threatening storm.

As the first gusts of wind brought the rain slashing down, a man hurried through the gathering darkness. The rain thickened, and the sky was torn by a terrible flash of lightning, causing the man to dash under the old tree. In the dim light, the man saw a narrow hollow in the side of the massive trunk and ducked inside. "Rather cozy," he mused. "Wonder why they haven't patched this old fellow?" he thought recalling the neatly filled holes in all of the other trees he saw in the park. Had not the wind been screaming, the man might have guessed the answer, the muted rustling of cells dividing, growing, multiplying, faster and faster. The hole behind him was slowly growing smaller!

The man shifted his feet in the mouldy earth and heard a metallic clink. Stooping, he struck a match and saw an old ring. In the flickering light, he could see another, then a watch, and then several of them all in varying stages of corrosion. Puzzled, the man arose, his shoulders scraping the sides of the hollow. "Funny, it seemed larger when I came in," thought the man as he turned to look out the hole. The hole! Where was it? Striking another match, he saw a small, slowly closing opening where the wide cleft had been, and like a drowning man, he plunged his hand through it. The hole grew smaller while the hand clawed at the bark. From within the trunk, there came a muted, animal-like scream! In a final, convulsive moment, the hand grasped a small branch, tore it from the tree, and was still. From the stub of the broken branch oozed a thick, red drop which fell glistening on the slowly disappearing hand...

Jack B. Gaston

ASHES OF THE PEN

White floating ashes on the wind;
Glaring light of a crumpled page;
A sudden quirk of The Will
Destroys the work of the pen.

Reeling flames push hotly
On downey ashes of the crumpled sheet
Curling and whirling higher;
Lost in the night of space.

Flame and heat and script are past,
No floating ashes on the breeze.
Only the scribbling pen
On parchment left behind.

Carl F. Dyes

ON INVOLVEMENTS AND COMMITMENTS

No rhyme
No time
No theme
No scheme
No class
No pass
No pen
No ten
No "C"
No plea
Lazy!

Wanda DuBose