

Spring 1959

TEF, Vol. 5 No. 1

Terry Youngblood Grey
Stephen F Austin State College

Jerry Reck
Stephen F Austin State College

Roberta Jefferies
Stephen F Austin State College

Clara Anthony
Stephen F Austin State College

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SPRING 1959

TEEF



Marquell Ledford

Pine Log, June 19, 1959

Creating Writing Awards Given

Two creative writing awards were given this week for the best works published in TEF. Mrs. Roberta Jefferies won the poetry prize for her poem "Western-Born," and Mrs. Wanda Williams won the fiction prize for her short story "Homecoming." Poetry was judged by Dr. T. E. Ferguson, Emeritus Dean of the college and former head of the English department, and the fiction was judged by Charlotte Montgomery, well-known author of many books. Three of Mrs. Montgomery's books have been Junior Guild Selections. The first was Necessary Nellie, 1945; its sequel, Nellie and the Mayor's Hat, 1947; and The Green Poodles in 1956. She was awarded the Cokesbury Bookstore Juvenile Award given in 1953 at the Texas Institute of Letters in Dallas for her Magic for Mary M.

"This issue of the magazine contains several good poems, I believe," said Dr. T. E. Ferguson, "and it was after much consideration that I chose 'Western-Born.'" He added that his choice was probably personal preference and that perhaps as good or almost as good were five others who should receive honorable mention. These poems are "A Man" and "Leaves" by Clara Anthony; "Yearning" and "To a Cardinal" by Mrs. Jefferies; and "Transition" by Mrs. Ted Trout.

In judging the fiction, Mrs. Montgomery said, "Of the stories in this issue, 'Homecoming' seems to me to show more feeling for the medium than the others. There is an attempt to form the characters and to make these characters motivate the action. There are some vivid pieces of description," she said, "which make the reader part of the picture." She gave for example

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Awards—

(Continued from Page One)
the spinning turnips and the rivulet of blood.

"'The Reverend and the Waitress,' I thought, failed because of its lack of characterization," Mrs. Montgomery said.

"On the Same Day," she commented, seemed somewhat obscure. There was a feeling of straining for effect.

The poetry award was made by the Women's Faculty Club. The officers of the club are Mrs. A. L. Long, President, Mrs. W. T. Chambers, Vice President, Mrs. Larry Covin, Treasurer, and Mrs. Thomas Scott, Secretary.

The fiction award was given by Mrs. Ted Trout.

"I am very happy," says Clara Anthony, Editor of the TEF, "that the Women's Faculty Club and Mrs. Trout have made these prizes available, and I hope they will become a permanent incentive for better creative writing on the campus."

Dr. Elma Heard is sponsor of the TEF. Dr. T. J. Kallsen made the awards. The magazine takes its name from the initials of Dr. T. E. Ferguson to whom the magazine is dedicated because of his continued encouragement and stimulation of young writers.

TEF
COLLEGE LITERARY MAGAZINE
SPRING, 1959

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THE NOBLE EFFORT

With pen in hand I strive to write
Some great and noble poetry;
One line of worth and wisdom bright,
An ageless gem--my reverie.

But though I rack my eager brain
And write, with fervor, hours on end,
The outcome always seems the same--
I tear it up and start again.
Terry Youngblood Gray

SOMETIMES

Sometimes I think about the past,
Nineteen years of happiness,
And I feel satisfied
And secure.

But then my thoughts turn to the future,
An unknown span of unknown outcome,
And I feel frightened
And depressed.

Jerry Reck

MANUSCRIPT OF GOD

Perfect shell of a tiny ear,
Minuscule markings of an infant hand,
I wonder at their patterns.
With a sudden sweep I feel
A moment of deep and lasting awe,
Profound enough to last a lifetime.
Such truth comes rarely to most
And never comes to some.

Roberta L. Jefferies

HISTORY AND PROPHECY OF MANKIND

How does man destroy his foe?
 With a club, with a club.
 How does man impart a blow?
 With a sling, with a sling.

How does man rout enemies?
 With a knife, with a knife.
 How does man make rivals flee?
 With a sword, with a sword.

How does man kill other men?
 With a gun, with a gun.
 How does man destroy them then?
 With a plane, with a plane.

How does man destroy a ship?
 Submarine, submarine.
 How does man a nation strip?
 Hydrogen, hydrogen.

