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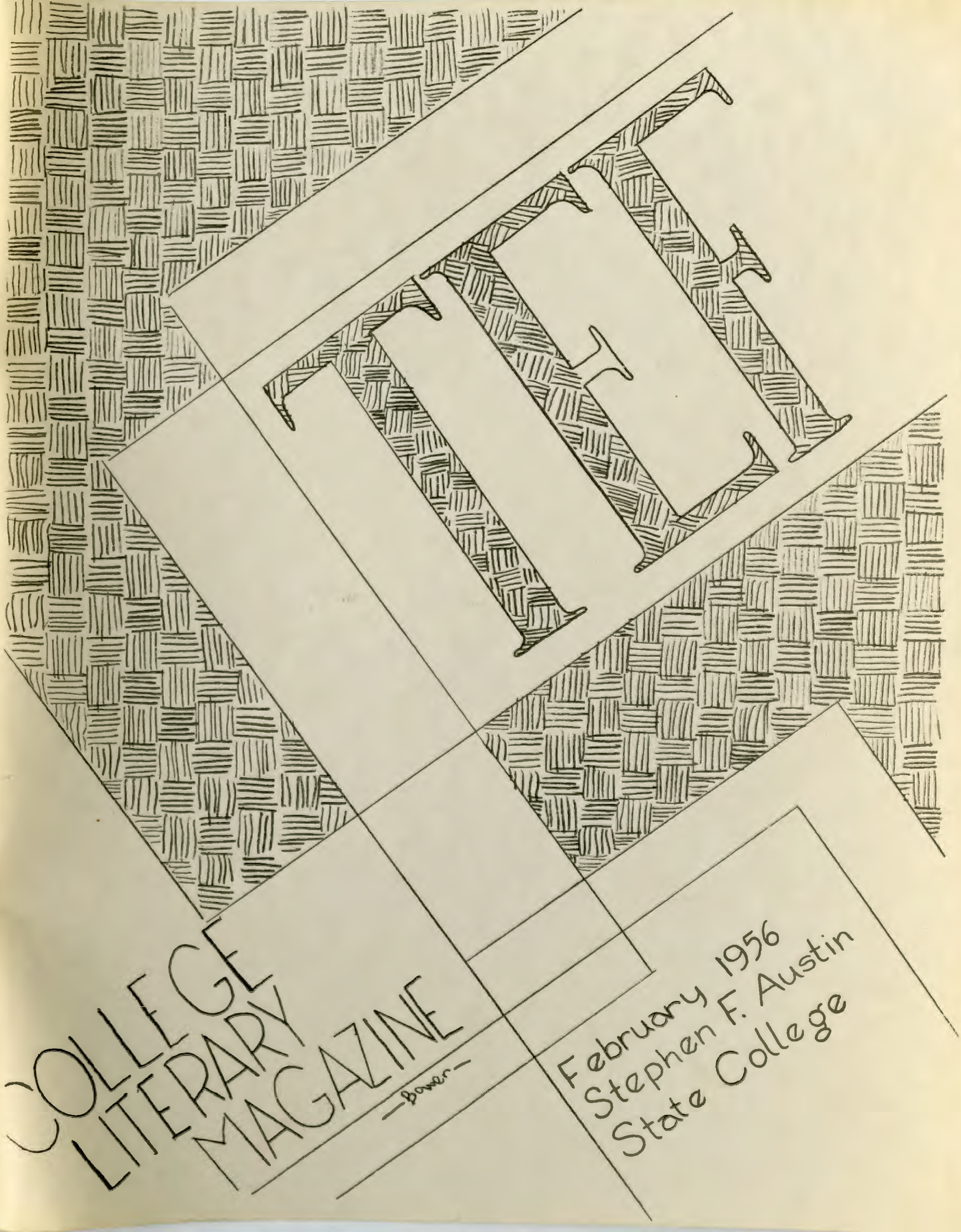

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DEDICATED

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NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS

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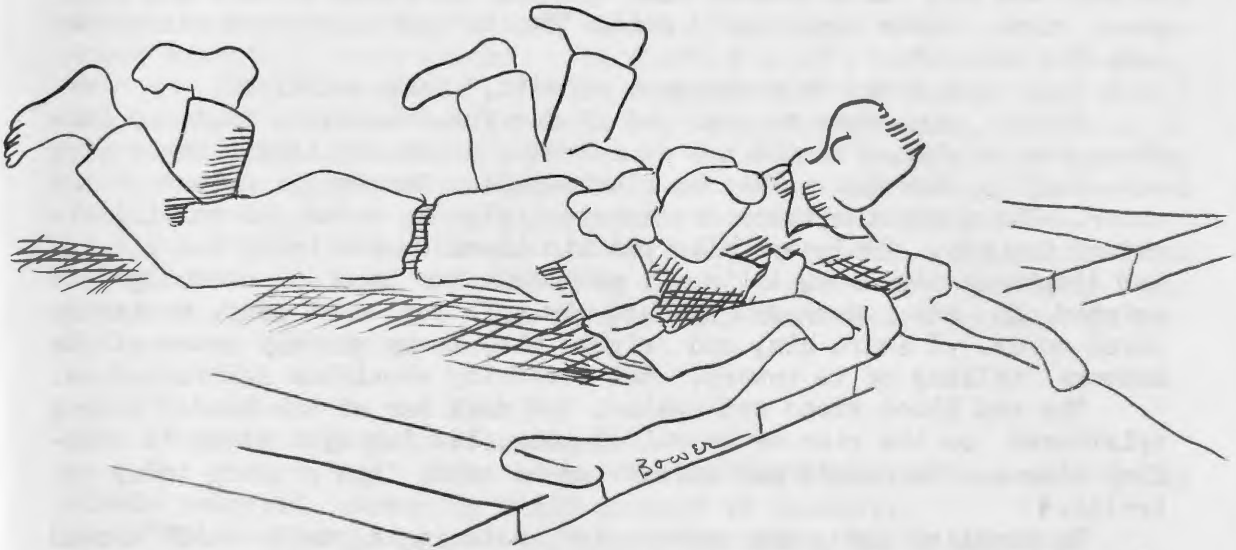
WRITING FROM
STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE
COLLEGE

THE HEAVENS TO HELP ME



"Everyday I took my little brother down there to go crab fishing."

by

Bebe Whitworth

I never thought much about what the heavens told me. That is, I never thought much about them until I moved here, to Corpus.

Corpus is on the bay and the sea coming in is calm and gentle by the time it reaches the shore. But every once in a while I go out to Padre Island where the sea is wild and lashing, with the undercurrent pulling until it tows everything in its reach out into the dark, mysterious depths. The sea at Padre reminds me of Paul.

Paul is wild, mysterious, strange: everything the sea is. I met him on South Beach. Everyday I took my little brother down there to go crab-fishing. We always had trouble grabbing the crab after he caught hold of the bacon. So we just let him go again, watching the greenish pearly pinchers disappear, groping out for something.

Paul had a girl that wore a blue bathing suit, but today she wasn't with him. He strode along over to where my brother and I were lying on our stomachs. I had my head down so I didn't look up until he said, "Having much luck?"

I caught my breath in a little gasp. It should have been because he startled me, but I knew it was because he stood so dark and handsome right there by me. I said, "No, we can't get them after they take the bacon."

"You need a net to scoop them up with," Paul explained.

I told him that we just did it for fun, mostly to amuse by brother, but he showed us the art of catching a crab by taking the string and feeling the tugs. Then he slowly pulled the weight up out of the water. There was the miniature monster, glaring at us for pulling him out of the bay. Paul carefully put his thumb on its belly and his index finger on its back, taking it away from the bacon. Suddenly it twisted in his grasp and pinched him. He hurled it away, muttering curse words. I heard him, and right then I was vaguely aware of the heavens telling me to beware. But something about him fascinated me.

The red blood stood out against the dark tan of his hand. A drop splattered on the pier as we walked away, leaving my brother to crab-fish alone. He wasn't mad anymore as he said, "Let's go up to my umbrella."

We strolled along the wooden pier, watching a yacht sail around the rocks jutting out into the ocean. We talked about boats and swimming as we lay under the umbrella. Paul said, "I like to swim over in the bay where they dock the yachts."

"Why?" I asked, nonchalantly trailing my index finger through the sand.

"Because it's still and deep. Like a big salty lake."

I thought about still waters running deep.....

Once I raised up to see about my brother. When I did I could see the cathedral, poised high upon the bluff, looking out over the Gulf. "Where do you go to church?" I asked him.

He pointed to the Greek Orthodox Church just down from the cathedral. I lay back, daydreaming for a while, and looked at the Grecian God I had just met. But again there was that uncomfortable feeling that something was wrong, that the heavens were trying to tell me to be careful.

I stayed with Paul all that afternoon. We talked a little, but when our eyes met, our sentences faded away as the sunshine finally faded until it was dusk. My brother grew tired of splashing in the water and crab-fishing and said he was ready to go. We said goodbye to Paul, and he said, "Will you be back tomorrow?"

I said "Yes, we come here every day."

"Then I'll see you sometime. Maybe some night we can go out to Padre." His black eyes came alive with his last words and I wondered.

We went down to the beach almost everyday, and I sat and talked to Paul, except when blue bathing suit was there. When she came, we didn't have much to say to each other. Paul never asked me to go anywhere except to Padre Island. At first I didn't think about it much, but now I found myself thinking about it all the time. Even when I ate lunch, I wondered how it would be, lying in the sand, listening to a portable radio, watching the stars twinkle. I could even hear the surf roaring up,splashing white and foam about our feet. An excited feeling would gather in my stomach and I couldn't eat any more.

One Friday I went down to South Beach by myself. I stretched out on my towel to sun and closed my eyes. I don't know how long I lay there, feeling the hot sun turn my body browner and my hair whiter. But soon he was beside me.

"Hi!" he said.

"Hi. Where've you been?"

"Down by the club, swimming."

We didn't say much more. We just watched the scores of gulls circle overhead, screaming their protest at humanity.

"When are we going out to Padre?" he asked, quite suddenly.

There it was: the never ending question. I wanted to go somewhere with him. He never asked me to go to a movie or anywhere except to Padre. Again the dancing eyes beckoned to me.

Desperately I wanted to say "Tonight!!"

But the little tug at my conscience held me back long enough for me to arise quite suddenly. "I'll let you know Sunday, Paul. I have to go now."

I left then. I was afraid to stay any longer.

When I got home we had company. My relatives were there for the weekend. My mother told me that we were going to Padre the next day and spend the whole afternoon.

That Saturday we got an early start. We drove by the air force base, by the canals, and finally I got a glimpse of the white sands of Padre.

The sun was hot, and the kids were screaming. They all ran out to splash in the foamy, shallow water left by receding waves. I told my mother I was going to walk down the beach.

I walked along the water's edge, feeling the wind blow through my hair and whip it all over my head. Here and there I stooped to pick up a sea shell glittering in the sand. Driftwood was scattered along the deserted beach, and I wondered what strange tales it could tell if it could talk. It was a barren, deserted land, with stretches of white sand on one side of me and the vast Gulf of Mexico on the other.

Then I was conscious of the lovely ocean, gently lapping her inviting arms over the sands, beckoning, pleading. But the heavens cried out to me, "Beware of the dark inviting sea."

The ocean seemed to whisper caressing words to the sands, "Come, join me." And the sands obeyed, just as I obeyed. I wandered forth in search of I know not what. Each step was hastened by the soft curling fingers of the sea's swirling tides——rushing forth inhurried moans, receding slowly with unyielding grace.

My mind unconsciously began to compare Paul to his beloved ocean. They were beautiful to see and wonderful to be with; the sea with its grace and Paul with his charm.

Still I pressed on, entranced by all its beauty. Then all at once the sea was no longer a warm, lavish thing. It thrashed my frail body about, pounding me against the sands. I awoke from my trance to find myself in a frightful, dangerous place. I staggered out of the water and gazed stupidly about. The sea was tempting just as Paul was. My mind became calm and I knew what I must do.

By the time I walked back to where the folks were, I was exhausted. We were ready to go and I was glad. Funny thing the kids didn't borther me any more.

Sunday my brother and I went to South Beach as usual, tied the bacon on the string as we usually did, and lay on our stomachs on the wooden pier just like always.

Paul came over and sat down. He was still his handsome self, and the charm was still there. But the secret was gone. Our eyes met but nothing passed between us. Paul seemed to sense it just as I did. We said goodbye that Sunday.

He is like the sea. I shall never forget him.

THE END

FLOWERS

The roses are red
But why are violets blue?
I don't know; do you?

— by Jimmie Martin

BALLAD OF THE BOOKWORM

He turned and he was lean with grace;
Upon me he did smile-
I read into his handsome face
The ancient wisdom of the Nile.

He strode to me and took my hand-
I did not draw away;
And so, my Dears, it all began.
Farewell to winter gray.

"Oh see!" he said and flexed his arm.
"Oh yes!" I cried — "the moon!"
"Oh no," he said, with old-world charm,
"Observe the muscles, Goon."

No romance there — I tried again.
"Do you like Keats or Shelly?"
He grinned and scratched his crew-cut head,
Told me he liked Grace Kelly.

I frowned and asked, "Am I like her?"
He laughed, and to my wrath
Guess what he said — the dirty cur?
"How's for some help with Math?"

Oh, some are smart, and some are not:
I coached him, he made "C";
So now he dates a blond named "Dot"
And never looks at me.

— by Eleanor Crokett

CONQUEST OF A BEETLE

by

Mrs. Frank Sisco

The other day, as I was sitting in the sunlight watching a little boy play, I noticed a beetle struggling to evade the two small hands that reached for it. Ordinarily this small incident would go unnoticed, but as often happens when the autumn breeze is blowing and a kind sun spills its warmth around you, time is as nothing while the most minute actions create a world of clarity. Suddenly this insignificant battle for survival became a contest of vital importance to me. Does not every act portray a certain character trait or attitude inherent in the personality. What would the next few minutes tell me about this little boy?

As the beetle moved clumsily over mounds of dirt and stones put as a barrier before him, I detected a sporting gleam in the eyes of the little boy. This was good, for I hoped he did not mean to harm the beetle. Laying down another stumbling block for the determined insect, the little boy carefully put his face near the ground in order to survey his opponent closer. I could almost feel the keen interest with which he considered the beetle's next move.

We were both surprised when that move came. Quite unexpectedly the beetle went underground, a tactic often used to gain time. Not to be fooled, however, the little boy began his counter-attach by vigorously uprooting the surrounding area until the beetle, once again, came out into the open. Patiently, but warily, he watched and traced the beetle and its path with two round, happy eyes. This experience was fun for him;it was new and exciting. He was learning the ways of a little creature.

I was anxious about the subsequent action because the chase was nearing an end and his final decision on what to do with the beetle seemed unaccountably important. A piece of limb lay temptingly near the little boy's hand. He spotted it immediately and picked it up. Was it to be used to squash his victim? His alert eyes followed the beetle's every move as it tumbled off the last rock. He raised the stick high over his target and with a jubilant laugh slammed it down. Hesitating only one moment to determine the effect of his last manuver, he left the beetle to make its way over his last and biggest obstacle — the stick which he had placed in front of him. This, then was his decision.

The little boy, wiser in the ways of nature, wandered off to the next big adventure while I pondered over the things I had learned about my son. Let him keep his alert, inquisitive mind busy. Let him continue to play fair and show mercy, even to the smallest creatures. Let him live his life as one big adventure; meet each day in his eager, happy way and I shall sit contentedly in the sun remembering his conquest of the beetle.

THE END

TO LEARN

She loved before she knew what loving was;
And let its meaning fade beside the years
She laughed, and never saw the need to learn
If laughter were of Heaven, or of fears.

She made a loud lament, and never dimly understood
How deep and certain grief renounces tears.
But death that lives, nor grows, she spurned;
    and as she turned to go,
Love found her waiting, strangely silent. Now,
    oh, now I know.

— by Johnnie Maude Tyler

THE HIRED GIRL

by

Parrish Cox

Cindy sat on the back porch steps in the sun, her black body glistening with sweat. This was a nice house, she thought. Not too big and it shouldn't be very hard to clean.

"I'll be there in a jiffy, girl. Don't leave!" she heard a sharp voice call from indoors.

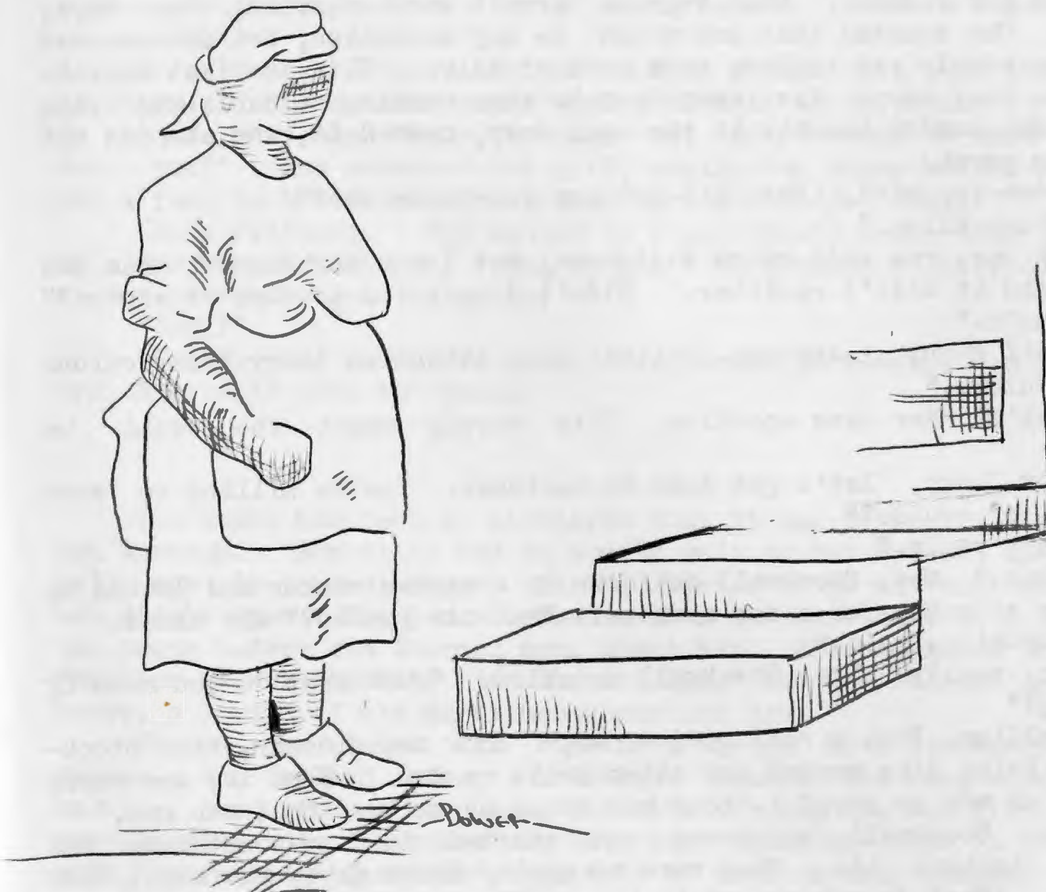
"Yas'm," she returned. She had come early because she wanted to make a good impression on Mrs. Stockwell. Now she was afraid she had done just the opposite by catching her in the bathtub. She heard a great deal of splashing as Mrs. Stockwell swung her ample frame out of her bath and the sucking of the water as it drained away.

Law, it was hot! Rivers of perspiration ran down her neck onto her bosom, staining her dress gray. She started slightly — something wet was tickling her leg. "Why hallo, ole houn' dowg." she reached down to pat a beautiful collie that had approached to sniff at her leg. It retreated with a snarl and she smiled. She'd never been able to make friends with white folks' dogs.

"Girl, you're still there, aren't you?" the voice called again.

"Yas'm." Cindy turned around and looked behind her through the unlocked screen door at the shaded, cool, back porch. Pots of green ivy and tropical caladium lined the walls, and the brick floor lay cool and dark in contrast with the glare and heat of the outside. A little stream of sweat rolled down her forehead and lodged in her eyebrow. She mopped her face with her sleeve. — Law, it was hot! She studied the patterned brick floor carefully. It had lots of crevices in it. She must be sure to sweep them out well if she got the job.

IF she got the job? She had to get the job. If only Mrs. Stockwell knew how much she had to have it. She dreaded like fire what she had to ask Mrs. Stockwell. On her first day, too. Oh, she



"Law, it was hot! She studied the patterned brick floor carefully."

knew what she would say. She'd never let her have it; she just knew she wouldn't. She would think she was lying. Cindy bit her lip. Just then a new gathering of sweat let go up around her hairline and zig-zagged down her cheek. Law, it was hot!

Mrs. Stockwell was irritated. Negroes never do that they're supposed to do. She had distinctly told this girl to come at eleven o'clock and here she'd showed up at ten thirty. Before she went to the door, she opened her jewel box and counted all the pieces. She was smart enough to know none of them were above picking up things if they had the chance. Most Negroes weren't worth shooting these days, anyway. She doubted this one would be any exception, but she was so busy she simply had to have some sort of help. With one last searching gaze that swept the room to make sure nothing valuable was lying loose, she padded heavily to the back door, opened it, and stepped out onto the porch.

"Come in, girl. What did you say your name was?"

"Cindy Allen."

"Oh yes, you told me on the'phone, but I was dashing out when you called and it didn't register. Didn't I tell you to come at eleven?"

"Yas'm."

"Well then, please pay a little more attention to my instructions in the future."

"Yes'm" Her eyes sparkled. This surely meant she would be hired.

"Now Cindy, let's get down to business. You're willing to work all day, of course?"

"Oh, yas'm."

"Good." Mrs. Stockwell sat down in a wicker rocker and looked up at Cindy silently for a few moments. What can you do?" she asked.

"Anything, ma'm."

"Oh, really?" Mrs. Stockwell chuckled. "Just what do you mean by anything?"

"Wall'am, I'se a real good orner, cook and cleaner, Miz Stockwell. Folks I'se worked for allus tells me dat. Fact is, one missy told me ah wuz as careful 'bout her house as ah wuz 'bout mah own."

Mrs. Stockwell snickered and started to say something, but decided against it. They were so uppity these days, she might take offense. "What do you expect to be paid?" she asked.

"Wall'am, ah been gittin' twenty dollahs a week."

"Twenty dollars! Are you quite sure you need to work? You should be able to retire." She scowled broadly. This girl was trying to get to her. "I'll give you fifteen and not a penny more."

Cindy looked down into the cold, piggish little eyes of Mrs. Stockwell. "Wall'am," she said softly.

"That's a little better," Mrs. Stockwell replied. "You'll start today?"

"Yas'm."

"Very well. Follow me and I'll show you the house. It's a mess."

"Uh, Miz Stockwell — ?"

"Yes, what is it?"

"'Bout my money . . . " she halted and swallowed. "Ah wuz wonderin' if'n maybe y'all would let me have a little in advance. You see, ma'm, mah . . . "

Mrs. Stockwell heard her out. She should have shut the door in her face, but she never could bring herself to be unkind to Negroes. So all she said when Cindy finished was, "Do you want to work here, or don't you?" The nerve of the girl; asking for money before she even got a foot in the door. She looked hard at Cindy. "Well?"

Cindy faltered. She wanted to run. She'd known from the start this was how it would be. She wouldn't have asked at all, but it was so important she get the money.

"Well?"

"Yas'm, ah wants to work," Cindy replied slowly, and followed Mrs. Stockwell into the house.

The house had been so cluttered that it was after six when Cindy got through. She still had an hour's walk to her house. Mrs. Stockwell was in a foul humor. She had wanted to go out that afternoon, but didn't dare. She had more sense than to leave that girl alone in the house before she learned more about her. She dismissed Cindy with "Be here by seven-thirty in the morning," and the Negress left the house, a bundle of old magazines under her arm.

Though she ached all over from moving Mrs. Stockwell's deep freeze, she walked along briskly. Usually she sang when she was walking, even after a hard day, but this evening she was silent. She stepped down into the street to let two white men pass on the sidewalk, murmuring "gent'mun" politely to them as they passed. The sun was disappearing now behind Johnson's Hill. It had seared and wilted the grass and weeds along the sidewalk during the day and still glared fiercely, sending off red hot rays, as if reluctant to usher in the cool of the night. Law, it was still hot!

As she passed the drugstore in town, she hesitated. She would have stopped here if all had gone as she'd planned and hoped. But that hope, never very strong anyway, was dashed now. She longed to get home, but in a way dreaded it.

She walked on for another half-hour and at last came to the quarter where she lived. It lined the banks of the sluggish creek that ran through town, a squalid assortment of shanties of which hers was little different from the rest. It had one fairly large room which served as sleeping quarters, and a tiny closet-like "kitchen" that housed the old cracked wood stove. This was all. This was her home.

She stepped up into her yard, littered with cans and junk, and past an old tire filled with dirt containing some half-dozen scorched zenias. There were no steps to the house, and she pulled herself up inside with difficulty by the door sill. Quickly, she walked over to a bed on which lay, in a pool of sweat, a fever-wracked black man. He cursed and swore at her in his delirum as she fanned him, and it was after midnight before she finally dozed off to sleep.

Mrs. Stockwell had a few friends in for dinner that night and, over drinks, Lydia Yarbrough asked, "Well Clarice, how do you like your new girl?"

"Oh," she gasped in mock indignation, "just let me tell you what that Negro did! This was her first day and she tried to borrow five dollars."

"No! Well, I'm not surprised. They're not worth their salt, any more," trilled Lydia.

"Exactly right," declared Mrs. Stockwell with a nod. "Of course, she ran on about needing medicine for her husband, who was hurt at one of the sawmills, but I can usually tell when they're lying. I told her she'd have to do some work around here before she got a dime out of me."

"Oh, Clarice, you're so clever. I'm afraid I would have fallen for it," teetered Lydia.

"Well, Lydia, you just have to be firm with them. However, I'm nearly certain she steals. I'm practically positive I had fifteen bath cloths, and when she left I checked up and found only thirteen!"

Lydia threw up her hands. "No!"

"Yes. Her work is only mediocre, too. If I hadn't so much to do, I'd try to get along doing my own housework.

"Why, Clarice! I think I know just the thing for you. Elmyra Finlay told me one of old Henry Thomas' girls came around to her door last week wanting work. Her mother has worked for Grace Woodley for years and she ought to be good."

"I'll contact her in the morning," said Mrs. Stockwell with finality. "I know I'll never be satisfied with this Cindy I've got now. Oh, while we're still on the subject, let me tell you what she said this morning. I said 'Cindy, what can you do?' and she said, 'Wall'am, I'se de bestest housekeepah in de whole worl.' Dey ain't nobody bettah dan me. Why, ah keeps white fo'ks houses just like ah keeps mah own." Then I told her: 'Well, in that case, Cindy, maybe I'd better do my own cleaning!' -- I don't think she caught it."

Mrs. Stockwell laughed and quivered so over her pun that she sloshed martini all over her new party dress.

The next morning at breakfast, Mrs. Stockwell saw in the paper where Jo Allen, Negro, had died of injuries received Monday in the Brighton & Sons Sawmill explosion.

After remarking to her husband that she thought the working conditions in those old sawmills were just terrible, she continued planning her afternoon bridge game with the girls.

THE END

ENDLESS SOLACE

The tears began their winding paths. . .
Inside the window of souls,
And flowed on out o'er softened cheeks
Which glowed like fervent coals.

Those briny tears like oceans deep
Have flowed on eons pass,
Streaming down around the lips,
Consoling some sad lass.

They are as endless as the years;
At last we come to know,
They wash away the sorrow there,
And strength to lives bestow.

-- by Bebe Whitworth

YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO READ?

by

Margaret Pittmen

Just like everyone else you don't have time to read. If you are a business man, the duties of your office will not permit you time to read anything but the newspaper, and sometimes even this is neglected. If you are a housewife, the chores of cooking, cleaning house, and taking care of the children take up all your time. You are fortunate if you can read the daily newspaper, and maybe once in a great while you can find leisure time to read a current novel or short story. If teaching is your profession, you try to budget your spare time by snatching a few important lines from your newspaper, by taking a few minutes to read over some current book review, and sometimes you are fortunate to read from your Texas Outlook articles which pertain to your profession, such as "How to Teach Functional English." Whatever your job or profession, you probably will admit that you don't have the time to read.

I once read that some of the greatest men on earth were those men who took time out of their busy lives to read. Do you think their day permitted them more hours in which to do this? Certainly not. Time is the same for all men. The main thing is not what man does, but how he uses the spare time when he is not at his job.

Extensive reading is educational, and is being stressed more today in our schools than ever before. You may enjoy reading, but perhaps your busy schedule limits this privilege. Have you ever stopped to consider the many spare minutes you have wasted that could be used to catch up on your reading? Here are some helpful hints on how to find the time to read.

While waiting for a bus, train, airplane, use your spare minutes to digest something from an article, book, or newspaper. If you have an appointment to see your doctor, you doubtless will have to wait from five minutes to an hour before you enter his office. Be wise and use this time by reading from one of the magazines which are always available in a doctor's waiting-room. You young people going to college can always use the spare minutes between classes to look over notes for a test; likewise, you can glean something valuable from a book if you also use this time to read instead of chatting with your friend whom you just saw earlier in the morning. Maybe you find it more relaxing to read while in bed. This is good — provided it does not usually serve as a means of putting you to sleep when you have only read for five or ten minutes. Every young woman who has had the services of a beauty shop knows that this is one of the most relaxing times of her life when she can shut the world outside and peruse her favorite current magazine.

All of you at some time in your life, if you have not already done so, will have to spend your valuable time waiting for a friend, a date, a meal, or a phone call. The time will go faster, and you will be better off intellectually if you use this time to do some reading. And, of course, there are many other ways in which spare time can be used to advantage by reading — at coffee breaks, while babysitting, or while eating a sandwich.

Don't plead guilty to the old excuse, "I just can't find the time to read." If you are wise and use your leisure minutes to take care of your reading problems, your time will be well spent and you will be the wiser. Remember that to be well-educated you must read extensively; to read extensively you must find the time; and to find the time to read, you must use the spare minutes permitted in your busy life.

DARK

Dark is a creature
That creeps in every evening
And leaves before dawn.

— by Brooks Sitton

JUST MOONING

by

Cates Burrows

Adventure, scientific achievement and frequent death await man in the upper atmosphere. It is the latest geographical frontier to be explored and among the most fruitful scientific fields ever investigated.

Being commonplace, the atmosphere attracts little public interest. The average person thinks of it in terms of its oxygen content which keeps him alive, and its temperature, humidity and cloud activities which give him weather.

The atmosphere is far more than this. It is nature's scientific proving ground. It is a text of physical sciences, containing within its seemingly limitless area the answers to many of those riddles of physical chemistry. Secrets of the atom, the sun and the earth itself can be found and explained in the upper atmosphere — the area of fundamental scientific discoveries!

What makes up this all important atmosphere? It is divided into several important regions and then into many other regions of lesser importance. The first and most familiar of these regions is the troposphere. This is the disturbed area of cloud activity, storms, air masses, and warm and cold fronts. The troposphere is characterized by a one-degree Fahrenheit rise in temperature for every three hundred feet of accent. It extends from sea level to around seven miles. At seven miles the temperature remains a constant minus sixty-seven degrees for about thirteen miles. This marks the beginning of the stratosphere which extends to a height of sixty miles. This characteristic of constant temperature does not extend throughout the stratosphere, but a great variance of temperature is observed throughout it. At thirty-one miles the temperature is observed to be one hundred and seventy degrees: at fifty miles it is back to minus twenty-seven. This warm layer of air was suspected of existing long before direct methods proved it. During the first World War the explosion of a cannon could be heard for about thirty miles. Then it could be heard again at a distance of sixty miles, but could not be detected between these points. This peculirity was explained by theorizing the existence of the warm layer. As the cold air bent the sound waves upward they strike the warm layer and rebound back toward the earth. This layer is responsible for the rebounding of low frequency radio waves but most of the high frequency television waves are not hindered.

The ionosphere extends from sixty miles out to interplanetary space. The outer limit of this area is still not agreed upon. Some say it could extend as high as sixty thousand miles. They believe that at this height the gases are separated into layers according to their densities. As the title implies, the ionosphere is characterized by electrically charged ions. The temperature averages about fifteen hundred degrees Fahrenheit, but it is thought that it may reach as high as twenty-six hundred degrees in some spots.

If we are to explore the upper atmosphere and interplanetary space, we will have to have some kind of ship that will fill our needs. The big problem is the motor. Since aeroplanes and balloons are impractical, we shall look at the rocket. First, we will see how the rocket was developed. The Chinese first used the rocket in the thirteenth century. It was used for war purposes and the newly invented gunpowder was its fuel. It resembled our present day skyrockets for the Fourth of July. Later Great Britain furthered rocket development by the work of Sir William Congreve in the nineteenth century. The British used rockets to burn Copenhagen in 1808 and caused Francis Scott Key to refer to "the rockets red glare" in the writing of the National Anthem during the War of 1812.

The rocket was then forgotten for awhile. Dr. Robert H. Goddard of Clark University was responsible for keeping it alive. Backed by the Smithsonian Institute, he experimented with solid fuel rockets for attaining high altitudes. Dr. Goddard recognized the need for some fuel other than the solid fuel that was being used at the time. He developed the first liquid fuel rocket which he fired in 1926 with success in theory only. In 1930 he fired a liquid fuel rocket that reached a height of two thousand feet and a maximum speed of five hundred miles an hour.

In Germany in 1923 the book <u>The Rocket into Interplanetary Space</u>

by Hermann Oberth was published. This book made Germany rocket conscious and led to the establishment of the Society for Space-Ship Travel. This did much to develop the liquid fuel rocket. In 1933 the rising military government saw the possibilities of the rocket and took over the experimentation. Under Werner von Brun the V-2 rockets and rocket aids for aeroplanes were developed. After the end of World War II the United States took over the V-2 rockets and studied them. One V-2 was sent to a height of one hundred fourteen miles to set a record for single stage rockets.

One important factor distinguishes the rocket motor from her jet motors. The rocket motor functions entirely independent of air. It carries its own fuel and oxidizer, which combine in the combustion chamber sending a blast of extremely hot gas molecules out the jet. One of Newton's laws states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Therefore the blast of gas molecules in one direction will push the ship forward as a reaction.

As we have already noted, rockets can be run by solid fuels. This has proved impractical because of the variance of reaction speed caused by differences in temperature and humidity. Liquid fuel rockets have been very successful. Some of the liquid fuels are ethyl alcohol, liquid oxygen, nitric acid, aniline and hydrogen peroxide. Several factors must be considered in selecting the fuels. It should be stable, easy to handle and transport, non-toxic, non-corrosive and non-expensive.

The V-2 has been the most successful rocket used thus far, so we shall take a look at how it works. As fuel, the V-2 carries eight thousand five hundred pounds of ethyl alcohol, ten thousand eight hundred pounds of liquid oxygen, three hundred seventy pounds of hydrogen peroxide and twenty-nine pounds of sodium permanganate. Hydrogen peroxide in the presence of sodium permanganate decomposes, giving off super-heated steam which drives the turbo-pumps. These efficient pumps transport nine tons of fuel into the combustion chamber in sixty to seventy-five seconds. The V-2 has completely automatic controls that guide it while in flight. As a safety device, a radio control cut-off is installed in case the flight becomes erratic. The V-2 has reached a height of one hundred fourteen miles.