How does man destroy his foe?
 With a club, with a club.
 Clara Anthony

ONLY THE VERY YOUNG

"Only the very young and old can laugh."
 'Twas a curious thing for a prelate to say!
 And I pondered as I searched for the truth of his
 words
 Through the experiences of my few brief years,
 Until suddenly I stopped and chuckled with glee,
 Knowing full well that this sage wisdom was not
 meant for me.

Larry Spradley

ON SELECTIVE READING

I believe that originality is a characteristic trait of college students, despite the feeling among our English profs that we express ourselves in our themes like so many stereotyped morons. My assumption is based on such examples as one that occurred only a few days ago.

Returning to my apartment after an 8 o'clock eco class, I was pondering the predicament of my roommate who had recently confided in me a problem which he felt perhaps I could help him solve. He was having difficulty with the literature part of freshman English, and his prof had warned him sternly that unless he made a hasty recovery, his grades were certain to suffer a decline.

My roommate's difficulty, the prof was quick to point out, was that he had no background in contemporary literature, to say nothing of the classics. His remedy, as she diagnosed the case, would be plenty of outside "selective reading," for which he would earn some extra credit. To me, my chum had assigned the task of selecting the reading.

I arrived home feeling competent and assured. Under my arm were three books that I thought would start him--by easy steps--on the high road to erudition: "Where did you go?" "Out" "What did you do?" "Nothing," Robert Smith's latest hit of nostalgia for juvenile delinquency; James Thurber's Dogs; and that relatively harmless bit of pornography, Is Sex Really Necessary?

I entered our smokey little domicile--and there he was, standing flat-footed in the center of the room, one arm poised just above his head, and in his fingers, lightly held, a small dart! His eyes were tightly closed, but his aim was directed toward the general area of a large bookcase standing against the opposite wall.

My first thought was that his mind had "snapped." I had warned him that so much smoking, peanut-butter sandwiches, and late hours would ruin him mentally.

"What on earth are you doing, Kenneth?" I exclaimed, ready to duck in the event he should turn on me.

"Selective reading," he muttered as he flung the dart, plunging it a quarter of an inch into the back of a small book.

With a sigh of relief, I realized he had taken matters into his own hands and had devised his own method of selection. With an air of responsibility he strolled over to the shelf and pulled out his selection. It was Faulkner's Knight's Gambit.

"Some kind of a damn love story," he stated seriously, "about a knight and his 'broad.'" With this, he stretched himself across his bed and began reading intently.

I said no more, but seated myself at my desk and began to study. I returned my three books to the library the following day.

Ben Pleasant

SUBTLE GREEN

In soft dampness,

the earth,

cool to the touch with the premature verde of a captured thing.

It will come,

unnoticed in the slow way of growing things,

and only then will we know,

it is Spring...

Bill Petty

SEASONS

Busy birds
Chirping so gay
In fragrant forest
And lilac lane
Implant springtime
In my heart again.

Sighing breeze
Whispering low
Through swaying pine trees
And sycamores
Reminds me June
Has returned once more.

Falling rain
Peppering down
On peaceful pasture
And forlorn fawn
Ushers in winter
All over again.

Frothy snow
Lazily falls
On drowsy suburbs
And snow-bound farm
Renews a feeling
Of felicitude.

Joyce Mace

SMALL TOWN

In this small town in which I live
 The day begins early, but so slow;
 Routine movements, familiar sounds,
 Cars moving in a single row.

A gradual rise in the muffled noises,
 A merchant, humming, opens shop,
 Loafing policeman, sipping coffee;
 Comes noon, everything must stop.

Leisurely eaten lunch,
 Creeping afternoon,
 Resting shineboy, drowsing banker,
 Day's ending, quitting time soon.

J. R. Wright

AFFAIR

Candle light reflects in your eyes.
 You sit surrounded by music of the band.
 Your smile holds a promise;
 Forgetting I'm married, I kiss your hand.

Once we sat here together;
 Far into the night we could dream.
 People could understand it then.
 Now their eyes with suspicion gleam.

You were my steady girl;
 A stolen kiss was my right.
 But now you're my wife,
 A kiss means we've had a fight.

J. R. Wright

EVERY DAY AND NIGHT

Six thousand boyhood yesterdays
Oft' times are my delight.
I am sentimental, and to some it appears
A tragedy that years
Should see daydreams direct the plays
Of every day and night.

My beauty is called
An old home site
Where oaken trees
Project a breeze
That once had marked the fall
Of every day and night.

I see the waves of grasses, hays,
Whose harvests at twilight,
'Neath golden red gigantic moons,
And in Autumn's arid afternoons;
These memories still affect the ways
Of every day and night.

Of this my heart still sings.
What if I've gone away?
Memories are our second chances,
Reruns of our old romances,
And T.V. screens are now the kings
Of every night and day.

Keith Allred

HOMECOMING

Lollie padded in her barefeet across the deep blue carpet and jerked the silk-tassled cord. The drapes slid silently back, and the thick sunlight poured in. She closed her eyes against the brilliance and hugged herself, basking in the warmth. The liquid sunshine of home. Not like the thin, pale light that for a few short hours each day filtered over the campus of the northern university she had left a few days ago.

Perhaps the sunshine was a good omen. Maybe it would dispel the uneasiness left inside her from the argument she had had with her father the night before.

She flushed at the memory. It was the first night Damon had been in her home, and her father had been in one of those black moods. All she had said was that something should be done about the shanties which lined the highways of their state.

"Lollie, I don't know what kind of ideahs you may have picked up from those Yankess, but yoah home now. We do things ^{scouah}own way down heah." Her father's southern accent got thicker when he was angry.

"But, Daddy, I can't be one person there and another here," she had answered. Her protest had sounded weak to her own ears. It had always been that way, all her life. She could hold her own with anyone but her father.

Her tiny mother, fluttering about for some means to break the mounting tension, relievedly began to usher them toward the dining room when the Negress came quietly to the door and announced dinner. Glad for the escape, they had all got up quickly, but as usual, her father had the last word.

"Ev'rybody down heah has his cert'in place. That's the way things are, and nobody can change them. All you need is a few days at home to straighten out."

"Well, I won't let it spoil my holiday," she thought as she turned away from the window. The deep pile of the carpet felt good to her feet as she walked across the room to the dressing table. As she ran a comb through her thick black hair, jerking the tangles of a night's restlessness, she gazed not at the reflection of her slim figure, but at the reflection of the room.

She saw the French Provincial furniture that she had chosen when she was allowed, as a young lady of eighteen, to redecorate her room. The deep blue of the carpet, the muted silver-blue of the draperies, and the scarlet brocaded chair passed the sweep of her gaze. Her choices had been wise, she decided. At twenty she still loved them all. But then, she had always been good at making minor decisions.

The spartan interior of her dormitory room suddenly focused in her mind, and she felt a strange wave of emotion sweep over her.

"Homesick?" She ruefully questioned the girl in the mirror. Well, if she was, it wasn't for that room. It was for that comfortable niche of a world which she and Damon had made theirs.

She remembered the first time she had heard Damon's mock drawl. Her languid "heah" in answer to class roll call had brought a titter from the other students. Damon had leaned across the aisle and whispered, "Scha-lut, honey-chile, you-all is a sight for soah eyes."

From that first moment she had been aware of a difference in her feeling for this man and the boys she had known at home. In a few short weeks he became the pivot of her universe.

He was forever teasing her about her Southern origin, about cornpone, and black-eyed peas and magnolias in the moonlight. But at times he didn't tease at all.

"Lollie, I appreciate the fact that you've been brought up with a lot of ideas that you can't help. But, honey, you've got to face facts. 'Color,' as you call it, has nothing to do with a man's worth. The mind, the heart, the soul aren't white or black."

At first she didn't understand the words. She only heard his passionate tone and saw the flash of his deep brown eyes. Then later, when they were spending every spare moment together, Damon explained himself earnestly, brushing his fingers through his blond crewcut as he concentrated on making her understand.

She had tried to defend her position, and then, as Damon's logic took shape and as her feelings for him intensified so that he needed no logic at all to persuade her, she saw that she had no defense.

Damon talked to her about his childhood in France where the friends of his diplomat father were from countries scattered around the globe. Because of this background, he had instantly made friends with people of every nationality and color on their big metropolitan campus. In the beginning she had felt embarrassed, speechless, when a dark student at one of their parties had offered to get her a drink and had stayed to talk with her. She knew he had felt her reticence and, almost gently, he had eased the conversation into smooth channels until she was actually enjoying herself.