Our recent work on the rocket has developed better fuels and given us much more factual and theoretical information on the use of rockets for interplanetary travels. We are told of a trip that can be made to the moon within the next twenty-five years by such men as Willy Ley, writer on scientific subjects; Dr. Fred L. Whipple, Chairman of Harvard University astronomy department; and Dr. Werner van Braun, world's top rocket expert whom we have already met.

Within the next ten or fifteen years we can expect to see a permanent space station one thousand seventy-five miles above the earth. It will revolve around the earth as the moon does. Materials will be carried for this station by three-stage rockets to our desired height. At this height, if we go around the earth at a speed of fifteen thousand eight hundred forty miles an hour we become a satellite. Since there is essentially a vacuum at this height, we will keep our speed forever. We will be able just to dump out materials and let them float while we go back to get more. We will build a wheel-shaped structure two hundred fifty miles in diameter to live in out there in space. It will revolve around the earth once every two hours and would be a perfect military observation post. The cost of this station will be about four billion dollars.

We will carry fifty scientists and technicians on our five day, two hundred thirty-nine thousand mile trip to the moon. We must decide where on the moon's fourteen million square miles of surface we will land. We will have to stay in sight of the earth so we can radio back information. At the moon's equator the temperature is two hundred twenty degrees Fahrenheit so we can not land there. Dr. Fred Whipple says that a plain called the Sinus Roris is just the place for our purpose. It is six hundred fifty miles from the lunar north pole, and the daytime temperature averages forty degrees.

To save fuel and time, we want to take the shortest practical course. The moon moves around the earth in an elliptical path once every twenty-seven and one-third days. The space station, our point of departure, circles the earth once every two hours. Every two weeks, their paths are such that a rocket ship from the space station will intercept the moon in just five days. The best conditions for the return trip will occur two weeks later, and again two weeks after that. With their stay limited to multiples of two weeks, our scientists have set themselves a six-week limit for the first exploration of the moon.

Six months before our scheduled take-off, we begin to pile up supplies at our space station. As the ships bring the supplies from earth, we begin our work on the ships that will carry us to the moon from our station. The supplies need only to be set out around the space station because they will become satellites just as our station did. As time passes, tons of equipment lie about -- aluminum girders, collapsed nylon and plastic fuel tanks, rocket motor units, turbopumps, bundles of thin aluminum plates, a great many nylon bags containing smaller parts. All parts are color-coded so work proceeds swiftly.

As the framework of the new rocket ships take form, big, folded nylon and plastic bundles are brought over. They are the personal cabins; pumped full of air, they become spherical and plastic astrodomes are fitted to the top and sides of each. Other sacks are pumped full of propellant, and balloon into the shapes of globes and cylinders. Soon the three moon-going space ships begin to emerge in their final form. The two-round-trip ships resemble an arrangement of hour glasses inside a metal framework; the one-way cargo carrier has much the same framework; but instead of hour glasses it has a central structure which looks like a great silo.

Each ship is one hundred sixty feet long and about one hundred ten feet wide. Each has at its base a battery of thirty rocket motors and each is topped by the sphere which houses the crew members, scientists and technicians on five floors. Under the sphere are two long arms set on a circular track which enables them to rotate almost a full three hundred sixty degrees. These light booms, which fold against the vehicles during take-off and landing to avoid damage, carry two vital pieces of equipment: a radio antenna dish for short-wave communication and a solar mirror for generating power.

The solar mirror is a curved sheet of highly polished metal which concentrates the sun's rays on a mercury-filled pipe. The intense heat vaporizes the mercury, and the vapor drives the turbogenerator, producing thirty-five kilowatts of electric power -- enough to run a small factory. Its work done, the vapor cools, returns to its liquid state and starts the cycle all over again.

Under the radio and mirror booms of the passenger ships hang eighteen propellant tanks carrying nearly eight hundred thousand gallons of hydrazine and nitric acid. Four of the eighteen tanks are outsized spheres, more than thirty-three feet in diameter. They are attached to light frames on the outside of the rocket ship's structure. More than half our propellant supply -- five hundred eighty thousand gallons -- is in these large balls; that is the amount needed for take-off. As soon as it is exhausted, the big tanks will be jettisoned. Four other large tanks carry propellant for the landing; they will be left on the moon.

We also carry a supply of hydrogen peroxide to run the turbopumps which force the propellant into the rocket motors. Besides the fourteen cylindrical propellant tanks and the four spherical ones, eight small helium containers are strung throughout the framework. The lighter-than-air helium will be pumped into partly emptied fuel tanks to help them keep their shape under acceleration and to create pressure for the turbopumps. The cost of the propellent required for this first trip to the moon, the bulk of it used for the supply ships during the build-up period, is enormous — about three hundred million dollars, roughly sixty per cent of the half-billion-dollar cost of the entire operation.

The cargo ship carries only enough fuel for a one-way trip, so it has fewer tanks: four discardable spheres like those on the passenger craft, and four cylindrical containers with one hundred sixty-two thousand gallons of propellant for the moon landing. The cargo ship's big silo-like storage cabin, seventy-five feet long and thirty-six feet wide, was built to serve a double purpose. Once we reach the moon and the big cranes folded against the framework have swung out and unloaded the two hundred eighty-five tons of supplies in the cylinder, the silo will be detached from the rest of the rocket ship. The winch-driven cables slung from the cranes will then raise half of the cylinder, in sections, which will deposit on the trailers drawn by tractors. The tractors will take them to a protective crevice on the moon's surface, at the place chosen for our camp. Then the other lengthwise half will be similarly moved — giving us two ready to use Quonset huts.

Now that we have our space-ships built and have provided ourselves with living quarters for our stay on the moon, a couple of important items reamin: we must protect ourselves against two of the principal hazards of space travel, flying meteors and extreme temperatures.

Since we expect to be hit by no meteors larger than a grain of sand, we will construct a meteor bumper consisting of a thin sheet of metal placed one inch from the surface that it is to protect. For protection against excessive heat, all parts of the three rocket ships are painted white, because white absorbs little of the sun's radiation. Then, to guard against cold, small black patches are scattered over the tanks and personnel spheres. The patches are covered by white blinds, automatically controlled by thermostats. When the blinds on the shaded side are open, the black spots radiate heat and the temperature drops.

Aboard the moon ships, living is cramped, and not comfortable. Each of the two passenger vehicles hold twenty men en route to the moon, and twenty-five on the return trip. For added safety, each passenger ship carries enough oxygen, water, and food for the entire expedition. The top floor of the personnel sphere is the control deck. All seats are contour seats; personnel must be strapped in so they won't float away in the weightless ship. The next floor down is primarily a navigation deck, although a sponge-bath stall and extra bunks are also installed here. On the central, and largest, deck are the ship's living quarters. Bunks line the walls and hang from stanchions, and a cooking-dining area occupies most of the floor space. At center is an automatic dining unit: table, short-wave food heater and dishwasher. The fourth floor down, or storage deck, houses the main electrical switchboard, storage cupboards, and a washroom. The engineering deck is at the bottom of the sphere. Lining the walls, directly below the ceiling, are the water tanks, oxygen tanks, air blower pump, and tanks for water recovered from the ship atmosphere. Below this ring are the electric storage batteries and the ship's air-conditioning and water-cleansing systems. Sewage tanks are under the floor. The sphere will be home to the voyagers not only for the five-day trip, but for several days after, while lunar quarters are being constructed.

Now we are ready to take off from the space station's orbit to the moon. The bustle of our departure -- hurrying space taxis, the nervous last-minute checks by engineers, the loading of late cargo and finally the take-off itself --- will be watched by millions. Television cameras on the space station will transmit the scene to receivers all over the world. And people on the earth's dark side will be able to turn from their screens to catch a fleeting glimpse of light — high in the heavens — the combined flash of ninety rocket motors, looking from the earth like the sudden birth of a new, short-lived star. Our departure is slow. The big rocket ships rise ponderously, one after the other, green flames streaming from their batteries of rockets, and then they pick up speed. Actually, we don't need to gain much speed. The velocity required to get us to our destination is nineteen thousand, five hundred miles an hours, but we've had a running start. While "resting" in the space station's orbit, we were really streaking through space at fifteen thousand, eight hundred and forty miles an hour. We need an additional three thousand, six hundred sixty miles an hour. Thirty-three minutes from take-off we have it. Now we cut off our motors; momentum and the moon's gravity will do the rest.

The moon itself is visible to us as we coast through space, but its so far off to one side that its hard to believe we won't miss it. In the five days of our journey, though, it will travel a great distance, and so will we. At the end of that time we shall reach the farthest point, or apogee, of our elliptical course, and the moon should be right in front of us.

As we coast toward the moon, we note that our speed is falling off rapidly, as we expected. On this first day, we discard the empty departure tanks. Engineers in protective suits step outside the cabin, stand for a moment in space, and then make their way down the girders to the big spheres. They pump any remaining propellant into reserve tanks, disconnect the useless containers, and give them a gentle shove. For a while the tanks drift along beside us, but soon they float out of sight. Eventually they will crash on the moon.

There is no hazard for the engineers in this operation. As a precaution, they were secured to the ship by safety lines, but they could probably have done as well without them. There is no air in space to blow them away. That is just one of the many peculiarities of space to which we must adapt ourself. Lacking a natural sequence of night and day, we live by an arbitrary time schedule. Because nothing has weight, cooking and eating are special problems. Kitchen utensils have magnetic strips or clamps so they won't float away. The heating of food is done on electronic ranges. They have many advantages: they are clean, easy to operate and their short-wave rays don't burn up precious oxygen.

From the start of the trip, the ship's crew has been maintaining a round-the-clock schedule, standing eight-hour watches. Captains, navigators and radiomen spend most of their time checking and rechecking our flight track, ready to start up the rockets for a change in course if an error turns up. Technicians back up this operation with reports from the complex and delicate "electronic brains" — computers, gyroscopes, switchboards and other instruments — on the control deck. Other specialists keep watch over the air-conditioning, temperature, pressure and oxygen systems.

But the busiest crew members are the maintenance engineers and their assistants, who have been bustling back and forth between ships since shortly after the voyage started, checking propellant tanks, tubing, rocket motors, turbopumps and all other vital equipment. Excessive heat could cause dangerous hairline cracks in the rocket motors. Unexpected large meteors could smash through the thin bumpers surrounding the propellant tanks; fitting could come loose. The engineers have to be careful.

As we pass the neutral point between the gravitational pull of the earth and the moon, our speed begins to increase sharply. If we don't do something to slow us down, we will crash into the moon at six thousand miles an hour. The captain of our space ship orders the longitudinal flywheel set in motion. Slowly, our craft begins to cartwheel. When it has turned half a revolution, it stops. We are going toward the moon tail-end first, a position which will enable us to brake our fall with our rocket motors when the right time comes. The landing will be done entirely by automatic pilot to diminish the possibility of human error.

Now we lower part of our landing gear — four spider-like legs hinged to the square rocket assembly, which have been folded against the framework. As our rocket motors come on, we feel part of our weight return. We fall more and more slowly, floating over the landing area like descending helicopters. As we approach, the fifth leg of our landing gear — a big telescopic shock absorber which has been housed in the center of the rocket assembly — is lowered through the fiery blast of the motors. The long green rocket flames begin to splash against the baked lunar surface. Swirling clouds of brown-gray dust are thrown out sideways. They settle immediately, instead of hanging in air, as they would on the earth. The broad, round shoe of the telescopic landing leg dips into the soft volcanic ground. If it strikes too hard, an electronic mechanism inside it immediately calls on the rocket motors for more power to cushion the blow. For a few seconds, we balance on the single leg. Then the four outrigger legs slide out to help support the weight of the ship, and are locked into position. The whirring of the machinery dies away. There is absolute silence. We have reached the moon.

There is danger on the moon -- the danger of the unknown. We have arrived at the beginning of the two weeks of sunlight that comprise the lunar day. There is no cloud cover, no wind, no rain, or snow — no weather of any kind. Stars shine steadily. They don't twinkle, for there is no blurring atmosphere as on earth. Our movements are restricted by the suits, yet we feel light. The moon's gravity is about one-sixth that of the earth. We wear weighted shoes to help pin us down.

The first equipment brought out of the cargo ship is one of our three surface vehicles, tank-like cars equipped with caterpillar treads for mobility over the moon's rough surface. Power is provided by an enclosed turbine driven by a combination of hydrogen peroxide and fuel oil. Oxygen escaping from the hydrogen peroxide enables the fuel oil to ignite. As soon as the moon-car has been set down and checked, a search party boards it to scout out a suitable crevice for the campsite.

By the time the search party returns, the ground around the cargo ship is littered with supplies: containers of water and liquid oxygen, canned and frozen food, scientific equipment, high explosives, rockets, the other two lunar cars and nine trailers also track-equipment. Engineers direct the unbolting of the hold from the framework, and cranes lower the huge cylinder in sections onto trailers. Two of the lunar tractors hitch up to three trailers each and the double convoy moves silently off for the headquarters site. A third convoy, loaded with supplies and personnel, bring up the rear. The framework of the cargo ship now stands stripped and forlorn on the barren plain, only its personnel sphere left intact. We will leave it there and use the sphere, with its expensive radio equipment and big disk antenna, as a station for communication with the earth.

The front ends of the tractors are firmly anchored to the moon's surface, and one by one the hut units are eased down the side of the gully. They are quickly assembled at the bottom. Electrical circuits are joined, air conditioning, water and sewage pipes hooked up, and we are ready to move in. A power unit like those on the rocket ships is set up at the lip of the chasm.

Sinus Roris, our landing area, was selected partly because of the opportunities it offers for exploration, partly because its temperature is livable — forty degrees Fahrenheit during the lunar daytime and two hundred forty degrees below zero at night. This is mighty cold, but it is bearable on the airless, waterless moon, and we have heaters inside the huts.

Our scientists want to know whether any faint traces of atmosphere are present, what minerals there are, whether the moon has a magnetic field like the earth and how the temperature varies beneath the lunar crust. Sheer curiosity suggests other questions and will play a large part in our explorations.

We know that the moon didn't form in the Pacific Ocean and get hurled into space, as was generally believed fifty years ago. It is possible that it was an independent planet which came from outer space, fell into the earth's gravitational field, smashed into the Pacific and then ricocheted back into its present orbit. But the most likely explanation is that the moon originally consisted of a belt of gasses and minerals that girdled the earth, much as Saturn's ring surrounds that planet today, and eventually fused into a solid mass. That's the theory we'll check. First, if there are faint traces of such heavy gasses as xenon and krypton, we'll know the moon was never a completely molten, hot mass — for extreme heat would have dispelled all gasses — and so could not have been an independent planet.

Then we'll look for a magnetic field. If we don't find it, we'll have another indication that the moon doesn't have an iron core, as an independent planet would. Compass-like magnetometers will do the trick for us; if the moon has magnetic poles as the earth has, they will show us.

We'll also shake up the moon's surface a bit. Scientists have learned a lot about the earth from earthquakes. The vibration waves of a quake travel freely through solids, but some of them cannot pass through liquids — which is how we know that the center of the earth is molten iron. We can't count on having moonquakes, so we'll make some. We'll send off rockets with high-explosive war heads and then read the story of the waves from our seismographs. The explosions, occurring about one hundred miles away, will show if the moon's core is molten (in which case, our waves will be stopped), solid (they'll go right through, or a jumble of rocks which never have been molten (muffled waves). There will be all sorts of samples to gather.

But soon the sun begins to slip over the horizon. For awhile there is still plenty of light; work slows down, but not entirely. For several days after sunset, we live in a kind of twilight, with a cold, but fairly bright, illumination cast over us by the earth (it reflects about sixty times as much sunlight on the moon as full-moon reflects on the earth).

Now comes our longest trip on the moon. Ten men will take two of the lunar tractors and explore a distant crater, called Harpalus. As they leave on their two hundred fifty mile trip, the rest of the crew continue to gather all sorts of samples, using the tractor that is left. They send a steady stream of information back to the earth. In a few days, the travelers return with many interesting stories and samples.

Now the six hectic weeks of exploration draw to a close. At the landing site, electronic engineers set up automatic recording instruments which will radio scientific observations to earth after we have taken off. These stations house delicate instruments which record cosmic radiations, tremors caused by the impact of meteorites hitting the surface, temperature changes and other scientific data. They are connected by cables to the skeleton of the cargo ship, which we are leaving behind. The ship's solar mirror generates power for the instruments, and the disk-like antenna will flash the reading to earth. Unless these automatic stations are destroyed by meteorites, they will operate for years without human supervision.

Engineers and technicians clamber over the passenger ships, checking pumps, rocket motors and electrical connections. The day before take-off, specimens for later study, oxygen and any remaining food are loaded onto the trailers at the lunar base. The entrances to the two huts are left open permitting the synthetic atmosphere to escape. All materials in the living quarters and laboratory will now be preserved by the vacuum of space.

During the next few hours, the cranes of the two ships haul up supplies. Each lunar tractor, when finally unloaded, is parked beside the skeleton of the cargo ship, to remain until the next lunar expedition. At last, the cranes complete the unloading of equipment and start hoisting men up to the catwalks of the two rocket ships. Then the cranes are folded against the framework, ready for flight.

The return trip is much the same as the trip down. Five days later, we are back at our starting point. Man's first exploration of the moon has ended. Space taxis speed toward us from our station. Other men pour out of the satellite's air lock to greet us.

Our next trip will be a short one — two hours to the earth, aboard one of the sleep rockets parked nearby. There, the members of our scientific panel await us -- and, without questions, a great crowd of earthlings, come to see the first men ever to set foot on the ancient, mysterious soil of the earth's closest neighbor in the heavens.

THE END

I LOVE LIFEGUARDS

by

Bebe Whitworth

I love lifeguards, tall ones, short ones, tanned ones, freckled ones, and oh, just all of them! No matter what they look like, they all have an unmistakable air about them. I call it conceit, but I don't know what they call it. They may be conceited about their good looks, their swimming, or their girl friends. Even if they're at a city pool, on the beach, at a state park, or at a country club they have that aloof look that separates them from the lowly swimmers. On some lifeguards its hard to see this aloof look because they wear shades. (And it's especially confusing when these shades have mirrors on them and all you see is yourself.) But even shades can't hide the inevitable.