One night, many parties and classes and coffee breaks later, she abruptly halted mentally and noted that the color of the face was no longer a barrier between her and the human being standing before her.

Damon had understood when she tried to explain this feeling to him.

"Thank heavens, honey-chile. I knew from the first time I saw you that you were kind all the way through, but I was afraid to let this issue ride. If I am lucky enough to get into the diplomatic service, this thing could have eventually destroyed us. I love you too much to risk that."

A muted slam of a door down the hallway jolted Lollie back to reality.

Everything seemed so simple then. Surely a few hundred miles could not make so much difference. A tremor shook her. "Somebody's walking over my grave," she thought, quickly turning toward the closet. She must hurry and get dressed if she and Damon were to get to town in time for lunch.

A short hour later she was sitting beside Damon in the familiar interior of her father's big car. This was the first real chance they had had to talk since last night's scene.

Lollie reached a white-gloved hand forward and switched down the volume of the radio music that filled the car.

"Darling, I want to apologize for last night. You can't know how grateful I am that you kept silent. Daddy's really sweet, but he is set in his ways and anything you might have said would have only made things worse."

"I know, sweet," Damon answered. "It was all right, I like your parents, and I want them to like me. I wasn't pussyfooting about the issue, but I just didn't see any reason to get into an argument on my first visit. Your dad and I may disagree on some things, but we both love you. I guess we can compromise on everything else."

He smiled at the windshield, concentrating on handling the speeding car as they rounded a turn where the concrete strip almost doubled back in the direction they had come.

"Anyway, Lollie," he added, "as long as you and I see eye to eye, that's all that matters."

The tires protested as the big car swung around the curve and up atop a tiny hill.

They saw it at the same time. A tiny, ancient truck, creaking along under its weight of age and rust. A white-haired old Negro sat perched, unaware of the horror bearing down upon him.

As long as Lollie lived she would never forget the next brief seconds. They would remain a nightmarish strip of mental film projected over and over upon the screen of her brain.

Damon stepped on the brakes. He was a good driver, much too good to jam the brakes to the floor, but he was not familiar

with the car. He hit them harder than he intended, and for an eternity they skidded toward the truck. The scene unreeled itself in slow motion before Lollie. She didn't scream or brace herself. She only felt a deep, shaking anger at the old man.

The first sound of impact was a flat thud. Then came a confusion of ripping, tearing metal as the big car ran through the truck.

Damon pulled her from the car as soon as it was completely stopped. They had been protected by an armor of expensive metal. Maybe a few bruises would show up later, but now they appeared unscathed. The car would have to be towed to town, but its damages were repairable.

The old man lay face down on the concrete several feet away from the twisted wreckage of his truck. Big purple and white turnips lay strewn about him like flowers, some still dancing and spinning.

"I ought to pick up his turnips," Lollie thought dazedly.

Damon bent over the still form and turned the old man face up. Blood that had been running a bright red rivulet toward the closed eyes now reversed its course and began to make a stain in the matted white hair.

Lollie watched in fascination as the stain grew larger. Damon felt for the pulse. "He's still alive," he grunted, reaching in his pocket for a handkerchief.

"Here, Lollie, put your arm under his head and wipe his face. I'll go down the road and see if I can get help."

Lollie did not move. The blood was streaming faster, soaking the handkerchief.

"Hurry, darling! If we don't get a doctor quick, this man may die." Damon looked up impatiently. Lollie knelt down and slid her arm under the old man's head. Blood smeared across the sleeve of her white blouse. She jerked her arm away, and the man's head snapped back.

"I can't hold that old man, I can't. He's dirty and bloody, and he's just an old nig..." The shock of her words almost choked Lollie. The rough concrete was scraping her knees, but she could not find the strength to rise.

Only the rasping of the old man's breathing broke the silence. Slowly Lollie moved her head back until she could see Damon's face above her. His mouth was a set line in the whiteness of his face. Only his eyes seemed alive, betrayed. He moved around her, careful not to brush against her skirt.

Lollie knelt on the concrete highway and watched him walk away from her down the road.

Wanda Williams

FIRST PRIZE

A splash of color to my right
 Made me turn and stare.
 For minutes I stood there and looked,
 Wondering how anyone could dare
 To place such a horror in full view
 For passers-by to see.

A blob of red, a streak of blue,
 It really looked quite weird.
 A line of green, a splotch of brown,
 And as the object I neared,
 More intricate patterns on the thing
 I began to see.