Being conceited does not keep them from being flirts. Most lifeguards I know like to see how many girls they can keep coming to the pool everyday. Of course, they might do this because they get so bored with their job. (They say they're bored.) The seat gets hard and the cement hot after staying on the job for a six-hour stretch. But after all, they get paid to do what some people pay to get to do.

When I see a big brown brawny lifeguard, I ask myself that age-old question: which came first, the bathing trunks or the sun tan?? And then I wonder which he got first, but I don't ask him because I'm the bashful type and I wait until he says something to me. One time a lifeguard said that girls either came to the pool to get a tan or to get a man, but he still hadn't figured out why I came. I should have told him that I was there to gain valuable information pertaining to lifeguards so that I could write a brilliant essay. But he would have thought I was the nutty type, so I said something more sensible, like "I come here to swim."

You know, I haven't seen a lifeguard that looked bad in a bathing suit. They look as if they were born in one. Yes, I've decided they look right at home around the water.

Lifeguards have cute friends too. They don't have quite as much tan, but they have more money because lifeguarding isn't one of the highest paid professions in these United States.

Well, I just don't know what I would do in the summer without lifeguards. They make plain old swimming so exciting!

ENCHANTMENT

Moonlight is a charm
That has been used many times
To enchant young love.

— by Mary Dodson

THE VALLEY OF DOUBT

How fearful we look
     at the Valley before us.
At the Valley of Decision,
     the Valley of Doubt.
How fearful the thoughts
     we allow to entwine us -
Entwine us as we ride
     through the Valley of Doubt.

No solace we find,
     nor peace of mind.
Only the knowledge
     there are more of our kind -
More of our kind who ride our way -
     seeing no light, but hoping for day
          in the Valley of Doubt.

Hoping to see
     the Liberty of youth
United with Wisdom's
     Immaculate Truth -
Though the vision is hidden
     and there seems no way out
For those of us who journey
     through the Valley of Doubt.

Where shall it lead us? Where shall we go?
When is our journey's cessation?
Only at death - Only at death -
     when Nature destroys
          Her own creation.

— by Jack Peebles

A DAY IN TOWN

by

Sara Jane Metcalf

Dummy sat beside the kitchen stove watching Uncle Bennie preparing their breakfast of biscuits, sausage, and gravy. He enjoyed the smells of the cooking, although since the first Norther two days before, he had hated to get up in the morning. The older he got, the more he dreaded winter. This winter would be longer than the others, too, since Aunt Mary was gone. He had missed her worse yesterday than he had at all before. Perhaps that was because there had been only two really cold days, and day before yesterday had been such a busy day with the hogkilling. He always enjoyed their killing hogs since at least one of Uncle Bennie's boys, and sometimes some of his grandchildren, came home to help — had before Aunt Mary died, too.

"Ready for breakfast, J. C.?" Uncle Bennie's frail hand touched his shoulder just a second before Danny looked up to see what he had to say. Uncle Bennie was the only person who ever called him anything but Dummy. Dear Old Uncle Bennie. He needed someone to take care of him, but he wouldn't go live with any of his children and leave Dummy.

Dummy nodded his head and seated himself across the table from Uncle Bennie. He watched the old man pour him a cup of steaming coffee and nodded his head in thanks before pouring the coffee into his saucer and sipping it. He then raised his head to look across at Uncle Bennie and shake his head vigorously to show him that it was too hot.

Dummy watched Uncle Bennie who was saying, "Warmed up some last night. This weather is too cold for us, J. C. We're getting old."

Dummy looked again at his plate. Getting old. He tried to figure — forty-nine, yes, he was forty-nine, and thirty-five. Five and nine make fourteen. That gives one to carry. Three and four and one makes eight. Why, Uncle Bennie must be eighty-four if he had been thirty-five when Dummy's own mother had died and his old man had given him to Aunt Mary and Uncle Bennie. Dummy raised his head, wiped his hands and raised eight fingers; took them down, then raised four.

He watched Uncle Bennie say: "Yes, that's it. Eighty-four. It's been a long time. I remember the day you came to us. We had our own four youngerns and Alice was eight then. It had been a long time since we'd had a baby. Eight years. We was tickled to death to get you." He chuckled, then his face grew sad. "You wasn't but a day old and your mama not even buried when we got you. Alice kept wishing we could have had your brother, too, but reckon it was just as well we just got you since your pa took him back when he married again." He shook his head sadly. Dummy remembered many of the times Aunt Mary had said that Uncle Bennie had taken him to heart more than his own children. He'd never made him work or mind like he had his own children.

Dummy sat in Aunt Mary's rocker and watched Uncle Bennie washing up. He hoped this day wasn't as long as yesterday had been. Uncle Bennie wasn't as neat as Aunt Mary had always been. The sun was shining, at least. He walked to the porch, but the wind hit him in the face, and he knew it was still bitterly cold. He went back into the kitchen and sat down beside the stove again.

"Want me to build a fire in the bedroom?" He saw Uncle Bennie asking, but he shook his head that he did not. He wanted to go to town, but it was too cold. He picked up one of the magazines Uncle Bennie's son had brought day before yesterday. He looked at the pictures. There was a cake that looked good and a ham and some salads. Uncle Bennie wasn't as good a cook as Aunt Mary had been.

He put down the magazine and went to the window. They had been up more than two hours. He sighed. He couldn't just sit here beside the stove and watch Uncle Bennie read his Bible all day again today.

Uncle Bennie got up and came to the window where he was standing. Dummy felt his standing beside him before he turned around. "It's too cold to go to town," he saw the old man telling him. He shook his head and shivered to show him that he knew it was cold outside.

He watched the trees blowing just outside the window. He thought of the cafe and of the people coming in and going out, laughing and talking. He wished they had a car. He wondered whether or not he could drive it, if they owned one. Those McClaren boys did nothing but ride up and down the road acting smart since they had got a car. He sighed again and went to Uncle Bennie. Uncle Bennie looked up from his Bible and he pointed with his finger toward the road and motioned on that he was going.

"It's too cold, J. C." Uncle Bennie's lips said.

Dummy shook his head vigorously, motioned around the room, held his arms out and slowly drew them into a circle which he made smaller and smaller to show Uncle Bennie that the room was closing in around him. He couldn't stay here any longer.

Uncle Bennie looked at him sadly and said, "All right, J. C., but please don't stay out until it begins to get dark. It's so cold and I'm afraid something will happen to you when you're on the road after dark."

Dummy clapped his hands and stomped his feet. He got his coat from the nail behind the stove. He turned to put it on and Uncle Bennie was standing there holding the sweater Aunt Mary had knitted him. There were tears in Uncle Bennie's eyes as he looked at him. Dummy smiled at him and took the sweater and put it on before putting on the coat.

Uncle Bennie walked with him to the door and touched his shoulder again. "Now, don't stay out late. Don't go to the show. It's too cold and the nights are dark now." Dummy nodded his head to let him know that he wouldn't. Uncle Bennie put his hand into his pocket and pulled out a quarter and a dime and gave it to him. "Get yourself a hamburger," he said. Dummy took the money and nodded his thanks.

He stepped onto the porch and the wind struck him in the face. He braced himself and walked down the steps. It would be cold, but it was good to get out of the house. He turned at the gate and nodded and smiled again at the old man. He then motioned for him to shut the door. No need of his catching cold standing in the open doorway.

The road was lonesome looking. He hoped someone would come along and pick him up before he got too cold. He walked fast.

The wind seemed to blow harder. He put his hands inside his pockets to keep them warm. He felt the dime and quarter Uncle Bennie had given him. Uncle Bennie was having a hard time getting along without Aunt Mary's pension. If his children weren't good to bring him clothes and food and other things, too, they'd never make it.

It was cold. He almost wished he had stayed home. He felt a car coming behind him and turned hopefully. It was almost upon him. He jumped backwards into a ditch. Two grinning faces began to laugh as the car passed. He shook his fist at them. They thought they were smart always trying to scare him. He had told Alice just day before yesterday about their running at him every time they passed. She had said they would probably kill someone with their smart aleck driving before they learned a lesson. Since they had been getting a gas check, they hadn't hit a lick of work. Uncle Bennie said people who got money without having to earn it never knew how to spend it.

Now that Uncle Bennie was getting old, Alice understood him better than anyone else. She had been the one who had got him into that school that time. Sometimes he wished he had stayed longer. Then he might be able to read well enough that staying in the house all day wouldn't be so bad . . . But he had been past twenty before he went and had hated being away from home so much that they had sent him home.

He topped the hill and could see the town. He was beginning to get that feeling he always got when he was with a lot of people. He hand't liked to go to town when he was little because everyone looked at him funny and picked at him. He didn't mind it any more—in fact, he liked to have them notice him.

Once in town he walked down to the feed store. The man who owned the place was gone for the day and his wife was moving some feed around. "Here, Dummy," she said when he was standing before her, "help me with this feed and I'll give you four-bits." Four-bits, he thought, why, that's half a dollar.

He pitched in to help her, but it took much longer than he had expected and he was tired before they finished. He wouldn't be caught doing this again. After all, he had come to town to go to the cafe. He should have gone there in the first place instead of saving that until he had seen who all was in town.

He went to the cash register and motioned to the woman. "Don't be in such a hurry," she said as she paid him. "Come eat a sandwich with me." She motioned him to take a chair before the heater and took a sack from the shelf. She opened it and took out a sandwich and gave it to him. Then she went to the coke cooler and took out a coke. She held it up for him to see. He shook his head from side to side and went to the cooler and took out a grape drink and gave it to her while nodding his head up and down.

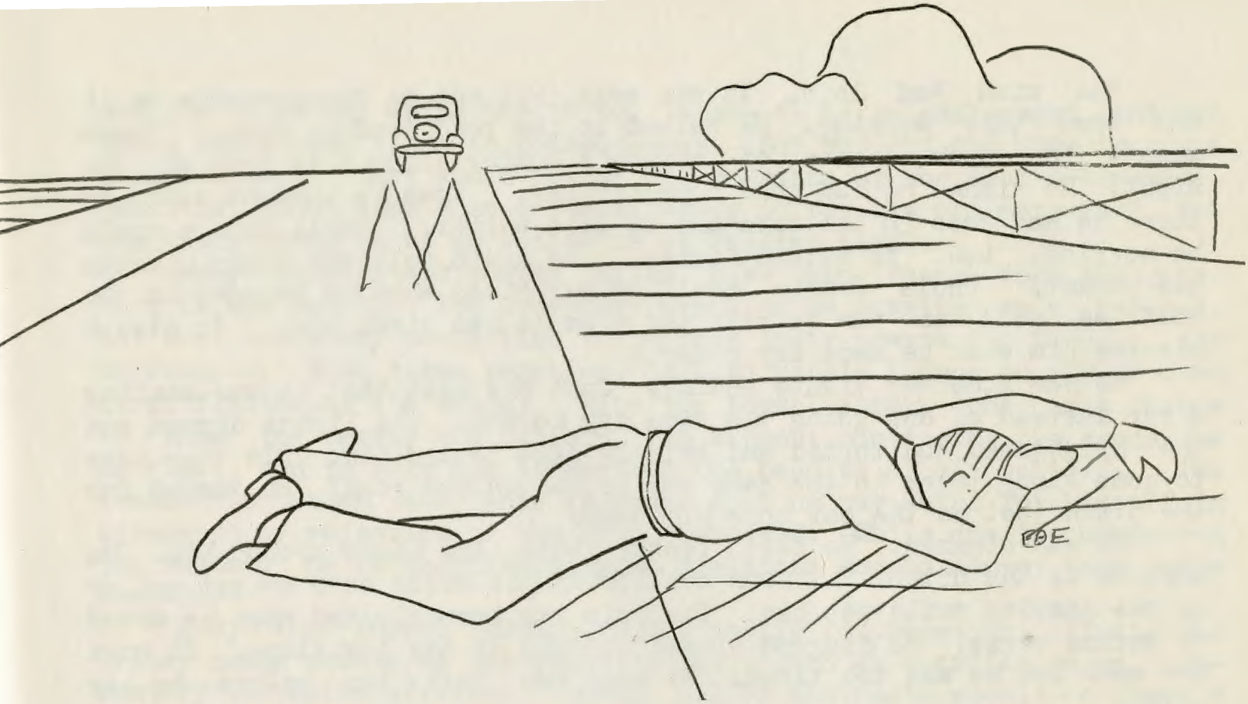
"O. K., Dummy, if that's what you want." She opened it and gave it back to him. Then she took a coke for herself and opened it. She sat down in the other chair before the fire.

"How's Uncle Bennie?" he saw her ask. He nodded his head up and down and smiled.

"That's good," she said.

He didn't look at her again until he had finished his sandwich. When he did look at her, she took the sack and offered him another one. He ate it and accepted the box of cookies she opened.

Once he was comfortably full, he stood up and took his coat off



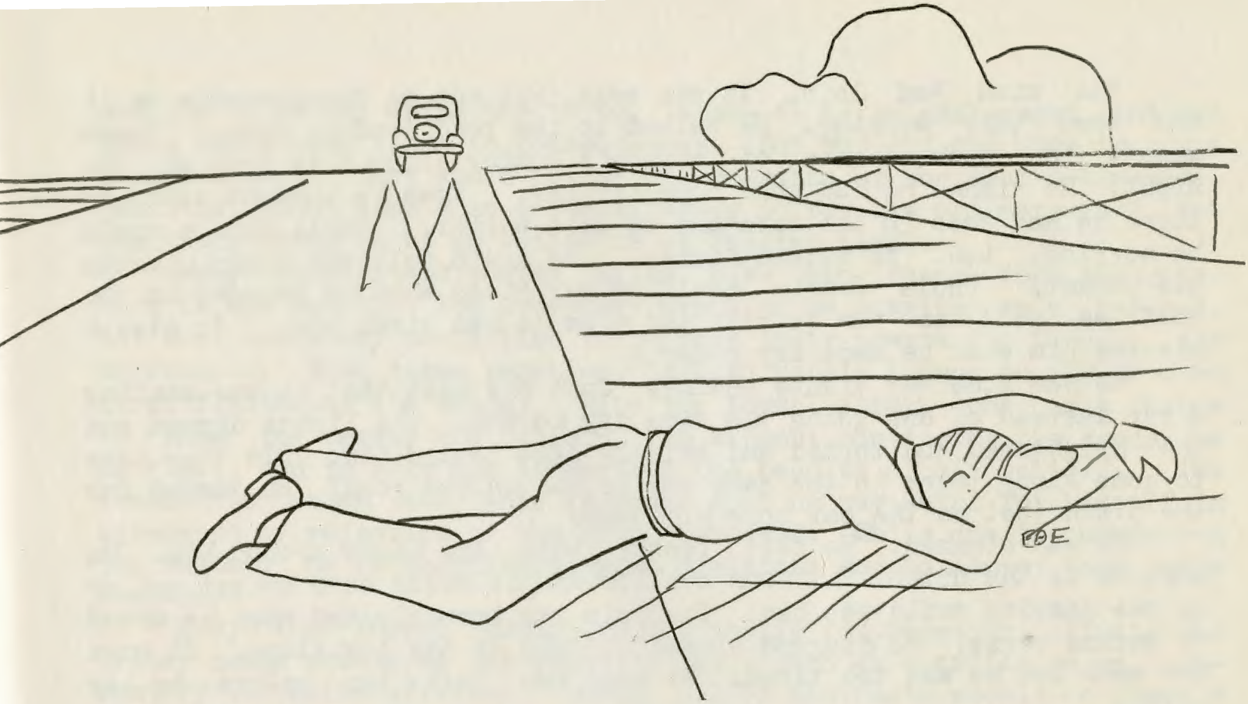
- "He made one last try before he lay still." -

other. This was the reason he came here every time he could. It was like another world compared with the house he and Uncle Bennie shared.

One man treated him to a hamburger and asked about Uncle Bennie and the whole family. Another came by and slapped him on the shoulder. He laughed with them all.

He glanced over to the clock. Eight o'clock. It couldn't be that late. Time always passed so much faster here than it did at home. He looked outside. It was pitch dark. He had promised Uncle Bennie that he'd come in before dark, too.

He put his hand into his pocket and felt the quarter, dime, and half dollar inside it. He didn't want anything. He stood up and wearily went outside.



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The wind had lain. It was cold, but not as disagreeable as it had been this morning. He walked to the road leading home. There wasn't too much chance of anyone's coming along this time of the night. He wished he had gone home earlier. Then he thought again of those he had seen in the cafe and he felt warmer. Uncle Bennie would be worried, too. He walked faster. He again felt the money inside his pocket. Uncle Bennie would be surprised when he brought in the half as well as the quarter and dime he had given him. It always pleased him when he made any money.

He saw some car lights coming. Just his luck that he was meeting a car instead of one going the same way he was. The lights dimmed and then brightened and turned and swiftly came toward him. Did they have to come along twice in the same day he was on the road? He jumped for the ditch just as the car bore him down.

He was stunned. He felt feebly with his hands around him. He must be in the ditch. It was shallow and he would have to get out or no one passing would see him. The pain was terrible and when he moved it became worse. He dragged himself slowly up the low slope. It hurt too much and he was too tired. He made one last try before he lay still.

THE END

A NEW LEASE ON LEARNING

by

Jan L. Scott

There comes a time in every student's life when a teacher, especially an English teacher, spoils a good day by assigning an essay, especially a formal essay. One might think the old girl had trouble at home that she is taking out on the class. Of course, there is nothing to do but write the thing, since it is an assignment, and not doing one's work leads to consequences. But why did she have to say a formal essay? That stuff is for the Emersons or the what's-his-name, Hazlitts. What good does a formal essay do for the ordinary man? Not everybody wants to be an author or an English teacher.

Many students and adults alike have had those very thoughts. Here is the point. Not everybody wants to be a writer or a teacher, but most everybody would like to possess their powers for thought and expression. That takes practice. A bird rarely learns to fly without first fluttering his wings. With the formal essay, one has a chance to show the reader his beliefs, to attempt convincing the reader he is right, and to make him understand the results of his beliefs. The reader is shown the facts in order that he may think for himself in agreement or rejection of the issue involved. While one is convincing the reader, he is learning to make decisions and to convey them with courage.

Now, the formal essay is not easily put together. First, the writer needs something important to say, such as a criticism or commentary on public affairs. Then, all of the facts should be clearly stated, giving a comparison of different points of view. A bit of emotion, wit, or humor is essential for driving home a strong point. The conclusion or compromise sums up the evaluated ideas. If the writer has done his job, a new thought has been created, instead of the reproduction of a previously discovered idea.

This is the difference between a formal essay and an ordinary, practical idea article. The formal essayist has shown his reasons and told the reader why; whereas, the practical idea writer must convince his reader of the personal value of an established idea and tell him why that is so. The reader is not impressed with the individual importance of an issue upon him but understands the significance of an affair to him as a member of the public through the formal essay.

Mr. Walter A. Campbell, a noted author, found thought training in England comparable to football training. The British combine both. An undergraduate spends most of his time off the football field in writing essays. In both places he needs the power of quick, decisive thinking, and he acquires such through practicing both subjects. When the time comes to change from football gear to a business suit, he may have the head of an executive and high value as a citizen of his country.

That English teacher may not have assigned corporal punishment to her students after all. She may have given them a new lease on learning with this assignment. Perhaps one of the students disagreed with the thoughts written here. If he puts his disagreement on paper, he has already begun to think as a formal essayist. Still more important he has begun to accept a responsibility to himself and his community in making up his mind about an idea and showing all who will read it how he thinks about it. Others may ponder his evidence to their evaluation. Maybe essay writing, especially formal essay writing, is not so bad, depending upon how one uses it.

THE END

GRANDMOTHER

My grandmother Jones was the savingest soul—
All that was hers she would keep:
Her dresser drawers buldged, every crannie and hole,
Filled with old treasures, some lovely, some droll,
Saved against time when shadows grow bold
And hands are folded in sleep;
Where buttons are useless and saved-twine forlorn
A land where tears dry before ever they're born.

"I'll take this meat home and this crumble of bread,"
How often I've heard her say
And folding them neatly and nodding her head
White as a blanced tree or a page left unread
And on carpeted feet with an old-lady tread
Happy, she'd trod away.
How I wish she had tarried, but one day she —
Stole into the shadows with some bit of me.

— by Eleanor Crockett

STELLA

by

Virginia Holloway

I hadn't wanted to look when I passed the mirror in the front hall, but what was the use of trying to hide from myself what I knew was there. As I looked, I saw the same dull, unexpressive brown eyes, the same long face with scars from the pimples that I had been plagued with since the sixth grade, the same coarse lifeless brown hair that never had curled even after suffering through numerous home-permanents and after sitting under a machine at the beauty shop having my head baked, the same figure which too many athletic events had made muscular and stout. Yes, I looked the same as yesterday. Nothing had changed.

"Stella, is that you?" Mother called from the kitchen. "Yes, Mother," I replied dully. "I'm just going up to my room to study," I lied because I just couldn't face her today.

"Is Diane with you?" she called back cheerfully. I wanted to scream that of course she wasn't with me. As usual she was at the youth center surrounded by several boys. Instead, I said, "She's having a coke with the gang, Mother, but she'll be home in an hour." I hurried on up the stairs to avoid any more questions.

As I opened the door to my room I felt free at last. This was the only room where I felt at home. It was my refuge. I loved it because it was the only thing that was truly mine. I had decorated it myself, to the astonishment of Mother, Dad and Diane. Mother had said, "But Stella, are you sure this is the way you want your room? Frills, stuffed animals, and soft, gay colors are so much more effective in a young girl's room. I'm sure Diane would love to help you fix your room just like hers." I was sure she would, but I liked my uncluttered, simple, modernistic room. I wanted to yell at her to stop trying to make me a carbon copy of Diane, but instead I told her I thought I would leave my room as it was for the present.

As I placed my books on the desk I hit the trophy, and it fell to the floor with a crash. Even before I looked down at it, I knew what I would find. The small, gold tennis racket lay separated from the rest of the trophy. I picked up the broken trophy and ran my fingers over it. It was the only think I had to be proud of, and now it was destroyed. It seemed at that moment as if my whole life was shattered as my trophy was. I remembered the day last spring when I had entered the tennis tournament.

I knew I would win, and I was filled with a sense of power and restless excitement. When my name was called, I had walked happily to the judges' table and had accepted the trophy for winning the tournament.

I had run all the way home because I wanted Mother and Diane to share my happiness. I hadn't told them about entering the contest because I couldn't have faced them if I had been defeated. I raced up the walk, opened the front door, and hurried in the direction of voices coming from the kitchen. "Mother, I have something . . ." but I was interrupted.

"Stella, the most wonderful thing has happened. Diane was chosen as the most beautiful girl in her class. She will be presented at the spring dance next week, and we've just been discussing what dress she will wear. Do you have any suggestions?"

Suddenly, it didn't seem so important that I had won the trophy; in fact, next to the title of most beautiful girl, my honor seemed insignificant and small.

I turned to Diane, who was sitting on the kitchen stool with her arms locked around her knees. The sun streamed through the kitchen window, striking her blond hair and making it sparkle. She was perfect from the top of her shining, blond hair to the tip of her small dainty feet. I had always wanted to look like her and have the grace and poise that came so easily to her.

"Any color dress would look lovely on Diane, but I'm partial to the blue one," I managed to utter before they could suspect that anything was wrong.

I shouldn't have worried. They began talking excitedly, and I felt excluded. I needed time to calm myself and ease the hurt. I

"I remembered the day when I had entered the tennis tournament."

turned and walked out of the room. But their voices followed me up the stairs, and only when I closed the door to my room did I escape them.

I placed the broken trophy back in its usual spot on the desk. My eyes suddenly fastened on my closet. I walked slowly to the door of the closet and opened it. Yes, it was still there. I jerked the jacket from the hanger and put it on.

I closed my eyes for a moment and saw Sam huddled on the bench watching his fellow players practice. Sam was sitting in the stands that day because he had injured his knee during Monday's practice. I had been on my way home from school when I had passed the stadium and had decided to watch the workout. Sam had seen me standing in the aisle of the empty stands and had motioned for me to sit next to him.

I had loved Sam from the night Diane gave a dance in our living room and Mother and Dad would not hear of me going to my room when the gang was having such fun. I had sat in the corner of the living room staring vacantly out the window when Sam suddenly asked me to dance. I had been so surprised that I merely nodded "Yes." I knew that he only felt sorry for me, but I loved him for his thoughtfulness.

While we watched the team, Sam noticed that I was shivering. I had left my coat in the locker at school. He took off his jacket and told me to put it on. When I left the stadium, I tried to give it back to him, but he told me to wear it home and return it some other time. Was that only last Wednesday? It seemed an eternity. I had relived my meeting with Sam many times during the past week, and I had felt happier than I had in weeks.

Then yesterday I had seen them in the hall at school together. He was looking at her with the same adoring look that I had seen in the eyes of many other boys, and Diane was hanging on to his every word. I had known that eventually it would happen.

At supper Diane had hardly been able to eat because she was so excited over a date she had with Sam that night. I was looking out the window when they came down the steps laughing and holding hands. Later, I had closed my eyes and had tried to sleep, but I kept seeing them as they had looked walking down the steps together.

Now, I pulled the jacket off and picked up the scissors from my desk drawer. I began cutting, and the pieces of the jacket fell to the floor. I picked up the picture of Diane which Mother had placed on my desk and threw it. The glass from the frame made a tinkling noise as it hit the floor. I picked up the unharmed picture which had fallen out of the frame and tore it into little pieces and scattered them on the floor, along with the remains of the jacket and the picture frame. A piece of the picture, Diane's smiling mouth, lay at my feet. I put my foot on it and pressed down — hard.

THE END

TO BE GREAT

In everyone's life there comes a time
When he wishes to be great;
To live forever in the minds of men,
To enter thru wisdom's gate.

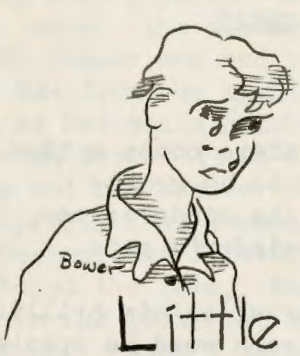
For the world to marvel at his brilliant truth,
And harken to each word he speaks,
For every ear to be open to him,
The strong, the wise, the weak.

To be a genius of knowledge untold,
To leave a mark in sands of time,
To be wiser than any yet of old
Who left their wisdom behind.

But these are dreams of mind, my friend,
Where reality hastens away;
A fool can be born to be
But a genius must be made.

So do not sit as a fool would sit,
And dream your life to ruin,
For greatness comes not in being, my friend,
But greatness comes in doing.

— by Tommy Moses



Little David Boy

by

Margaret Pittman

Brenda Moore's golden hair glistened in the sunlight as she walked slowly down the dirt road toward the Warwick house. She did quite frequently as she pleased now. Why shouldn't she? No one at home had paid much attention to her actions these past two weeks. Both her mother and Aunt Bess had forbidden her to play with the Warwick children. One day when Mrs. Moore was out in the yard, Brenda turned to Aunt Bess and said, "Why can't I get to know the Warwick children? Are they bad people?" With a swift turn of her body Aunt Bess faced her. "Good heavens," she remarked, "Child, your mother couldn't take it if she knew you had to get out and play with children of such low class as the Warwick children are. They never had much schooling, and some say they are so poor that they never know where the next meal is coming from. It's best not to play with such children. You come of a more respectable family, Brenda." Today Brenda was happy because she knew she would get to play with Tommy and David Warwick.

Brenda knew from Aunt Bess that her mother had first gone to bed two weeks ago with the flu, and that under the doctor's orders no one could see her. She could not understand why she was not allowed to see her for just a few minutes anyhow. Today a certain gloom hovered over the household like a huge dark cloud that appears before a storm.

There was so much which Brenda didn't understand. Like the time her mother had stayed out late for a party and what had happened when Brenda had tip-toed lightly into her room when she say her mother's lights on. "What are you doing here and---at this hour?" she had almost screamed in the child's face. Trembling underneath the thin gown, Brenda had muttered in a half-broken voice, "I --- I just wanted to kiss you good-night, Mama. And I wanted to know about who all came to the party. I always like parties when a lot of people come." Mrs. Moore had shooed her out of the room with the only comment, "Go on to bed. I haven't the time to talk about the party. I'm too tired and sleepy."

Brenda could not understand why her mother was always too tired and sleepy or never had the time to play with her or tell her about any of the parties. Aunt Bess never had time to play with her either. Sometimes she got awfully lonesome in the big house. Brenda had never thought much about the situation until she had seen Mrs. Warwick take time off from work to play with Tommy and David. And she often came and sat on the porch and told stories to the children as she sewed.

Brenda could not see anyone as she turned in at the Warwick gate. "Tommy," she shouted, "Tommy, where are you? It's me, Brenda."

She saw ten-year-old Tommy appear in the doorway. When he put his finger to his lips to silence her, she came up on the porch. Behind Tommy she could see simple, crude-like furniture and a bare floor. The floor had a clean smell to it. In fact, everything looked all scrubbed and cleaned. The door was closed to the other room, but she could hear a child's voice crying out as if in pain.

Coming closer to the door she said curiously, "Is it little David? What makes him cry so loud?"

When Tommy came out on the porch she could see that his usually neat brown hair had not yet been combed and his large brown eyes were red and swollen. Brenda had never seen him look so sad. His voice sounded choked up when he began to speak. "Little David took sick last night. Mother---she's been up for hours trying to make him well. Dr. Berry said he could not seem to locate the pain. But it must be something that bothers him." His voice sounded weak, but he went on, "I never heard him cry like that. Mom says he never in all his six years ever had nothing to bother him but mumps and chicken-pox."

Brenda did not know what to say. Every day for the past two weeks Tommy and David had come out to play with her in the yard. She walked over and sat down on the edge of the porch. There in the yard were the sandpiles they had begun scooping up yesterday. Leaning against the porch was the broomstick which had served as a horse for little David. She felt a sad tug at her heart for the little sick boy. She got up and started down the path. She suddenly heard Tommy's voice calling to her, "Brenda, you aren't going home yet, are you? Don't you want to play today?" His voice no longer had the clogged-up sound but had its natural tone.

Brenda turned to face Tommy standing on the porch. Her little chin quivered and her big blue eyes were full of tears. "But what about little David? Who will shovel his sand for him? And . . . who will ride his horse for him?" Before she could say another word she was covering her face with her hands to hide the tears.

Then she felt Tommy beside her. When she removed her hands and looked up at him his eyes dropped to the ground and he began drawing straight lines in the sand with his toe. His voice sounded soft to her as he said, "Brenda, we can . . . we can still play. Little David might be well in a few days and then he can play too. I think while he's getting well he'll want us to shovel his sand for him and take good care of his horse, and . . ." Brenda's face took on a cheerful expression and she interrupted Tommy saying, "Oh, do you think it'll make him happy and well if we play for him too? Do you really think so, Tommy?" Then her expression changed to a frown. "But how will he know we're shoveling his sand and keeping his horse for him? If he's so sick, how will he ever know?"

She could see Tommy's eyes sparkle as he said, "When David's better, Mother can let him stay at the window and watch. Then it won't be long until he'll be well enough to play again." Brenda's face lit up like a candle that is burning once more after being snuffed out by a strong gust of wind. "Oh, good! What'll we do first? Don't you think we should make David's sandpile first? Then we can do ours."

That very morning, Brenda, along with Tommy's help, began work on the sandpiles. At noon, Mrs. Warwick, her eyes swollen and her face tired-looking, brought them some cold milk and cheese sandwiches. Later she brought out some jam sandwiches. Brenda enjoyed her meal better than any she had eaten at home since her mother had been ill.

At home she had been going in and eating sandwiches her Aunt Bess had prepared. Sure, she had plenty to eat, but who liked to eat along? She had been told that the doctor was making more trips to the house now. "Besides," Aunt Bess had told her, "I don't have the time to wait on your mother and cook and clean house all at the same time."

Many times Brenda had been invited by Mrs. Warwick to stay for lunch. Mrs. Warwick had always added with a smile, "It isn't much, but it is substantial." Brenda liked Mrs. Warwick and thought she had beautiful brown eyes in spite of her homely-looking face.

As the little girl ate her sandwich she remembered that she had heard her mother tell Aunt Bess that two years ago Mr. Warwick had been killed in a car accident. The family now lived on a small income left by the father, and Mrs. Warwick earned a few dollars by taking in sewing and washing.

For a week Brenda left home after breakfast to go to the Warwick house. She helped Tommy make the sandpiles, and mark out a horse-face on an old piece of white cloth for David's broomstick horse.

One Saturday morning as Brenda turned in at the gate she was both surprised and happy to see little David at the window. His bed had been placed near the window and he was propped up among huge pillows. Through a voice filled with happiness Tommy, pointing to the window, told her, "It's David, and he's much better now. I told him about the sandpiles and the horse. He begged Mother to let him watch us from the window."

Brenda went closer to the window and waved at David. She saw him wave back and smile weakly, but she also saw something more. His once rosey cheeks were now pale and his big brown eyes seemed larger.

As Brenda helped Tommy work in the yard, David's brown eyes glowed with happiness. Several times Brenda heard his ask his mother, "Mamma, it won't be long 'till I can play, will it? I can help Brenda and Tommy on the sandpiles myself." Mrs. Warwick assured him it would not be long.

Four days later things were in a big stir at the Moore house. The doctor was coming more frequently and Aunt Bess was sitting up all nights with Mrs. Moore. Brenda wanted to see her mother, but the doctor had been strict in allowing no one to enter the sick-room with the exception of Aunt Bess. The case of flu had not developed into pneumonia. "Well," Brenda told Tommy, "I guess she'll be well in a few days. Aunt Bess won't tell me a thing. She just tells me to stay out of the way."

Late that afternoon Brenda ceased her playing as little David took chills, and a deep sweat broke out over his entire body. Mrs. Warwick had to move him from the window. Linen was stripped from the other beds to keep him warm. Dr. Berry was sent for but he came an hour later as he had been on another sick call.

Brenda sat on the porch steps. She did not want to play any more. She did not want to go home either. Besides she did not think anyone would miss her. She had been so happy about little David's recovery. Now he was sick again. But he must be even sicker as Dr. Berry had been in the house for at least two or three hours now.

With a childish plea she uttered under her breath, "Dear God, don't let little David die. Let him live and play again."

She heard Tommy come out of the house and felt his arm brush against hers as he sat down. His voice sounded weak to her when he said, "Brenda you'd better go home. Your mother will be worried." She turned to him, "I don't want to go. And it won't matter anyhow. Nobody will miss me."

There was a long silence before she heard Tommy speak again, "Dr. Berry doesn't expect David to live anymore. He told mother David had a bad case of some kind of cold called new-monia. . .or something that sounds like that. I heard him tell her it was pretty bad. I had to get up and leave. I couldn't stand to hear David breathe so hard, even though the door was closed." Brenda heard him utter a loud sound, and when she turned to face him, he had put his face in his two hands and had begun to cry. A big lump rose in her throat. She wanted to run into the house and tell Dr. Berry to let little David live. He just had to live. He just must live.

The sun was sinking slowly over the hilltop. Brenda did not want to go home yet. Big tears were now splashing down her cheeks. She was then aware that Tommy had stood up and had started toward the door. She looked up in time to see Dr. Berry meet him at the door. His look was on Tommy's face, but he never said a word. He looked old and stooped as he walked down the steps and past the gate.