In a way it looked like a painter's easel
 And in another way it couldn't.
 I wanted to touch its multicolored surface
 But I decided that I shouldn't.
 For it looked like it was wet--
 Or was it dry?

I stared at it up close and I
 Examined it from afar.
 I even looked from the left and the right:
 Its secret I couldn't mar.
 But I couldn't leave just now with
 The mystery unsolved.

The more I looked, the longer I stayed,
 The more things I discovered.
 Every time I looked at it
 My mind became all smothered
 With wonders of "What can this be?"
 Or "Can it?"

A strange gray film covered it all
 Making it look hazy.
 I rubbed my eyes and scratched my head,
 Thinking I'd gone crazy.
 And I noticed a small purple dot
 Of unimportant size.

The object must have been two by three
 Or maybe even bigger.
 It was perfectly flat in its wide-white frame:
 What it was I couldn't figure.
 And that's when I noticed a big blue ribbon
 Reading "First Prize."

Jerry Reck

A MAN

I met a man upon the road today,
 A big man with an ordinary face--
 A large mouth, a great and fleshy nose,
 A dirty denum cap upon his head.
 This face I could not easily classify
 As kind, or cruel, intelligent, or stupid;
 He simply looked at me for just a moment
 With eyes that seemed to have a glaze on them.
 I often see such men in daily work
 Come late and weary from the mill or farm;
 Except for the eyes of this one man
 I could not know the gaze he fixed on me.
 'T was not the glassy stare of a man drunken
 Nor was it anger as if hate were there,
 But just a far away and absent stare
 As if behind those eyes so memorable
 His mind were fixed on things I cannot know.
 Clara Anthony

YEARNING

A train whistles low
 In the night. Its plaintive call
 Beckons me to come.

Where? It matters not.
 Any place that's new and strange
 Would fill this yearning.

Fresh sights and faces,
 Exotic lands and vistas
 Rise before my eyes.

The steady rhythm
 Of the wheels on iron rails
 Is a welcome sound.

It bids me follow
 And promises adventure
 And experience.

I cannot account
 For this streak of the gypsy
 In one who's hearth-bound.
 Roberta Jefferies

FATE OF A REACTIONARY

Hiram would sit in a cane-bottomed chair
 On the rough-planked porch of pine
 And gaze down the sweep of the bull-nettled yard
 Where the fence tried to stay on a line.

Every once in a while he would spit in the dust
 From the cud that he held in his cheek.
 He would noisily clear his throat, shift his chair,
 And on many matters would speak.

His opinions were not based on much fact, it is feared,
 His references were not too wide--
 He simply thought back to what Gran'pap did
 In the years on the farm till he died.

"These new cars?" Hiram asked. "They are terrible things
 Made for fools and daredevils to ride.
 As for me, I'll just stick to old Nell and the rig
 My folks had when old Gran'pap died."

"Electricity is nonsense," Hiram declared,
 "For people who wish being fried.
 As for me I will take a kerosene lamp--
 My Gran'pap used one till he died."

On the subject of crops Hiram knew quite a lot,
 But all modern machines he'd deride,
 "Tractors," he'd snort, "are for sissies, not men.
 Gran'pap plowed till the day that he died."

Alas! It is sad to relate Hiram's end,
 One telling it cannot stay dry-eyed.
 After hours of plowing, tired old Nell kicked a lamp--
 In the blaze of the barn Hiram died.

Wanda Williams

RAIN

The dark still shadow passes overhead,
 Great drum - rolls distantly anticipate
 Arrival--Flashes penetrate the black
 As liquid silver music beats the grass.

Keith Allred

THE NON-CONFORMIST'S LAMENT

I will not declare that a sack has a flair,
Or that houses should stand in a row,
Or believe that Eliot is the Bard of today
Just because it is stylish to say so.

I will not stock my walls with brass clocks,
Or quaint little prints of Van Gogh,
Or courageously choke on my barbecue smoke
Just because it is modish to do so.

I will go my own way! You agree, do you say?
There are thousands who think just like me?
Egad! It is plain that I must change again,
Or conform to this non-conformity!

Wanda Williams

THE RIGHT TO CRY

I want to cry;
I really want to cry.
But not one single tear will form,
And not one single sob will come.

I try hard;
I really try hard.
But through age I've lost the privilege,
The ability, the very right to cry.

Jerry Reck

TRANSITION

These lovely things I shared with you
 Wane with the death of young love's dreams:
 Deep scarlet leaves on green-based trees,
 Mirrored in waves of cool, clear water,
 Turn sere and brown and prostrate,
 And drop from lone, grey limbs o'er murky pools;
 Holding his harvested hickory nut,
 A vigilant squirrel scampers into oblivion,
 Stilled by an ardent hunter's gun;
 A flashing fish on a taut line playing
 Now lies quiet and spent in the fisherman's boat;
 Resonant rain on a tin-roofed cabin
 Fades into whispers of slow-dying mist;
 Iridescent logs in a warm fireplace
 Char to black coals on an icy hearth.
 These lovely things I shared with you
 Are gone; and with them I died too.
 Ted Trout

ANONYMITY

Faces in the crowd
 People walking fast
 People walking slow
 Faces going past.

City lights and noise
 Screeching auto brakes
 Flashing neon signs
 Dull and helpless ache.
 Clara Anthony

THE REVEREND AND THE WAITRESS

The first time that Reverend Barrett was alone with Sheila, his social trendex dropped 50%. If he had just stayed in the church office a few more minutes, he wouldn't have been in the restaurant when Sheila left work. Then he couldn't have walked her home, and old Queen Victoria wouldn't have seen him as he left her at the gate.

"Good evening, Mis-ter Barrett." Mrs. Jak Random raised her nose so high into the air that her glasses nearly tumbled off backwards. She had apparently heard about Sheila. She usually knew everything about everybody in Croftsville.

On his way the reverend debated with himself the effect that this incident might have on his future. Maybe the Randoms would withdraw from his church as they had from the Community Center organization when they heard that dancing would be allowed there. Since they financially supported about one third of the church program, their absence would be felt if they should leave.

And he wanted to hold and build this church. It was his chance for bigger things.

"We'll all have our eyes on you," Reverend Bond, his predecessor, had told him. "This church has as much potential as any small church in Virginia. I know you'll improve its record."

As his steps mechanically led him around a corner and toward his apartment, he saw the large Random house with its magnificent pillars looking down at him from a hill about four blocks away. Random house was a large plantation-type home, a relic of the Old South.

Every person in Secodocan County knew the history of the Randoms. There had been a United States Senator, a Civil War hero, and a famous lawyer from the family. Jak's only claim to fame was his name. He had made no attempt to accomplish anything. He and his wife seemed to be content with using his inherited power in Croftsville.

Now Reverend Barrett was to be at the mercy of the worthy successors to the Random estate.

Why had he been so careless as to let himself love Shelia, with her uncombed hair and sloppy dress? How could a man of

God love a waitress who kept a cigarette hanging from one corner of her mouth and whose every word would make a marine's parrot blush?

Barrett had asked himself these questions many times before, but there was never an answer.

At first he had only stopped at Lacy's for an occasional glass of milk, but this soon became a habit. As they became more familiar, Sheila had told the reverend her problems as well as her happinesses. He learned among other things that she had come to Croftsville from Pennsylvania after her husband was killed in a traffic accident.

The thing that continually dominated the reverend's impression of Sheila was the searching, faraway look in her eyes. Her eyes were beautifully sad. They seemed to tell Reverend Barrett that all purpose had been stolen from her life, but that she hadn't given up hope of leaving the world with more than she had taken from it.

Sheila had one remaining interest, a flower garden. In fact when Barrett had invited her to come to his church some Sunday, she said she couldn't because she spent all her Sundays with her flowers.

"God is closer to me in my flower garden than He ever was at church," she explained.

What would Mr. and Mrs. Random think of a minister's wife who wouldn't come to church on Sunday?

His thoughts were interrupted as he reached his apartment.

Sunday morning, the people of Croftsville filled the church as they had so often done since Reverend Barrett had been there. As usual, the space in the center of the second row was empty until Mr. and Mrs. Random made their awaited appearance.

Mr. Random was pale and stooped and moved slowly like a person in poor health. Attached to his arm was the ever-present wife. She was fat and walked with her nose toward heaven. Reverend Barrett remembered one of the children's description of Mrs. Random's entrance--an overweight hunting dog. But he didn't feel like laughing.

Reverend Barrett automatically made his way through the sermon although he wasn't conscious of what he was saying. His thoughts were all of Mrs. Random and what her decision might be.