On the way home Brenda's footsteps seemed to beat out time to the phrase, "Little David's dead." Over and over in her head the words sounded, "Little David's dead." In the distance she could hear the sad, cooing voice of a dove which seemed to lament the death of little David.

When she got home she was aware that the house was filled with people. Some were relatives she had never seen. They all talked in soft whispers and there was a hushed silence prevalent over the group.

She wondered why they were looking at her so strangely. Then she looked down and saw that she was holding in her hands the unfinished cloth horse-face that was to have been little David's. She felt tears coming into her eyes so she stuck the piece of cloth into her pocket and ran from the room.

Later she heard Aunt Bess calling her into the dining room. "Brenda," she began, "It's your mother. She's dead. It happened this afternoon. She died of penumonia. She's gone forever."

Suddenly Brenda could see the still form of little David as he lay on the large bed. The roses were no longer in his cheeks and his brown eyes would no longer open. Once again she felt his small hand in hers, and she wondered why it was so stiff and cold. She began to cry and her little body shook with sobs. She felt Aunt Bess' arms about her shoulders. "Don't cry, darling," she said, "we tried everything to save her. Seeing how weak and sick she was, I don't see how she stayed on as long as she did."

Brenda looked up and said, "Why does God let people die?" Through her tears she saw Aunt Bess shake her head and heard her say, "Only God does know." In a voice that sounded far-off Brenda said, "Why did He take Little David so early? He was so good, and he never did anybody any harm."

When Brenda turned around, Aunt Bess was nowhere in the room. As she started toward the living room she could hear Aunt's voice saying to someone in the next room, "The little darling's taking it so bad. I wanted to let her see her mother, but Dr. Blanton gave strick orders to let no one enter the room. But I can see her heart's broken now. The poor, poor little girl."

Brenda took the piece of cloth from her pocket. Her tears fell on the unfinished horse-face. She hid her face in it while crying out "Little David boy. Gone ..... gone forever."

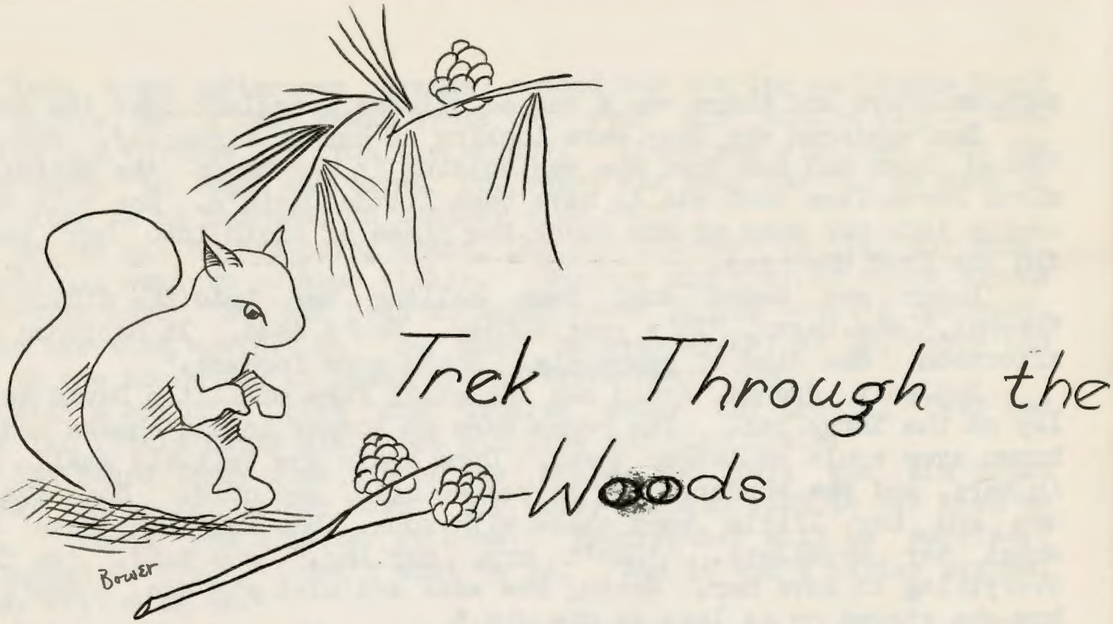
THE END

D E A T H

Death breathed upon me,
The icy fingers chilled me,
And cold enclosed me.

— by Barbara Adams

Trek Through the Woods



I am late.
As I walk over the dry leaves, they crackle under my loafers.
Yesterday it rained and everything was quiet.
Everything but the birds.
I watched them today and they flutter
And tweet
And fly from cedar to pine.
Ah, yes, the stately pines,
The tall pines.
They bravely defy man's impudence.
The squirrels take delight in scampering along a path away fron me.
They stop.
Their head is in the air, their tail arched.
I come to a cold, hard stretch of man-made cement,
So out of place.
A robin hops within inches of me, trusting, yet wary.
And then I am there.
I step down into the street, leaving a little world to itself.
But tomorrow I will make my trek again.
From Senior Dorm to the Birdwell Building.

— by Bebe Whitworth

THE BIG MISTAKE

by

Diane Engstrom

As Sallie put her glasses on for the fifth time, she noticed that the handsome young man in the tweed sports jacket was still standing in the lobby by the Wishing Well. He was standing just as he had been for the last twenty minutes, tossing a silver coin.

He was a very good looking fellow, with black hair, about six feet tall and completely average and respectable looking.

The words of the old song, "It's later than you think," kept going through her mind as the minutes ticked off. Her friends had said to her, "You have to be daring and sophisticated in order to get anywhere in New York. If you don't, you'll be home sitting with your kittens and knitting for an old aunt." She didn't have an old aunt, or anyone for that matter, to knit for, but the prospect of such a life did look probable if she didn't get out and do something about it.

That was all she needed. She took one more look at the young man and that settled it. She started down the stairs of the balcony to the lobby below.

This whole idea had been the brainstorm of the girls in the outer office. He, Phillip Wilkin, was a young out-of-town buyer. He was supposed to be rich besides being handsome, so that made him all the more desirable. Since Sallie had never laid eyes on him before, this made it harder on her than on him because he told the girls that he had seen her before.

She didn't like the idea of meeting someone she had never seen in a hotel lobby, but as the girls pointed out, she was just plain G. U., geographically undesirable, as she lived an hour's drive from uptown

New York.

Just as she was about to approach him, he began to move toward the information bureau desk. With a sigh of relief, Sallie said to herself, "Good, he is going to leave and I can get out of this foolish mess." But she sighed too soon, he was just moving to the other side of the well in order that he could watch the front door, or in order that he could be seen better, because it looked as if he was losing patience with whomever he was waiting for.

With her back braced again and her head high, she went toward him. "That coin you are flipping will bring you one good wish," she said. That went over smooth, she thought to herself. Maybe this game isn't so hard after all. Then she said, "I'm Sallie Collier."

The young man threw up his head and looked her straight in the eye. "Hello," he said, and smiled.

Even though her glasses were stuck away in her purse, she could tell that he was even more handsome than he had been from twenty feet above.

She tried to think of something else to say and all that came to her was, "This is a quaint old hotel, isn't it?" That didn't sound very sophisticated, so she added, "I come here quite often."

"You do, do you?" he replied, looking around. "It is rather unique."

Touching his arm, she said, "Shall we sit down over here and get acquainted? It's not so busy and noisy here in this corner." She led him to a loveseat by the window. After sitting down and arranging her full skirt, there was not much room for him on the small seat, but he made the best of the situation.

"Now we can talk in peace," she said. "Where are you from?"

"Nevada," he said. "Reno, to be exact."

"You're a long way from home. Is it like they say, just flooding over with rich women getting divorces and looking for new husbands? I'm surprised you haven't been caught yet." No, she thought, that was not the right thing to say and it didn't sound very sophisticated.

He laughed it off and answered, "I've got a good hunting dog and I know where all the traps are set. Now, where are you from?"

"From a small town in New Jersey," she said. "I lived with my aunt until she died, and then I was left alone. I always wanted to come to New York and be independent. So, here I am. I feel like a true New Yorker now."

"You don't look exactly like a New Yorker," he said, looking her over. "They always have a hurried, troubled look about them, and all you have is a dazed look."

I've got to watch this she thought. Then she said, "I love New York, with its hustle and bustle and all the different types of people that you meet here. It's funny, but you can meet a new person everyday and never run into him again as long as you live here. That's why I like it."

Now she was conscious of his stare. "You don't seem like the type of girl who would do a thing like this," he said solemnly.

"I'm not," she admitted hurriedly. "I was simply terrified at the thought of coming up to you and speaking to you first. I'm glad I did though, and it is not at all like I thought it would be."

"You mean you've never done anything like this before?"

Sallie just nodded.

At that moment a tall, luscious blonde came in the door and started directly toward them. Sallie looked and then gulped. No, it couldn't be, not possible, not Vera Stanley from Little Falls! She couldn't tell exactly by the face, but she couldn't mistake that walk. She came over and stood in front of them, then looked at Phillip, and spoke. "Mark, darling, I see you haven't been losing any time." Then looking at Sallie, who was trying to hide by sliding down in the seat, she said, "Why I'll be, if it isn't little Sallie Collier from Little Falls. This certainly is a small world. I was thinking about you on the way up here and I thought I would call you if I had time. I'm here buying my trousseau. Isn't that right, Mark, darling?"

By now Sallie was pretty well mixed up. Who was Mark, darling? Why was Vera talking to Phillip and then talking about her trousseau? The light shown on Vera's engagement ring and then the light began to dawn on Sallie. She had made a terrible mistake.

Vera was saying, "I didn't know you two had met. Isn't he simply wonderful, Sallie?"

But Sallie's head was spinning too fast. All she could stammer was, "I'm afraid there has been some mistake. I've got to be going." And off she flew toward the telephone booth. She was going to call Mary Anne, the girl who had gotten her into all this trouble, and tell her off as fast as she could.

As she was not watching where she was going, she ran into a man standing by the booth. She looked up into hard eyes, he said, "Are you Sallie Collier? I'm Phillip Wilkin."

"Yes," she stammered. "I'm Sallier Collier."

"Well, then you must be my date. These New York girls sure like to keep the men waiting. What would you like to do for the evening, baby?"

She was still stunned, but she knew she had to go out with him because she had kept him waiting so long. It was the only polite thing to do.

As she left the hotel with his hand on her arm, she looked back at Mark and Vera, who were both staring at her with unbelieving eyes. I guess, she thought, that Little Falls will really have something to talk about for a long time as soon as Vera gets home and tells who and what she saw in New York. Little Sallie Collier, standing in hotel lobbies waiting for a pick up. Oh, she felt terrible about this character who just would not shut up.

They went to a small lounge around the corner. He asked her what she wanted. Half-heartedly she replied, "Lemonade."

"With what added?" he asked.

When she said, "Just sugar," she thought she heard him say something under his breath, but she let it pass. She was too worn out and sick at heart to think about anything except those hazel, or were they grey, eyes of Mark's. If she only knew his last name, then maybe she could write him and apologize. But that would probably make things worse for herself and also for Vera. As she had said, you could meet a new person everyday in New York and never see him again. She hoped she would never see him again. Or did she?

Just at that moment he walked in with Vera on his arm. They went to the opposite side of the room so they didn't see her.

Phillip tried to make small talk, but she did not have her mind on anything except how terrible she felt. At that precise moment, Phillip said something that brought her out of her trance and also made her drop her lemonade glass in her lap. "Oh, brother," he said, "I really got a square this time."

She said, "Never mind, it isn't a good dress and it'll clean."

In a minute he said, "Excuse me, I've got to make a call." And he got up. She knew he wouldn't be back and she didn't for a minute care. In a little while the waiter appeared with a note with two $1 bills attached. It read: "Sorry I had to run out. Important meeting. Take a taxi home."

She had to get out of there and get out fast, but how could she without Mark and Vera seeing her? She waited until they got up and then she slipped out the side door.

On the way to the bus she gave the two bills to an old lady. She caught the bus and all the way home all she could think about was Mark and what a fool she had been, and about what Vera would say back home. But she did not care about that particularly. She did have to admit to herself that she did care about Mark. She couldn't understand how Vera had been so lucky to land a prize like him. But then, she always had been lucky with boys, even when they were in high school together.

Vera was the one that had all the dates and was elected to everything. Now she had what Sallie wanted most.

Sallie knew she had to get over it, and she knew she would, in time. But for the present she wasn't going to follow anyone's advice about how to get a man. She was going to let it work itself out. After all, she was just twenty-one and still had the best days of her life ahead of her.

She was thinking this as she got off the bus and walked slowly and tiredly toward her rooming house. Just as she approached the steps, a figure stepped out of the shadows and blocked her way in the door. At first she was startled, and then she realized it was someone familiar.

"Hello," said Mark. "You ran out so fast I didn't get a chance to talk to you."

"But," she stammered.

"I know exactly what you're thinking," he said. "You think Vera is my fiance. Well, she isn't!" She's my brother's. He couldn't come with her so he asked me to bring her up for the weekend. I wanted to run after you in the lobby, but when I saw you talking to that other man and leaving with him, I honestly didn't know what to think about you. Then I saw you in the lounge and I saw when he left you. I tried to get over to you, but you ran off again. Vera gave me your address and I drove right out here. By the way, you owe me for the ticket I got." He laughed heartily and added, "I had to find you again and tell you about all this, and ask you for a real date. Maybe we'll have a chance to have several evenings together."

All this time Sallie stood there blankly. She could not say a word. When she finally regained her voice, all she could think of was, "What is your name?"

"Mark Thompson," he said, opening the door for her. Then he added; "I made a wish in that Wishing Well back at the hotel and I wished to meet a nice girl just like you. It looks like my wish has come true."

As they turned from the door and started to the car, Sallie thought, "The girls wouldn't call this being so sophisticated, but they might classify it as daring.

THE END

MORTAL STRATAGEM

The purple veil of evening
Was creeping 'cross the sky,
When 'side the darky's cabin
The boys were passing by.

The light was slowly fading
As whispers came their way.
'Twas Dan'l to his God above
That they were hearing pray.

"Oh, Lawd, you knows me well;
My soul am yourn to keep,
And, Gowd, if you am willin,
Please take it as I sleep.

My haid am white as wintah;
My knees, dey shore air bent;
And by de misery in muh bones
I knows my life am spent.

"Take me, Lawd, please take me;
I wants to live no mo'.
Let Gab'l come and take me
To Jordan's othah sho'."

The darkness hid the scheming
Of youthful wit at work.
To have his prayers answered,
Dan'l's courage it would irk.

The midnight hour found them
In gleeful silence deep;
The cabin door before them,
And Dan'l fast asleep.

Their knock was loud and somber;
It split the quiet air.
Dan'l raised his head and said,
"Pray tell me, who am dere?"

The voice outside did answer,
As had been planned before,
"Tis Gabriel to take old Dan'l
To Jordan's other shore."

The darky's eyes were rolling;
Cold sweat was on his brow.
"If you's lookin for ole Dan'l,
He don't live heah now!"

— by Bill Bailey

SPLENDID LOVE

Love is as awesome
As the bright red setting sun
Glowing on the clouds.

To be loved inspires
So that even the awkward
Can deftly create.

Love is a luxury
Both the rich and poor enjoy
Without any tax.

— by Bebe Whitworth

THE HANGED MAN

He was hanging from an oak tree.
    Limp and straight he was hanging,
Gone and doomed, life is no more,
    No more to hear his gun banging.

They caught him as a cow he stole.
    He said his wife and children starve,
No food to eat, no milk to drink,
    He only asked some beef to carve.

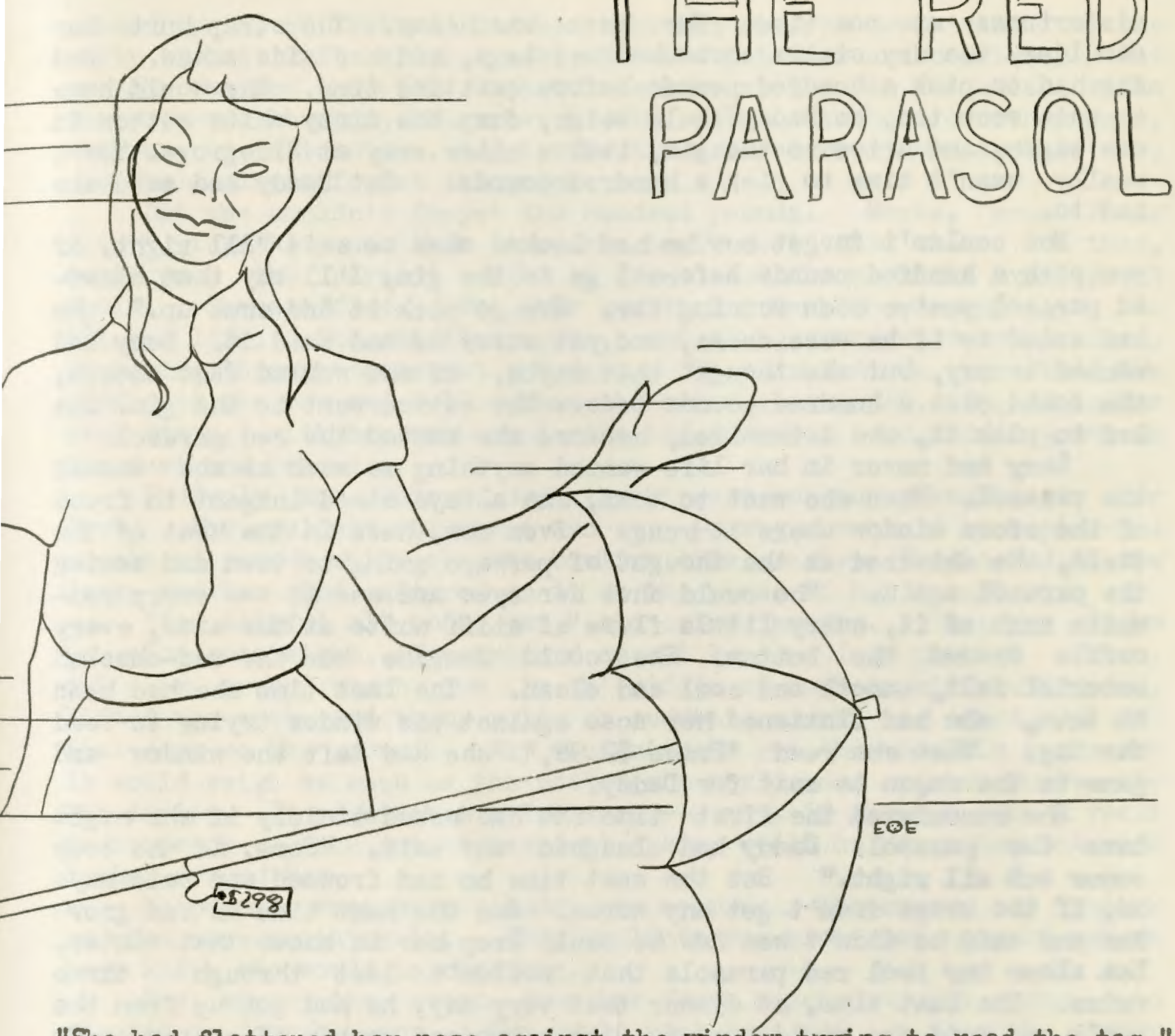
A cattle thief they called him now.
    Unclaimed by those who knew him best.
A shallow grave shall hold his bones.
    How can he ever know true rest?