At the end of the service he stood at the door, speaking to those who stopped.

Mrs. Random and her husband were the last to leave. The reverend braced himself as he saw them coming.

As usual, she did the talking.

"Reverend Barrett, Jak and I think that you are now receiving a more than adequate salary, considering the size of the church.

But you do seem to have a certain appeal to the common people, and the attendance has been steady since you came. Therefore, Jak and I think that we can persuade the budget committee to recommend that the church raise your salary somewhat for the coming year."

The reverend knew that there was more to come.

"But you have also been seen walking home with certain unsatisfactory company. We realize that maybe you might want to invite a young lady to go with you to some places, but ministers should be seen only with ladies of character."

"Yes, and we could never contribute to the salary of one who does otherwise." Jak said his little part.

"Mrs. Random, I am sorry that you do not like Sheila. I didn't either until I got to know her. Please give her a chance."

"Well, maybe...", Jak started.

"Don't be stubborn, Reverend." Mrs. Random didn't mind interrupting her husband. "You don't owe this tramp anything. You have no obligation to stand by her. Maybe love is your excuse. If it is, forget it. Love does not exist, except in fools. Learn to be strong. Live by the laws, and you will not need love."

"Mrs. Random, if we all loved each other, there would be no need for laws. Some of us love our wives or husbands, our children, our parents, and nobody else. Remember that Christ added one to the Ten Commandments, 'that you love one another.' Even if I were not considering marrying the girl, I would love her."

"Well, if you feel that way about it--if you are going to disregard my advice completely--I am sure Jak and I can put our money into some other church."

Reverend Barrett had prepared himself for the worst, and he was getting it. His choice was between Sheila and the Crofts-ville church.

"Even though I have been here for only about three months, I have become attached to this church and its people," he told the Randoms, "and I love a waitress from what you would call a second-class restaurant. I hope that someday you will realize that it was not the restaurant or Sheila or the common people who were second-class. Your assets might be greater than theirs, but does that mean that you are greater or better than any of those people? How much of your property have you earned, and how much of theirs have they earned? This is how you should measure your classes if you want to have classes. You will have my resignation tomorrow."

The reverend closed the church doors as the Randoms stepped from the sidewalk into their black Cadillac. He walked toward his apartment.

Keith Allred

THE ARMADILLO

Have you seen an armadillo
 in the spring?
 In the spring?
A baby armadillo
 in the spring?
When the spreading roots are sprouting
Then he goes upon an outing
What a snorting and a snouting
In the spring!

Have you neared an armadillo
 in the spring?
 In the spring?
Just a baby armadillo
 in the spring?
He is almost blind, a'lack!
And his house is on his back,
But, how he rustles for his snack
In the spring!

Do you know he has three brothers
 in the spring?
 In the spring?
Or, if a girl, she has three sisters,
 in the spring?
Then when all the brooks are brawling
And grubs and ants begin a-crawling
They come to lunch without a calling
In the spring!

Have you seen a patch of melons
 in the spring?
 In the spring?
Of ripe, juicy watermelons
 in the spring?
Then this boy, with all his brothers,
Older sisters, aunts, and others,
Gather there to show their "druthers"
In the spring!

If you have not looked on Nature
 in the spring,
 In the spring,
Have not viewed some tiny creature
 in the spring--
Almost helpless, though sublime--
Filling out its link of time,
You should go into the woodlands
In the spring!
 Mrs. Martin W. Rucker

TO A CARDINAL

Oh beauteous feathered streak of flaming hue!
I've searched for you through verdant shrubs and trees
With bated breath. The briefest glimpse of you
Is quite enough to send a surge of joy--
Or is it pain--through every part of me.
Your call is an alert. On guard I stand
Until my eyes have told my heart to skip.
Though blind were I, your beauty and your song
Would pierce through gloom and bring a shaft of light.
 Mrs. Roberta L. Jefferies

LEAVES

While walking in a forest all alone
 And in a somber mood of solitude,
 I stopped by a tree I oft' have known
 For I am a frequent visitor to this wood.
 I looked at all the leaves which Fall had slain
 And strewn about the ground in disarray
 To live in wait of Winter's cold and rain
 And then to disappear into the clay.
 Some leaves were battered as if tired and aged,
 Some frayed and torn and beaten as in war,
 While some retained a look not quite so sage
 But yet would be in life and use no more.
 I looked again and saw dispersed among
 The aged and mature, a few yet young.