They cut him down from the oak tree.
    He'll hang upon a tree no more.
Forgot he'll be, if it can be,
    He hangs not on our family tree.

An thus is fate in this old world.
    Men hang their brother on a tree,
Ignoble death they give to him,
    Then deny him to posterity.

— by Sara Jane Metcalf

THE RED PARASOL



"She had flattened her nose against the window trying to read the tag."

by

Marjorie McNeill

Lucy, scrawny eleven-year old, all legs and arms and slatted sunbonnet, scuffed along in the dust of the cotton row and hated cotton-picking time. As she bent mechanically over the half-opened bolls, she wondered desolately if any other little girls had ever had so many misfortunes at one time. Her sack was heavy. The strap hurt her shoulder, the dry stalks scratched her legs, and her side ached. And she had to pick a hundred pounds before quitting time. She would have to quit soon too, so Daddy could weigh, dump the dirty white cotton in the wagon, and drive to the gin, twelve miles away at Bluegrove. There really wasn't time to pick a hundred pounds. But Daddy had said she had to.

She couldn't forget how he had looked when he said "All right, if you pick a hundred pounds before I go to the gin, I'll buy that blasted parasol you've been whining for. Now go pick it and shut up." He had acted as if he were cross, and yet sorry he had said it. Lucy had wanted to cry, but she thought that maybe, if she worked fast enough, she could pick a hundred pounds before the cotton went to the gin. She had to pick it, she determined, because she wanted the red parasol.

Lucy had never in her life wanted anything as much as she wanted the parasol. When she went to town, she always stood longest in front of the store window where it hung. Even now, here in the heat of the field, she shivered at the thought of perhaps going to town and seeing the parasol again. She could shut her eyes and see it --- every red-white inch of it, every little flare of stiff white at the side, every ruffle around the bottom. She could imagine how the red-checked material felt, smooth and cool and clean. The last time she had been in town, she had flattened her nose against the window trying to read the tag. When she read "Price $2.98," she had left the window and gone to the wagon to wait for Daddy.

She remembered the first time she had asked timidly if she might have the parasol. Daddy had laughed and said, "Sure, if the crop comes out all right." But the next time he had frowned and said maybe, if the crops didn't get any worse. And the next time he had growled and said he didn't see how he could keep her in shoes that winter, let alone buy fool red parasols that wouldn't last through three rains. The last time, at dinner that very day, he had got up from the table and said she would have to pick a hundred pounds of cotton or do without the parasol.

She bent down to pick a grassburr from between her toes, and straightened up slowly so she wouldn't hurt her shoulder, already chafed by the strap. She was tired. She had been up since five-thirty, stopping only for a scant dinner. Now, when she wanted to work hardest, she didn't feel like it. As she went on down the row, the ache in her side grew worse, and felt knotty and twisty, so that she wanted to bend over and lie down on her cotton sack.

Lucy wondered about the ache. At first she had thought it was caused by the shrivelled peaches she had stuffed down to fill up the empty spaces left after a meal of fried potatoes and cornbread. But now she decided that the peaches made a heavy lump in her chest, while the pain was sharper, below her middle. When she bent over her row, however, it felt better, and by the time she started down another row, she could almost forget the pain.

But she couldn't forget the hundred pounds. Maybe, even if she didn't pick that much this time, she could do it next week. But then, next week the parasol might be gone. And she couldn't even see it again. She sniffled. Not ever see that red-white parasol again in all her life. She sniffled again, and a big tear ran down her face, streaking through the sweat and dust. She stumbled on a rock in the middle of the row and fell. Then she cried in earnest, tangled in her sack strap, with her sunbonnet slipping from her head and dragging in the dust and leaves.

Suddenly she gulped down the biggest sob and scrambled to her feet. She couldn't sit there and cry —— why she could have picked a couple of pounds while she was bawling like a baby. She looked at the rock, and her mind centered on it as the cause of her troubles.

"You hateful ol' rock, you," she cried jerkily. "I'm gonna throw you plum outa sight. You tripped me an' kep' me from pickin' cotton, an' I'm gonna throw you in th' middle of nex' week!" She stooped, lifted the rock, and then, quite as suddenly as she had stood up, sat flat down on the ground. Why couldn't she put this rock in her sack? It would weigh as much as the cotton she could have picked while she was crying. It might even weigh more —— why, if she put enough rocks in her sack —— she got to her feet again, still holding the rock, and looked around her.

Nobody was near here. Daddy was over near the wagon, and Brother and Sam were weighing in. They couldn't see her——but even if no one ever knew, she would be cheating.

She wiped the sweat from her face, hitched up the strap, and started on down her row. She would pick fast and get as much cotton as she could. Then, across the baked field she heard Daddy calling, "Hey, Lucy, almost time to weigh." And Brother yelled after him, "Yeah, got that hundred pounds yet?"

Lucy looked back at the rock, and wished she could be bad enough to slip it into her sack. She could be good —— she began sniffling again —— and work all day in a hot cotton patch——now she was crying in earnest —— and if she couldn't pick a hundred pounds she wouldn't get anything at all. She swallowed a sob and went back to the rock. She didn't want to be good. She wanted the red parasol.

It was very easy to slip the rock in with the cotton, and it didn't show. She breathed deeply and looked around for another rock. It would take a lot of them to make her sack weigh a hundred pounds, and she might as well go ahead and put in as many rocks as she could, now that she'd started. She saw three little rocks close together, and put them in, and then she saw some more ahead of her and dragged her sack up the row, putting in every rock she saw. Her side was hurting again; the ache began beating against her, but she didn't mind. She was going to get the parasol.

Her sack was heavier now, and pulled down on her sore shoulder. When she reached the end of the row and straightened her back, she saw that Daddy was weighing his sack and Brother and Sam were tramping down the cotton in the wagon. She turned toward the wagon and walked slowly, dragging the sack with both hands to keep the weight off her shoulder. Gosh, it was heavy —— maybe now she had a hundred pounds. She scuffed through the dead stalks, forgetting her aching sides and her sore shoulder.

What was an old pain when she was going to get a new parasol? But then, what was a red parasol if she —— if she cheated? Lucy bit her lip suddenly. She wasn't a good girl any more; she was just the same as a thief; she had stolen from Daddy. Suppose someone found out or Sam or Daddy saw the rocks? What if the man at the gin —— and she had heard that the man at the gin shot people who cheated on the weights. And once she had heard that flint rocks in cotton made it catch fire and burn, gin and all. Were there any flint rocks in her sack?

She glanced hurriedly at the wagon. They weren't looking; there was still time to take out the rocks and put the cotton back in her sack. As she bent over, Daddy called impatiently, "Well, come on with that hundred pounds and let's get going!" and Brother and Sam laughed and said "hun'erd pounds is good."

Lucy jerked up. They thought she couldn't pick a hundred pounds. She'd show them. She stumbled to the wagon, dropped the sack, and sat down. Let them go ahead and weigh it, she didn't care. She bent over, holding her side, and waited.

Daddy lifted the sack up slowly, as if he were weighing it with his hands, and fastened it to the hook of the scales. He looked at the bulging dirty canvas, and then, as if trying to make Lucy think it was too little weight to bother with, he selected the smallest weight, the pea used only for the half-filled sacks. The scales screeched a little then shifted, swung, and settled on an even line. The little weight was far out on the end of the scale. Daddy squinted at it, moved it a notch, and whistled.

"Shoo——who'd a thought it? An even sixty. That's a hundred an' ten, with th' fifty you picked first weighin'. Guss you'll hafta have that parasol." He unfastened the sack and slung it heavily to Sam, who began emptying it into the wagon. Lucy started at him. What if he found the rocks?

Suddenly Daddy, now in a good humor, patted her shoulder. It wasn't the sore shoulder, but Lucy began to cry.

"What's the matter, Lucy?" Daddy wanted to know. "Ain't you glad you're gonna get that parasol?" But Lucy only sobbed, and, suddenly, realized that she could never give up the parasol, even if she had to be a bad girl forever, and ever, clung to Daddy and wept loudly and convulsively on his stained blue shirt.

"Why, Lucy, what under th' sun's th' matter?" Daddy asked, now worried. "You ain't sick or nothing, are you?" Lucy, aware now that the pain in her side was almost unbearable, and seeking some plausible excuse for her outburst, nodded.

"Yes, awful sick. In my side. It hurts." Then she renewed her spasmodic sobbing. Daddy turned to Brother and Sam who having emptied the sacks, were now standing awkwardly near.

"Get the team hitched and bring this cotton 'round to th' house. I'm gonna cut 'cross creek and take Lucy home so's she can take some medicine. I guess you-all been eating them shrivelly peaches again." He picked Lucy up, shifted her thin body to a comfortable position, and started with long strides for the house.

Lucy clung miserably to him. She was sick, so sick they might have to call the doctor, and she had been so bad that she would probably die. She must tell Daddy about the rocks, even if she never saw the red parasol.

"Daddy, I——I been awful bad," she choked. "I guess that's why I hurt so now. I been terrible bad." The pain doubled her up, she could not continue, but could only gasp.

"Here, kid, don't talk if you're hurtin' so." said Daddy. He cleared his throat. "You ain't bad, Lucy, you ain't a bit bad. Don't cry if you can help it. Don't mind about eatin' them peaches."

She tried to stop crying. If Daddy thought she was worrying about the peaches, maybe she'd better not tell him until she felt better. She held tightly to his over-all strap, because everything was going round and round, and she couldn't see. She screamed, and then a thick blackness came down and covered everything but the pain.

For a long time there wasn't anything but the blackness and the pain. Then she heard voices, and blinked, and could see again. She was lying on the bed in the front room, and Mother and Daddy were there, and a little fat man who poked his finger where the pain was. She winced, and the man clucked sympathetically, as if he knew how it hurt.

"Pretty bad, isn't it sister?" She looked at him. He must be the doctor, she thought. That meant a lot of expense. Daddy would have to pay a doctor bill now, and he couldn't buy the red parasol. She began to cry, but to herself this time.

"Well, best thing to do is to get her to town," the fat man was saying. Mother was hurrying around, and Lucy saw that there was biscuit dough on her hands. And again everything was getting blacker. Although she could hear Mother saying something about clean nightgowns, and Daddy was saying he had to go to town with the cotton, it all sounded a long way off, like voices from the bottom of a well. She was glad when the blackness came down again, because she didn't have to think about the rocks and the red parasol.

But when the darkness left again, Lucy was frightened. This time she was lying on a little narrow table in a shiny white room where bright lights burned and everything smelled like liniment. The fat doctor was talking to a youngish man in a white coat. She must be in a hospital! Going to have an operation! She moaned and turned a little. The young man stepped up briskly.

"Now if you'll just breathe hard when I put this white thing over your face, we'll have you feeling fine in a jiffy," he said. Lucy shook her head slowly.

"I'm scared," she whispered.

The young man quirked up his eyebrows and smiled at her, a reassuring smile.

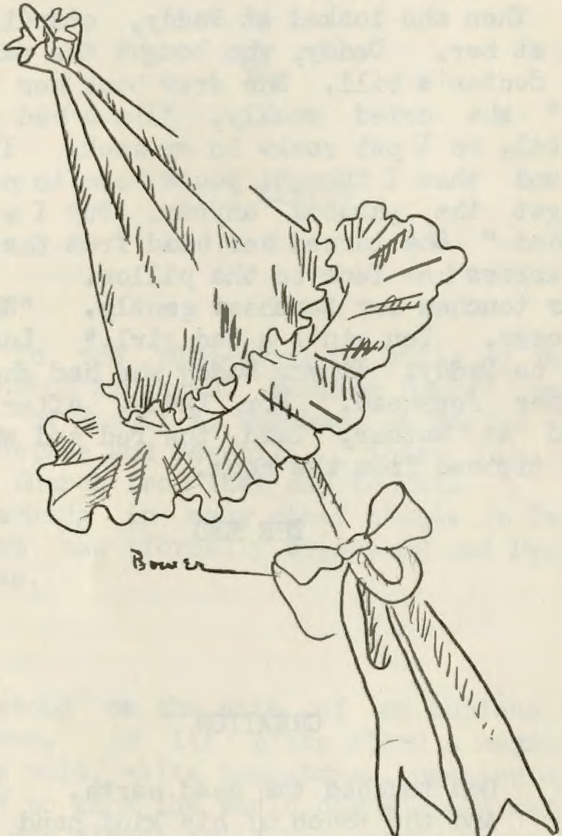
"You needn't be scared. You're a good little girl, aren't you? Now remember to breathe deeply." He turned away for a moment.

Lucy gasped. She wasn't a good little girl any longer, now that she had just the same as stolen. She must tell Daddy about the rocks before the young man came back.

But he was at her side again, and she thought of telling him. It didn't really matter. She couldn't get the parasol now, on account of the hospital bill. But as she started to tell him, he put something over her face and said "Now breathe deeply!" And she couldn't say anything, because she was choaking, and something got down in her throat and hurt, and her nose felt stuffed with cotton. She was almost glad when the blackness began to get thick again.

This darkness had little lights in it. They went round and round in front of her eyes, coming closer and closer. She felt herself rising slowly and floating among them. She was relaxed and a little happy.

The lights began to go faster, and faster, and the pain came back to her side. Lucy felt herself falling, through the blackness and the



noises, and she cried out because there was nothing to hold to. A great white glare of light loomed below her, she fell onto it, there was a burning hurt in her side, and she opened her eyes, to see the fat doctor and the young man looking at her.

The choking stuff still hurt her throat. She cried a little. Then Daddy and Mother tiptoed in. Mother was crying, and Daddy looked solemn and didn't say anything. Lucy just looked at them, until Mother said, as if she were trying to laugh, "Look what Daddy and Mother brought you to keep you from feeling bad. Look, Honey." And Daddy held up the red parasol.

Involuntarily, Lucy reached for it, weakly, and shakily. The same red parasol——ruffles and all——her parasol. They'd got it for her after all. Then she looked at Daddy, standing there by the bed, trying to smile at her. Daddy, who bought the parasol even when he'd have to pay the doctor's bill. She drew back her hand.

"I'm mean," she cried weakly, "I'm a bad girl. I cheated. I wanted the parasol, so I put rocks in my sack. I wanted to tell you once, Daddy, and then I thought you'd have to pay the doctor's bill and couldn't get the parasol anyway. But I mustn't have it now, 'cause I'm too bad." She turned her head from the red parasol and let the tears slip across her face to the pillow.

Then Mother touched her forehead gently. "Why, Honey, don't you mind them old rocks. You ain't a bad girl." Lucy looked up at her, then she turned to Daddy. It was Daddy she had cheated. But now —— she puckered her forehead. For Daddy, after clearing his throat gruffly, looked at Mother, laid the red and white parasol across Lucy's bed, and tiptoed from the room.

THE END

CREATION

God touched the dead earth,
And the touch of his kind hand
Brought the dead to life.

— Janece Oliver

THE SPIRIT OF McMAHAN'S

by

Bill Bailey

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Nestled back in the pine-covered hills of East Texas is the oldest Protestant Church of Texas. McMahan Chapel was organized in 1833 in the home of Samuel B. McMahan, in Sabine County about half way between San Augustine and Hemphill. There has been continuous organization of the Church from that day to this.

There was preaching in many other places in Texas, but it was here that Methodism was formally organized and Protestantism given formal birth in Texas.

Yesterday I stood on the site of an antique Churchyard. The old church was gone. In its place stood a magnificent memorial structure. Only the cold, white tombstones, pushing up their spectre-like heads, remained to show the world how ancient was this spot.

Then ...... it was almost as if the graves began to open as there paraded before my mind a procession of thoughts which were lost in the lives of those who lay in those sunken graves.

So real were the visions that I could almost hear the musical laughter of the children as they skipped along toward the open door of that little log church. Next the grown-ups were coming. Rough-hewn, tanned from the sun and wind and rain, their heads were held high with a look that can be obtained by only those who joy in labor, love, and worship.

My thoughts begged for the stories that those silent lips could tell. The longing mounted within me until it was more than I could contain. Frantically I looked around to the towering oaks which stood in their solemn majesty.

"Oh, if only you could tell your stories!" I cried, "you, who have witnessed the birth and growth of the holy activities which have so abounded here, won't you speak to me?"