Clara Anthony

A REMEMBRANCE

Here are the loose and dirty pages
 The pages missing, pages torn;
 A smudge of dirt, a penciled drawing,
 A paper doll, a bookmark worn.

A poignant memory this book brings
 That time has not seen fit to blur---
 The day I brought it home to show
 My first Reader.

Clara Anthony

ON THE SAME DAY

Tom Erosman was going to die. There were the examinations, with hushed tones of scientific indifference. Then came the explanations. All voices spoke fatherly faith, but gave themselves away in tones of pity. There should have been pain, or some traversing from clinic to clinic, some irony, some fate, but there was none. Tom Erosman had one year to live, 365 days.

The conversation with the last doctor was over. The doctor sat, head down, fussing with desk papers, as if silently ashamed of what he had said. Accompanied by a sterile-smelling silence, Tom Erosman buttoned his soft cotton shirt. As he walked down the tiled halls, his heels made sharp the sounds of walking. A bright angle cut across the polished floor as he pushed through the big, glass door, pausing on the porch in the warm, white light. The sunlight sharpened, and from far across the even, fringed lawns came the clearness of children, play-waiting. Across the shimmering lawns and into the trees went the green thoughts of Tom Erosman, and floating back came the echo cry of a child.

On the same day, Tom Erosman took the afternoon train to San Vida, listening to the cricket sounds of the wheels on the hot rails, and quietly thinking a thousand thoughts. Stepping down into the steamed gravel of San Vida, Tom Erosman walked aimless, unnoticed streets, and found himself again with the singing of fishermen. He walked through and beyond their songs, barefoot up the grey, cool sand, head down, retracing the steps of thirty-two years.

Tom Erosman sat on the sands of San Vida, with his feet barely reaching out to the water, and the sea sweeping forth, making damp his brown trousers. Through his eyes, his life arched out over the wave whispers to the almost nothing that was the horizon between sea and sky.

From some place far out at sea, it returned, as a wave gathering memory, cresting with the shriek of the sandbirds, pushing toward him in the air of memory above his head, then crashing down into his soul with peace. With quivering jaw and wrinkled brow, down his cheek ran the intense joy of a tear.

It was there, and she that had given it to him also came, they were one, she and it, so close that he reached out and touched them in the air, the sea, and the earth. He lay back and looked up at the vision of them, and tried to speak to her, but from him, barely audible, came tiny squeaks of ecstasy.

They heard, and understood.

With the gentle smile of realization, Tom Erosman closed his eyes and passed himself away.

Bill Petty

A REQUIEM FOR THOUGHT

I locked myself within my room alone,
 And with my television set blacked out,
 The outside world away from me had gone;
 The room was dark, no light rays played about.

I heard no hit parade of rock and roll,
 Nor screaming cowboys riding through the house;
 I got a book to elevate my soul;
 My only comrade was a bashful mouse.

Then came a tapping at my chamber door.
 "A visitor," I muttered mournfully,
 "This life is not my life, no, nevermore,
 The world will always claim a part of me."

So now I sit and watch my T. V. set,
 And take just what my fate wants me to get.
 Keith Allred

WESTERN-BORN

One beauty lies in forests deeply green,
 A majesty and grandeur not denied.
 This have I adopted for my own;
 But deep within there is a mem'ry yet.

A feeling of nostalgia for the sight
 Of wide expanse of open earth and sky,
 The neon green of standing winter wheat,
 Mesquite leaves with their fragile filigree.

The cloudless sky's a dome of azure blue
 Viewed in sweeping glance from dawn to dusk.
 By night the heav'n's a bowl of stars upturned,
 Their points of light in deepest velvet set.

To one who's western-born there seems to be
 Such beauty in this prairie land that He
 Must love it too.--You see, there's nothing there
 To hide it from His view.

Roberta L. Jefferies

GOLF SHOT

I was all teed up and ready to swing
When I heard you call my name;
My club turned into a rubber string,
And the ball a quavering flame.

I turned and saw you standing there
With your old familiar stance;
But the blonde by your side with shoulders bare
Was not there strictly by chance.

"Hi, Champ," you called, "come meet my wife;
We were married today at five."
Not only have you wrecked my life;
You ruined a perfect drive!

Ted Trout