Then, amid my longing, I seemed to hear a command. My mind stood still at the voice which was more like the whisperings of the wind. "Look!" And I beheld a glorious panorama of history unfolding before my very eyes.

The church bell was ringing, and around the bend of the narrow trail came the circuit-rider . . . . the prophet on horseback . . . the apostle of the open road. His horse was weary from the long road since early morning, but the rider was the image of man at his happiest moments. His face shone with the light of heavenly inspiration and expectancy at the task which was at hand.

My thoughts were drawn to follow him as he moved proudly through the door of the Church. The dim light inside revealed split-log benches filled with worshipping peasantry. Those trusting eyes were glowing with a peculiar light which seemed to give a radiance to the whole being.

The singing .... the praying .... the preaching! This world could own nothing which was so divine. A crude log church? .... Yes, but so heart-touching and sincere that even the heavenly chorus could not have been sweeter.

The scene was changing. It was evening. Meeting time was there. I found myself beholding the gathering of the men for their prayer-meeting. It seemed that the arms of those now-young trees hovered closer as if to enfold the simple beauty of that group. They may have been listening to the prayers that were coming from upturned faces which were lined with tears that dropped unashamedly to the dry leaves below.

The people began to enter the open door and seat themselves in the candle-lit chapel. There was a certain feel in the air that spoke of brotherhood and love.

Again that singing and praying and such preaching as was amazing to behold! Men and women shouted and prayed; lives were changed; God was present!

Suddenly I was alone again. Yet .... I was not alone. I found myself looking up to God from my knees and trying to speak, but in the place of words only sobs came. I was weeping for joy. There had been revealed to me the wonder of the Holy Spirit of God. This was my own experience with God as he spurred me on to greater efforts to carry that same Spirit to all mankind. Only after that knowledge had burned itself upon my heart would words come.

"I can; I must; I will!"

THE END

LOST OPPORTUNITY

by

Margaret Pittman

A pearl of great value and price lay on the seashore. A traveler stooped and picked up this pearl. Being blind to its value he threw it down and proceeded down the shore to pick up rocks, sand, old shells —— nothing of significant value. When the traveler had grown tired and weary at the end of his journey he stopped to rest. He went to sleep and had a dream. An old man stood on the seashore before him. In a weak faltering voice he told him, "Go back young traveler before it is too late. The object which you have so carelessly thrown aside is the Great Prize of Life —— a pearl of priceless value." Immediately the old man's voice faded away and the traveler awoke, took up his belongings, and ran hurriedly back to the location of the pearl. As he reached the spot he could see the pearl nowhere. When he looked up he saw a beautiful young golden-haired girl carrying away the pearl in both hands. As she walked away with an old man by her side the traveler heard her voice ringing with laughter and happiness saying, "Father, I've found it at last——the Pearl of great price we've searched for so long." The traveler went on his way a disappointed, yet a wiser man.

THE END

THE WEALTH I CRAVE

I ask not pomp nor power
Like kings, to give command;
The wealth I crave is power
To serve my fellow man.
I want to feel the hand-clasps
That joys and sorrows blend;
I want to hear him saying,
"Ah, sir, you've been my friend."

I ask not fame nor fortune,
Nor joy that honor brings;
The wealth I crave is power
To love God's lowly things;
To see in morning sunrise
The Master-Artist's skill;
To read in humblest flower
The workings of His will.

I ask not dazzling jewels,
Nor raiment fine, nor gold;
The wealth I crave and plead for
Is Truth and Courage bold;
A simple, child-like trusting;
A faith, while on life's way,
That sees beyond all darkness,
The dawn of golden day.

— by Emma C. Brannon

MRS. BARBARA

by

Eleanor E. Crockett

Most of the women in our cross-roads town in south Mississippi are just women. To a boy of twelve, I mean, they don't stand out as being anything much;like teachers, say, or mothers of friends. But Mrs. Barbara Mason wasn't like the rest of them in some way I didn't understand. She was the mother of one of my friends, of Mike Mason. But she didn't act like a mother: make Mike wash himself and get to school on time, or go to Sunday School, or any of the other things a mother usually makes a boy do. And also she was gone a lot; sometimes she'd disappear for whole days and nights at a time.

Mike was a regular fellow. At school, he wasn't the teacher's pet, but the kids liked him. He was quiet though —— old for his age. He had blue eyes smudged into his freckled face with black, and a shock of white hair that was always falling down on his forehead. I was Mike's best friend. I think he liked me because I never asked him about his mother when she was gone. I never asked him about her because I didn't like to see the look that came over his face when Mrs. Barbara's name was mentioned. His blue eyes would narrow and withdraw, and his jaw would be squarer than ever. Sometimes he wouldn't answer, especially if it was a kid that asked where his mother was. But if it was an adult, Mike would say real quiet, "She'll be back pretty soon. She'll be back — maybe today."

You could tell Mike loved Mrs. Barbara. While she was gone he kept the house neat as anything. He'd get up mornings and fix his own breakfast, and even wash up the dishes afterwards. Lots of times I'd leave for school early just so I could eat a second breakfast with Mike; he made hot cocoa better than my mother did.

One morning last September I went by for Mike and right away I knew Mrs. Barbara was home, only that time she hadn't been gone long, just a couple of days. There was a cup on the sink with lipstick on it, and the kitchen smelled the way Mike's mother smelled —— sweet, the way those Cape Jessamine flowers smell so good.

"Shhhh," Mike said when I banged the door. "She ain't feeling so good." And his smudged eyes and square jaw dared me to make something of it, which I wasn't aiming to do anyway.

Then after awhile he went back to Mrs. Barbara's room and I heard her low voice answering him when he asked if there was a anything she needed before he went to school. Then he asked her something else and she said, "Goodness gracious, Mike. I don't want anything. Just go away and let me sleep." She didn't sound irritated, just tired. It wasn't the way my mother would have said it. But my mother isn't Mrs. Barbara.

I knew two words for Mrs. Mason, and I'd have looked them up in the dictionary if I'd known how to go about spelling them. I heard those words one time when I was in the kitchen and my mother was entertaining the bridge club, and I knew they were bad because they were said in a hiss and made me almost drop the watercrest sandwich I had decided I wasn't hungry enough to eat anyway. The words were "dipsomaniac" and "nymphomaniac." The last part of the words, the "maniac" part, was bad, I knew. And finally, I just up and asked my old man about the words.

Dad is a lawyer and an all-right sort of guy. He put his paper down and looked at me steady. "As applied to whom?" he asked finally. So I told him, looking him straight in the eye.

"OK fellow," Dad said. "Dipsomania is alcholism; drinking to excess. Nymphomania is when a woman chases men; can't stay away from men —— any man."

I thought I understood, but I wanted it plainer. Dad gave it to me plain, real plain. It made me sick. Anyway, it wasn't the Mrs. Barbara I knew, and I said so. Even when Dad explained that they were sicknesses, I didn't understand. I had never seen Mike's mother drunk, and as for the other —— well, it didn't make sense. Wanting to prove Dad wrong, I cried, "You said ALL men. That ain't right — Bill Burton is crazy about Mrs.Mason and she won't even look at him!!"

"That's different," Dad said. "Mrs. Mason likes Mr. Burton. She isn't cruel, Jim, just sick and proud. Before she married, she was a McInnis. I guess the McInnis family is one of the oldest and proudest in Mississippi."

Then Dad looked at me a long time. He started to pick up the paper, then put it down. He said, "Its because she's so proud, Jim, that she goes out of town so much."

I understood about the McInnis pride. Everyone in Mt. Sherman who was anyone at all, could tell you about their ancestors, from both sides too, maternal and paternal. Once I had even ridden with Mrs. Barbara and Mike on a Sunday afternoon, and we'd driven down close to Greenville. Mrs. Barbara had taken some old back roads off the highway, gunning the car like Ned himself was after us, and scaring even me, the way she drove: as though she was daring the car to leave the road with us. I was glad when finally we stopped.

She got out in her little spike-heeled shoes and took off across a sedge field, Mike and me following, trying to keep up. My mother would have been thinking about her hose, but not Mrs. Barbara. Once she tripped. Mike ran forward and picked her up. Her knee was bleeding, and Mike had his handkerchief out and wanted to wipe off the blood, but, laughingly, she shook him off and started to run again.

"It's right up here," she said in her rich, husky voice, real breathless now. And sure enough, she stopped right after that. She stood there on a little soft hill with the sedge grass up to her waist and her black hair like a cloud around her neck. "This is the old McInnis place," she said, only even I could tell she wasn't talking to us. Her eyes had a greedy look, and she sipped the soft air like water. "As far as the eye can see; all of that belonged to the McInnis family," she whispered.

On the way back she looked tired and didn't talk at all. The way she drove on the way back made the trip down seem like a ride on a kiddy-car. But one look at Mike's jaw told me not to let on I was scared. I just sat there like that was the way old Jim Nixon was used to traveling.

The next time we visited by cousins in Greenville, I went out to old Negro Spurlock's farm. Spurlock claims he's a hundred years old, but its my private opinion that he's older. He looks like an apple that's been too long in the barrel, but his eyes are black and shiny jellybeans.

"Was the McInnis place real big?" I asked after we sat awhile.

"Big 'nuff," he answered. Spurlock had his thumb in his Bible. He had read that Bible so much it was as limp as a rag. He closed it now over a gnarled, gray finger. "After the Civil War, it fell to pieces, though. Mr. Brutus, who built the place, had a powerful streak of bullness in him, couldn't stand losing. After the was he drank hisself to death. And his boy — don' remember his name — same way with him. He farmed the place for awhile, till his li'l gal died of the fever. Then they was an accident. He falls on his gun, only folks knows he falls on purpose. — A powerful steak of bullness; can't stand losing, them McInnises can't!"

I thought old Spurlock was asleep because he closed his eyes then. But I should have known better. His black eyes snapped around at me, trying to catch me unaware. He was as curious as anything, even if he WAS a hundred.

"Why you ask, boy?" he wanted to know. I just mumbled something and gave him the pound of bacon I had snitched from my Aunt Mildred. And then I left. That time I had tried on purpose to find out about why Mrs. Barbara was so peculiar. Later I found out more, only I couldn't help hearing what I heard.

The day Dad and Bill Burton had their conversation, Mrs. Barbara had been gone for nearly a week, for the longest time she had ever stayed away. Mike and me were on top of our old shed out back, and we had a book apiece and a big peppermint stick apiece, which we ate along with mouthfuls of cheese. Dad was stretched out in a hammock by the side of the shed, but he was asleep, so we felt like we was by ourselves, especially since there is a willow grows and spreads out right over the shed, like a ferny green umbrella. Only, Bill Burton comes up and first we know of it is when we hear Bill say:

"No, I'd rather we stay out here. What I want to say is private. I want you to talk to Barbara."

Mr. Burton doesn't say "mighty proud" or "partner" or talk like Texans are supposed to talk, but he comes from around Kilgore, which is in Texas, and his face looks like Texas does on the map in my geography book; flat and wide with big spaces between his features. He doesn't smoke or drink, and once I heard my mother call him Don Quixote, whoever that is.

Cautiously, my dad asked, "What do you want me to talk to her about?"

Bill said, "About the way she's trying to kill herself."

So it was too late now for Mike and me to crawl down off the shed. I stole a look at Mike. Like he didn't see me looking, he turned over on his belly and put his face down flat on the tarpaper roof. I didn't dare touch him so I started biting the skin around my nails, wishing I was deaf.

"I'd like to do something, but I don't know what I could do," my dad said.

"What's the matter with you people? What's the matter with her?

It's been three years since her husband died, yet you people say she's a McInnis; she'll never get over it."

"Take it easy," my dad said gently.

"I won't take it easy. I love her and want to take care of her and her boy. If I could get them away from this place, back to Texas, I think she could forget. But it has to be soon. Time is running out for Barbara. I feel it. And it isn't just her! What about Mike? What will happen to Mike if he loses his mother?"

After a long time Dad said thoughtfully. "Mike is blond, so was his father. He is a proud boy, and a brave one. Mike doesn't even look like the McInnis side of the family."

Bill Burton's voice sounded strained. He said, "To Hell with the McInnises!"

You could tell Dad didn't think it would do much good, but he said he would talk with Mrs. Barbara. They walked off, still talking.

All this time I hadn't looked at Mike. Now he sat up and I made myself look at him. From sooty frames, his blue eyes probed mine, and I had a sinking feeling that now I knew too much about his private affairs to be his best friend any more. But he wasn't mad. He jabbed my shoulder soft-like and wiggled his ears. I started to say something, but before I could, he slid down the side of the shed and ran off fast in the direction of his house, his whitish hair bobbing and his elbows churning.

Mike was still my friend; I should have been happy. But it was my turn to put my face down flat on the tarpaper roof. Only, where Mike hadn't cried, I did. Somehow my crying had nothing to do with what Mr. Burton had said about Mrs. Barbara's time running out. I felt bad about that —— sure! But what had gotten me was the way Mike had wiggled his ears, as though he was trying to tell me —— ME, Jim Mixon, that I wasn't to feel too bad. I guess I decided something there on the shed; I guess I did. Because after that I stayed close to Mike. Seemed like it was the thing to do, seeing as how I was still his best friend and all.

The next day Mrs. Barbara came back. I was with Mike when he found out she was home. We went in his house right after school and there was her shoe, kicked off right inside the front door. It was small and useless looking and worn and muddy. But underneath the mud, good leather glistened with many polishings. Mike slipped the shoe in his jacket pocket and I followed him to the kitchen door.

Mrs. Barbara was in there moving things around on the cabinet shelves. Mike stood before me, his hands dangling loosely at his side, but his feet planted solid as a tree. Mrs. Barbara didn't hear us, I guess, because she stooped down and started looking in the bottom shelves, as though what she wanted might be hid down there. Even in the bunchy blue robe she wore, she was as small as a mid-afternoon shadow.

Mike said. "I found it, Mother. I poured it out, down the sink."

Mrs. Barbara started and whirled, her long black hair cascading down the front of the blue robe. "Oh Mike," she whispered. ---- And behind her green eyes something turned over roundly, like a kitten. You didn't have to be twelve to see that she had just remembered Mike.

Mike walked toward her, his hand outstretched. "Momma," he said. He didn't ask where she had been, and when she smiled a thin, bleak little smile, he let his hand drop. "I saved you some. Its behind the milk in the back of the refrigerator. Its just a little," he said. And it was an apology, somehow.

Then Mike just stood there and breathed --- thats all; he just breathed until Mrs. Barbara's small bare feet whispered swiftly over the linoleum toward the refrigerator. She stood with her hands gripping the door handle, but she didn't open it.

Working fast, Mike had put coffee and water into a percolator. He said, "You're supposed to go to bed, Mother. I want you to drink some coffee before you do." He walked out of the kitchen then, fast, carrying the coffee pot. As I turned to follow him, I heard Mrs. Barbara open the refrigerator.

Mile went into his mother's room. It was cold that day, a hard day in a wet November. But Mike kept a fire burning in Mrs. Barbara's room, so it was warm there. Feeling useless and intruding, but still not wanting to leave Mike, I watched him plug in the coffee pot and set it beside a pastel radio on a night table by the bed. Then he smoothed Mrs. Barbara's lace-edged pillow and straightened the turned-down lap of the matching sheet.

Rising from the warm air of the room was the Jassamine smell of Mrs. Barbara and another smell, but the sweet smell was strongest. I had never been in her room before so I looked around.

All the furniture was old. The pastel radio and the electric coffee pot looked out of place. But the room was like Mike's mother, somehow. When she came in, either the furniture seemed newer or Mrs. Barbara seemed older. It was one or the other --- I don't know which.

She didn't even notice me, though I was sitting in plain sight, right by the door. She walked to the dresser and with a slim finger she touched a lavender bottle, her perfume, I guessed. I noticed that besides the bottle, there was two pictures on the dressing table. Mike walked to her.

"Your father," she said. "And the other one is Brutus McInnis."

"You mean WAS," Mike corrected gently. But when she only kept looking at the pictures, he took her shoulders and guided her to the bed. As they passed me, the blue robe slipped from Mrs. Barbara's shoulders and I saw some round dark marks on her skin, burned penny marks, four of them. There wasn't any rug on the floor. Suddenly, my ankles felt cold.

Mike tucked his mother in bed. Even though she kept on the bunchy blue robe, she hardly made a lump under the covers. With the pillows behind her back, she took the coffee Mike poured. Her other hand caught the robe and pulled it tight over her shoulders.

She smiled vaguely at me and then to Mike she said. "Gracious. I've had company today. Mr. Nixon was here and after he left . . ." She paused and looked hard at Mike. " . . . after he left, Mr. Burton came by. You like Mr. Burton, Mike?"

"Yes, I like him," Mike said. And I knew he really did. But I saw Mike's hands make fists. They had forgotten I was there so I got up and left the room.

Before I shut the door, I heard Mrs. Barbara say, "No. You're right. I don't know what I was thinking. It wouldn't be fair, would it Mike?"

Later, Mike and I drank some cocoa and talked. It wasn't until the air outside turned blue with misty twilight that I went home. My mother said I had a cocoa mustach and told me to wash it off. In the bathroom Dad was shaving. I don't know why I told him what Mike said when he came out of Mrs. Barbara's room, but I told him:

"He said he was going to take up the living room rug and put it in her room. He said the cold air was coming up from the ground underneath and was pushing the warm air clear up to the ceiling."

"Damn," Dad said softly. He had nicked his face, but usually Dad didn't cuss about THAT. Then he told me, "You help him do it, Jim. Help Mike, you hear?"

"I aimed on helping," I said.

The next afternoon Mike and me put the rug in Mrs. Barbara's room. That same day Mr. Burton came with red roses. He left the bedroom door open (he always did, Mike said) and we could hear his voice from in there, not his words, just his voice, which sounded like the wind: low, humming and breathless; like he was afraid Mrs. Barbara would